

# Man proves his mettle

With detector, he finds woman's lost engagement ring

By Patricia Snyder  
of the Daily Courier

As he slid the engagement ring on her finger, the man joked that he wasn't proposing. Frank Serroni already has a bride, but he also found Nancy Seidel's engagement ring after searching in juniper bushes for three hours. The president of the Rogue Valley Coinshooters metal detector club officially presented the ring to Seidel on Tuesday, at the group's monthly meeting.

When she lost it, Seidel had been doing yard work and realized the ring wasn't on her finger, "I panicked," she said. She'd had the ring almost a year. She and fiancé Michael Ethridge haven't set a date yet. After looking for the ring, Seidel rented a metal detector. Unsuccessful, she called a metal detector shop to see if she needed a different type of machine, and they connected her with Serroni. The next day, he spent three hours hunting through the junipers that covered most of her front yard, cutting back some. He expanded the search to the driveway and, eventually toward the neighbor's place. He finally spotted the ring under a jumper branch.

His sense of humor aroused, he went to the house and told Seidel he wasn't going to look any more. Then he showed her the reason why. She started crying with joy and hugged him "almost had a few popped ribs. The squeeze was incredible," he said. Serroni planned to present the ring right away at the club's meeting, but that was the day of the World Trade Center attacks, and no one felt much like celebrating the discovery. They rescheduled and finally connected on Tuesday. A lost ring was what drew Serroni to the Rogue Valley Coinshooters in the first place. His wife, Tammy, lost her ring while mowing the lawn. He'd bought a metal detector from a magazine but didn't use it. After crawling around the yard, he finally dug out the machine and the owner's manual. Finding the ring turned him on to the hobby.

"No matter where you go, somebody has been there and somebody has lost something there," he said.

The club recently searched Cantrall-Buckley Park, where those fighting the Quartz Fire camped this summer, and found more than 400 coins.

With wet ground enhancing the signature of metal, a machine can detect a coin 8 to 12 inches underground.

Seidel's ring was the toughest job because of all the juniper, Serrom said. One of his most memorable was finding a fifth-generation ring lost when an Ashland woman was



KEVIN LAUNIUS/Daily Courier

**Frank Serroni, right, president of the Rogue Valley Coin Shooters metal detector club, found Nancy Seidel's engagement ring for her**

throwing weeds over the side of a steep hill. Engraved inside the ring were the initials of all the women who had worn it. "She had three teenage daughters standing there, practically in tears because one of them was in line to get it next," he said.

Rogue Valley Coinshooters meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church in Grants Pass.

Founded a dozen years ago, it has 38 members from as far away as Ashland and Roseburg. For information, attend or call Serroni at 476-2371. The group asks for a donation to search, and individuals work out their own deals. They've found capped wells, property markers and septic tank lids as well as coins and jewelry.

The club has a monthly competition for the best find, and the winner gets a silver half-dollar. The group also goes on regular hunts, such as one where they will search 6 acres for a missing jar of money.

Descendants were told that an ancestor buried six jars of money, but they found only five. Such situations are common, Serroni said, especially from 1936 and 1970. "In the old days, a lot of people buried their stuff," he said, especially those who lived through the Great Depression. "They didn't trust the banks, so they trusted their back yards." One rumor is that \$22,000 is buried in a jar somewhere on or near Seventh Street, beneath the pavement.