

2014 Manitou Days Treasure Hunt  
Varney Lake Park, White Bear Lake

Clue #1:

*With our welcome mat unrolled, let the mystery unfold  
In this hunt for the Manitou Days medallion.  
We welcome the scrawny, the brawny – yes, even the Wisconie –  
And every single member of your hunting battalion.*

*Enjoy last year's trip? We did – but have abandoned ship  
And toward another horizon we strode forth.  
To pre-empt any rumpus, we'll provide you further compass:  
Generally speaking, our sun rises in the north.*

Explanation:

The opening lines welcome all to White Bear Lake for our annual treasure hunt, sponsored by Coldwell Burnet Banker. "Welcome mat" subtly hinted at all of the front doors facing the treasure's location. "Even the Wisconie" was a playful nod to the Minnesota Vikings mailbox at 3485 Van Dyke Street and the rivalry between the Vikings and Green Bay. In the second stanza, "abandoned ship" referred to the fact that the medallion was not hidden in White Bear Town~~ship~~ as it had been in 2013. "Sun rises in the north" narrowed the search area to those public places south of Sunrise Middle School.

Clue #2:

*Flash back to a vortex that froze many a cortex  
Even the heartiest of spirits began to splinter.  
A song of praise was sung – but hardly by the young  
Pay homage to a place that stood up to Old Man Winter.*

*When November approaches and an icy wind encroaches  
Not all foliage will surrender and descend.  
When it comes to winnings, you may imagine new beginnings  
But treasure awaits you at the end.*

Explanation:

White Bear Lake Area Schools were the only schools in the Twin Cities that chose not to close on January 27 during the Polar Vortex. While adults were happy that their children were able to go to school, students were hardly impressed. White Bear Lake High School South Campus was located directly north of the treasure site. The second stanza pointed at the pine trees at the corner of Orchard Lane and Van Dyke Street, whose foliage (needles) stay green year-round. "At the end" referred to the Dead End sign on Van Dyke Street.

Clue #3:

*We framed it up with help from the Cup  
Central thinking will get you there.  
If you find football lame, choose another game  
Sport is a-plenty around our lair.*

*In fact, the color green and number eighteen  
Will further narrow the course.  
But whether done by swing or with a wristed fling  
Getting too close we do not endorse.*

Explanation:

“Cup” hinted at the World Cup, underway during the medallion hunt. When looking at Google Maps, one can see that the medallion was hidden on a line between the soccer fields at South Campus and those at Lakewood Hills Park. “Sport is a-plenty around our lair” referred to the many different activities found at both the High School, Manitou Ridge Golf Course, Ice Arena, and Lakewood Hills Park. The second stanza goes further, pointing at the golfing choices in the area: traditional and disc. Hunters were encouraged not to search too close to either one.

Clue #4:

*Our own namesake provides a route to take  
It's one with many an intercept.  
From a prime number it wends to the letters where it ends  
Along it our secret is kept.*

*Southerly neighbors do tap their woods for sap  
Hunting is forbidden among their arbor.  
In the old crow's nest rests the treasure chest  
Seek out the riches it now does harbor.*

Explanation:

The first stanza referenced White Bear Avenue, which runs very near the site. White Bear Avenue runs from Highway 61 (“prime number”) south to A, B, and C Streets (“the letters”) near Battle Creek Park in St. Paul. “Southerly neighbors do tap their woods for sap” and “hunting is forbidden among their arbor” pointed at the city of Maplewood and reminded hunters to remain within White Bear Lake city limits. According to books documenting the history of White Bear Lake, the land on which the medallion was hidden was originally settled as a farm by the Crow family.

Clue #5:

*Don't be led astray, finding treasure is child's play  
With a map (perhaps gloves) and a discriminating eye.  
On the by and by, you'll soon learn to ask why  
And sound out the island guy running nearby.*

*A water clue seems long overdue  
As it certainly defines our space.  
Seek, young knave, an appendage concave  
To end this wild goose chase.*

Explanation:

"Childs play" referred to the children's activities at the local YMCA (also: "learn to ask why"). "Perhaps gloves" was a playful hint at how the medallion was concealed – in a coonskin hat – and how one might take pause before touching it. "Discriminating eye" pointed at the Neighborhood Watch sign, from which the medallion was paced into the high weeds. The "island guy running nearby" referred to Monn Avenue. When said aloud ("sound out"), Monn sounds like the Jamaican ("island") word for "Man." The second stanza names the importance of water in this year's hunt as the park is named after Varney Lake. Other ponds surround the site to the south, as does the water park at the YMCA. "Appendage concave" hinted at the arm of Varney Lake that extends southward toward the treasure site.

