

**Thursday, January 24, 2002**

And it's Morning Edition for Thursday on Minnesota Public Radio. The time is 8:24 -- I'm Cathy Wurzer.

This morning's Saint. Paul Pioneer Press includes the fifth clue in the paper's annual Winter Carnival Medallion Hunt. Every clue is eagerly anticipated by a group of obsessed treasure hunters who congregate outside the paper's offices each night waiting for the first edition.

Those crazed hunters are being followed by a crew of filmmakers working on a documentary about the hunt. Trent Tooley is one of the filmmakers, and yesterday Minnesota Public Radio's Eugene Cha met him at Saint Paul's Indian Mounds Park, where many of the diehards believe the medallion is hidden. Tooley says the documentary will follow four teams of hunters.

**TOOLEY:** The primary group that we're following is the Coolerheads. They're also known as the Cooler Crew, and you can find out about them at CoolerCrew.com. We're also following a group called the Camo Crue. They're these guys that have been hunting for years, and they dress in camouflage outfits. The third group we're following is led by Cathi Hogan, who found the medallion last year. And then the final group of diggers is a mother-two daughter team and their friends -- they're all women and they're known as "The Maidallions."

**EUGENE CHA:** Now what about this medallion hunt makes a good movie or documentary?

**TOOLEY:** There's so much natural drama. First of all, there's a limited timeframe over which this takes place, which in Hollywood-speak is known as "the ticking clock." There is going to be a winner -- someone's going to find the medallion. So you're going to have someone standing in front of the podium at the press conference with all the TV cameras pointing at them with their \$10,000 check and their fifteen minutes of fame. The hunt also has so much suspense and anticipation that slowly builds over the twelve days. Every night hunters line up at the paper, waiting for the new clue to come out. They think it might be at four different parks, and they're lined up, waiting to rush in to the building and get the next clue. And when they get the next clue, it tells them it's not at one of the four parks they were originally thinking, but at another park, so they all jump in their cars and take off for that park, and we're following them to the park, and then when they get to the park they all start digging in different places.

As far as cinematically, snow is always beautiful, so have you have a natural, picturesque backdrop that the hunt is set against. Also you have people digging at night, building bonfires, and diggers wearing miner's helmets and carrying lanterns. So you have these beautiful shots of all these different light sources sprinkled throughout the park. Plus, there are the characters -- the people who hunt for the medallion are so interesting. It's just such a natural and easy subject to make a documentary about.

**EUGENE CHA:** What are the challenges of filming a documentary like this?

**TOOLEY:** Well, first of all, it's really difficult because there are a lot of people to follow, and it's completely unpredictable because you don't know where the diggers are going because they're all over Saint Paul, you don't know what the next clue is going to say or when the medallion's going to be found, and who's going to find. There are just so many factors that are completely out of your control. And then there's the weather -- it's cold, snowy, wet - - cameras don't function as efficiently, lenses get splattered. The wind is terrible, which is bad for sound. Logistically, racing from one park to another is challenging. Plus, diggers are out from 7a.m. to 3a.m., so you have a 20-hour period that you have to cover, and that's demanding even without factoring in the weather.

**EUGENE CHA:** You sound like you're having a lot of fun?

**TOOLEY:** Yeah, I'm having a great time. I love the hunt, I love the characters.

**EUGENE CHA:** Well, maybe you can do a hunt sometime?

**TOOLEY:** I think after this film, I would love to experience the hunt as a hunter -- not as a filmmaker.

**EUGENE CHA:** Great, thanks very much. Well, let's go over here and do a bit of digging.

(DIGGING SOUNDS)

**EUGENE CHA:** Okay, well, one of the teams in the film is the Cooler Crew, and we've got a member of the Cooler Crew here. What's your name?

**SANTA DAVE:** I'm Dave Young, also known as "Santa Dave" and also known as "DDY."

**EUGENE CHA:** Why are you so obsessed with the medallion?

**SANTA DAVE:** Well, I'm not really sure. After you do it for a number of years every year, it sort of becomes a tradition. If I went a year with doing it, it would be like a hole in my life.

**EUGENE CHA:** Is there a certain technique that you use, or do you just shovel the snow?

**SANTA DAVE:** Just basically shovel the snow. Now it depends on what kind of snow you have. This snow here is only about two or three inches thick, so you can kind of just get the shovel under it like this and shovel it away.

(SOUNDS OF SANTA DAVE SHOVELING)

**SANTA DAVE:** Now in past years when the snow is really thick, you might have to start at the top and just kind of dig down to the ground.

**EUGENE CHA:** I tell you what, I'll let you keep digging here.

**SANTA DAVE:** Yeah, yeah, we gotta find this thing.

(MORE SOUNDS OF SANTA DAVE SHOVELING)

**CATHY WURZER:** That's medallion hunter Dave Young with Minnesota Public Radio's Eugene Cha, who also spoke with documentary filmmaker Trent Tooley.

END OF INTERVIEW