

# SAVAGE PACER

## Savage couple win horseshoe contest after digging into city history

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Laura and Rick Brannen pose for a picture near the Hidden Valley Park archery target where they found this year's commemorative Dan Patch Days horseshoe using clues from the Dan Patch Historical Society and other research.

The annual Dan Patch Days horseshoe hunt is over after a local couple found the object at Hidden Valley Park on Wednesday, June 5.

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Laura and Rick Brannen scrutinized two Dan Patch Historical Society clues and read up on city history in the Savage Library and the Nancy Huddleston book "Savage" before searching multiple times around multiple city parks. Laura Brannen found the commemorative horseshoe in a hay bale archery target at Hidden Valley.

"We basically covered every inch of it," Rick Brannen said of the park. "The book really was the key."

The winners of the historical society's riddle-based contest each year win \$100, the horseshoe they find and the chance to be part of the Dan Patch Days parade. The festival is set for June 20-23 at the Savage Community Park.

The Brannens said they paid special attention to individual words in the society's weekly clues. The first clue last month mentioned "a button by George," for instance, which got them thinking of George Egan, one of several Egans who once owned what is now Hidden Valley.

The phrase was also in honor of George Augustinack, who made the festival's buttons until he died late last year, said Jim Ross, a historical society board member.

The second clue then spoke of Irish brothers with a cabin that stood "where we now play and cook up some brats" and that was condemned at some point. Documents at the library referenced a Hidden Valley shelter condemned in the 1980s, Laura Brannen said, so the two were sure Hidden Valley was the right track.

Their success was a nice cap to the family's entry into last year's contest, when they figured out the horseshoe's location but reached it too late. Laura Brannen said the thrill of the hunt and the chance to learn more about the city made the search worthwhile.

"Everybody knows the story of Dan Patch, but there a lot of other interesting families and interesting stories in our history," she said.