



A Detecting Diva's point of view

Banner picture by Antonio Gagliardi

Allyson Cohen is a successful American detectorist with a wicked sense of humour – or humor if you are from the Bill Gates School of Spelling and Grammar. In this short article she explores some of the 'difficulties' often encountered by female detectorista (cheerful girls with dirty nails and mud on their shoes). Although the problems may be seen as universal, the text has been adjusted for an English audience.

"Hey Sheila, when you're done with that red nail polish, can I borrow it? Oh, and by the way, have you seen the new XL 550 super detector with that awesome new technology? We can go check it out tomorrow after we're done shopping for those cute new shoes you've been talking about".

A conversation like that just doesn't happen between two women. Detectors aren't something you sit and chat about with your girlfriends. I find it sad that I can confide in them about so many things, yet the thing I am most passionate about, most of them don't even understand. Being a woman involved in a

mostly male dominated hobby has certain problems. So guys, here are some things a woman **detectorista** must deal with:

Frustration:

I tell my female friends how much fun detecting is, how much I love it, and they laugh at me because I'm so excited about the hobby. A few have expressed a brief interest, and one actually went and tried it for a few minutes. They all say "I'll go with you," but that never happens.

What is it with these women? Have they never fished, camped, climbed trees, hiked, slept in a tent

or made mud pies? I suspect a few of them secretly wish they could do what I do, but are too afraid to let their femininity become vulnerable.

Hygiene:

Nails, nails and more nails – and I'm not talking about the rusty metal kind – I mean fingernails and what am I going to do about them. All summer they are full of dirt. Yuck! I wear rubber-coated gloves, scrub with a nailbrush, manicure, but they still look dirty. It's just not very attractive to have detecting fingernails!

I see my friends looking at my



Assorted coins from the calf pasture



Lead Civil War bullets from Virginia



Antique diamond and gold ring



Was the 1826 cent worn as a necklace?



Civil War hat badge 'B' company

hands in an odd *I can't believe she goes around like that sort of way*. On occasion I've found myself looking longingly at their perfectly manicured and polished nails ... but it's a short-lived longing, because I know that detecting is so much more fun than painting my nails!

Bathrooms:

Where are the bathrooms? I actively seek out female friendly places. You know what I mean! Many times I've suggested a site much closer to home – to the obvious dissatisfaction of my hunting buddy (Dad). I admit to sussing out a potential site for 'facilities' in the area. I laugh when I think

that as the tree cover at my favourite site becomes thinner and thinner after autumn, so did my trips to detect there.

Where would I hide in case of an emergency call of nature? Hey... maybe that's why my female friends don't want to go with me? Nah, we would just leave the site and go to the bathroom together... and that's a mystery men will never understand.

The significant other:

Okay, try to keep them happy while you are out detecting. Remember that you are so into swinging you don't care about cooking meals, cleaning, and shopping for food. My typically clean home can fall apart and I couldn't care less if I've got my detector in hand. I usually come back to my senses when I arrive home and realise I've just tracked mud through the house and then have to vacuum.

Of course when I'm detecting and my mobile rings with one of those frequent and plaintive *when are you going to be home* calls, it can put a damper on the day. Detecting can be addictive, as you well know. Those that don't enjoy it (sometimes our significant others) can become jealous, especially if we give our machines nicknames like *Honey* and *Best Friend*. I have learnt the hard way. This season,

I'm going to **try** to set time limits for myself whilst on a dig. Wish me luck ...

The Expense:

How do I, as a female, justify spending money on a spade to my friend who insists I need the latest designer handbag, or my boyfriend who thinks my detecting accessories are a waste of money? If anyone knows, please tell me. I'm not a beach hunter, so I can't defend my hobby with found diamonds and gold.

Weight Control:

When my friends are discussing their latest diet, I just go detecting. Not only is it great weight control, but also good for my blood pressure and sense of well being. This hobby is the best method of losing weight I've ever found. I'm not so worried about the six pounds I gained over the winter, because I know as soon as I get out there, it will disappear without me even trying. Go ahead, weigh and measure your food ladies ... beep, beep, and beep again!

So fellas – when you spot a detectorista walking out of the local public loos and she asks to borrow your mobile – because she *accidentally* smashed hers with a spade while in the woods – be nice to her ... she could be your next detecting buddy!

