Let's go caching!
GEOCACHING

by Kristie Denbow

Geocaching is a popular sport where adventure seekers locate Tupperware in the woods using billion-dollar satellites.

To participate in geocaching (caching), a Global Positioning System receiver (GPSr) or smart phone with the geocaching app, the internet, a sense of humor, and powers of observation are needed.

Geocaches are diverse-sized containers placed by geocachers (cachers) in precise locations in public environments. All caches contain a logbook to record the date and name of the finder. Regular and large size caches may also contain travel bugs, geocoins, and "swag''. Travel bugs are numbered dog tags that have a traveling goal and may have an object attached. Geocoins are fifty cent-sized coins imprinted with designs for various causes, groups, or events. Swag consists of small, interesting items that are traded among cachers and caches.

The cacher placing the cache posts its location coordinates on internet caching sites and includes a description of the cache and sometimes a clue to locating it.

How to find a geocache:

- **Visit a geocache database on the internet.**
- **Log-in with a handle – all cachers have handles or nicknames, think of a cool and meaningful name to be your handle.**
- **Search for caches hidden in the area.**
- **Click on the names of nearby caches.**
- **Locate the caches you would like to find on the map.**
- **Get the coordinates of the hide from the cache page.**
- **Travel to the approximate location.**
- **Use the GPSr or smart phone to zero in on the cache location.**

The GPSr will lead you near, but may not lead you to, the precise location of the cache container. Powers of observation are needed. Many cache containers are expertly camouflaged; some containers may be no larger than an acorn, others may be the size of a surplus ammo can.

Once the cache container is located, inspect the surroundings before reaching for the container. Grabbing a stinging insect, a biting critter, or a thorny plant will ruin the adventure. Open the container, retrieve the log book, and sign with your handle and the date. Trade swag if you desire, replace the logbook, and return the cache to its proper position. Most importantly, look around; the best caches are placed for a reason - a scenic view, a historical location, or a significant site.

Re-visit the geocaching database to log your find and write an account of your adventure. The database displays the total number of caches you have found. Many cachers have over 10,000 finds.

Caches are located all over the world. Over eighty caches have been placed in Kendall County. I own twenty-seven caches in four counties. Caching on a road trip makes the miles fly by and since a number of caches are located at rest stops, caching provides an opportunity to take a break.

Caching is a challenging experience and a great way to see new places, exercise, and spend time with family, pets, and friends.

Geocaching websites: geocaching.com, terracaching.com, geotruckers.com