Clue #6:

*Tony's artistic style sure did beguile  
Luring low country ladies in for the kiss.  
Before hope careens, get to know your greens:  
Collards, romaine, kale or this.*

*Rebecca is a name associated with pre-depression fame  
Her "relative" will make you a winner.  
A cool leader was he, an animal lover was she:  
Thankfully, they didn't serve ol' Becky for dinner.*

Explanation:

The first stanza names the intersection near where the medallion was hidden. Anthony ("Tony") Van Dyke, of Holland, is credited with creating the Van Dyke style beard in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. And, if you finish the last line you might arrive at "Collards, romaine, kale *or Chard.*" Therefore, naming Van Dyke Street and Orchard Lane. The entire second stanza was in reference to the coonskin hat in which the medallion was attached. Rebecca was a raccoon adopted by President Calvin Coolidge ("cool leader") and his wife, Grace. It had been proposed by members of the Administration that Rebecca be served at Thanksgiving ("thankfully") instead of a traditional turkey in order to show solidarity with the poor. Instead, Mrs. Coolidge insisted on adopting Rebecca as a White House pet.

As a footnote, the hat was made of artificial material; no animals were harmed in the making of this treasure hunt.

Clue #7:

*Wood and creatures meet at a place for feet  
Providing escape from a nightmare of a drive.  
Take some time to embrace this natural space  
For within its realm the enigma survives.*

*He made his stamp when he went to camp  
Did time and had Holiday acclaim.  
He was scared and then – rode again  
Search in earnest for this actor's name.*

Explanation:

Varney Lake Park, largely an undeveloped space, consists of one major paved pathway (“place for feet”) that is primarily accessed at the intersection of Elm (“wood”) and Buckbee (buck + bee = “creatures”). “Nightmare,” referred to the movie *Nightmare on Elm Street*. Along with “Drive” one again arrives at Elm Drive. The second stanza held hints to all of the Ernest (“earnest”) P. Worrell movie hits (*Ernest Goes to Camp*, *Ernest Goes to Jail*, *Ernest Saves Christmas*, *Ernest Scared Stupid* & *Ernest Rides Again*). Ernest was played by the late actor Jim Varney.

Clue #8:

*As we wind down this race, mind your pace  
Please: less tortoise, more hare.  
Are you seeking thrills over at Lakewood Hills?  
If so, the medallion isn't there.*

*Old Mariner, we confess, is also quite treasure-less  
Yet combined they may bring you glee.  
Soccer fields at both sites to view – now know what to do?  
If not, go back to the second line of clue number three.*

Explanation:

This clue revealed that the medallion was not at Lakewood Hills Park or South Campus (Mariner High School until 1982). Yet, the medallion was hidden on a line between the soccer fields at those two locations. An aerial view was helpful here.

Clue #9:

*It ain't no blarney: there's treasure at Varney!  
In tall grass you'll find your reward.  
Study your map, for boundaries do wrap  
And no ground should go ignored.*

*While questionably showy, it's time to make like Bowie  
And put on his thinking cap.  
You won't get rabies, the black plague or scabies  
For it's only a muddy faux fir wrap.*

Explanation:

This clue clearly put the medallion at Varney Lake and suggested that it may be in a remote spot of the park. It also gave away the medallion's placement inside of a false coonskin hat.

Clue #10:

*Near lake's coast you'll find many a post  
With their own form of access.  
On the corner stand the pines, on Van Dyke the signs  
Alas! Behold our treasure hunt axis.  
From the looking sign, walk northeast on a line  
Uphill toward our pondish lake.  
Trees number three; near them you should be  
See! Finding treasure is a piece of cake.*

Explanation:

Final hints to the 2014 treasure medallion.

Exact Location of the Treasure:

