

FROM NEW YORK TO IDAHO; THIRD WINNER OF GREAT U.S. TREASURE HUNT SCORES \$10,000 IN NATIONWIDE CONTEST

Kristian House, New York Times crossword constructor, cracks code to win only two days after purchasing clue book.

UNITED STATES, February 8, 2021 / EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Great U.S. Treasure Hunt](#), an e-book containing clues leading to four items in four locations, each item worth \$10,000 to the finder, has delivered its third winner just over twelve weeks from the contest's launch.

Kristian House, a crossword constructor with puzzles published in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Los Angeles Times, among others, purchased [the e-book](#) after hearing of the nationwide contest on a podcast, then decoded the message in Chapter One just two days later.

The hidden message led Mr. House to book a flight from his home in Oneonta, New York, to Boise, Idaho, where he found a small tin badge featuring the Greek god Hermes secretly duct taped underneath a playscape slide at Lions Park in Nampa, a Boise suburb. That discovery earned Mr. House a cool \$10,000.

“

you just won \$10,000”

Hermes, Messenger of the Gods

The tin badge was taped underneath the slide last July, and went undiscovered by thousands of children and their parents in the months since.

Mr. House, a former calculus teacher and current mathematics content writer, is a fan of another so-called

“armchair treasure hunt,” *The Secret*, a 1982 book which gives cryptic clues to twelve items



Kristian House, with Hermes badge worth \$10,000

buried around the U.S., with only three of the twelve items ever discovered.

While listening to a podcast dedicated to The Secret, Mr. House heard David Steele, one of the creators of the Great U.S. Treasure Hunt, interviewed about the contest. Mr. Steele stated that three items remained to be found, and each could be discovered by deciphering a hidden message in one of the e-book's chapters.

Mr. House purchased the e-book that night, thinking that he had a chance at one of the three remaining \$10,000 prizes, but a second item had been found since the recording of the podcast. So Mr. House got to work.

Using his skills as a puzzle constructor and some investigation on the internet, led him to notice unusual word patterns in Chapter One. After some trial and error over the course of just two days, Mr. House discovered that by using the first letter of words that appeared twice in one sentence, the exact location and identification of the item became clear. "Trislide, Nampa Lions, Hermes Badge."

A Google search revealed only one "Nampa Lions" in the country: Lions Park in Nampa, Idaho. The "trislide" was part of a playscape, and the Hermes Badge was the item for which he was looking.

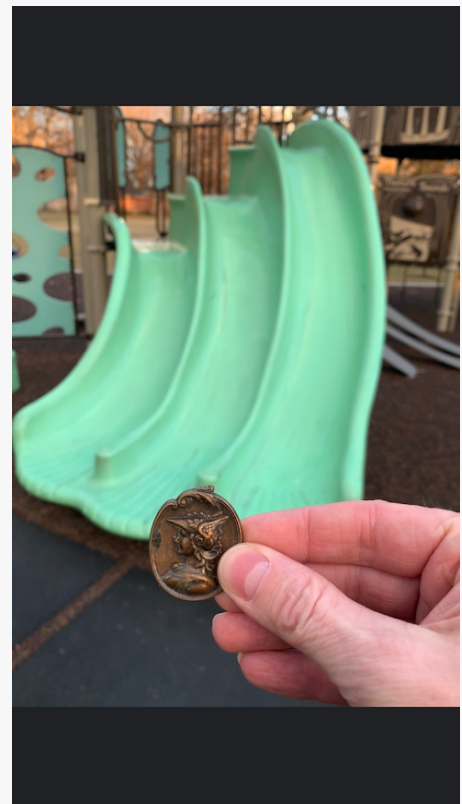
According to the rules of The Great U.S. Treasure Hunt, all items are hidden, not buried, in public, easily reachable in areas with no danger, no entry fees, and free parking nearby.

So Mr. House was Boise-bound, and alone, much to the dismay of his two sons, who were looking forward to sharing the adventure with their father.

"Times being what they are," Mr. House reported, "I was lucky to get on a plane myself. My wife is a pediatrician, so I was double-masked!"



Lions Park playscape entrance, Nampa, ID



Hermes badge had been taped under slide since last July

Arriving in Nampa, he expected to find snow on the ground as back home in New York, but found mild temperatures, no snow, and dozens of families filling Lions Park. Searching for Hermes would have to wait, he decided.

"I didn't want to seem like some creepy guy hanging around a playground," the puzzle constructor and mathematician said. "So I went to grab a bite to eat, then came back a couple hours later."

He ran his hand under the lip of the middle slide, and felt the duct tape immediately. Peeling it off, he found the winged Hermes, messenger of the gods. And that message was "you just won \$10,000."

Mr. House and Mr. Steele had been trading texts during the journey from New York to Idaho. Finally, the two talked on the phone once the item was secure in the winner's hands, with the hunt organizer congratulating him and making it official:

Kristian House had become the third \$10,000 winner in The Great U.S. Treasure Hunt.

He returned home to a hero's welcome. But his boys still wanted to make the trip with him. "There's still nine items to find for The Secret," Mr. House said. "Maybe we'll find one of those as a family."

Mr. House follows Anthony Kneisser, a truck driver and driving instructor from Philadelphia, PA, and his sister Margo, who just two weeks earlier, found a pair of tiny wings tucked into a crevasse in a wooden bench in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to become the second winners.

The first winning team notched their victory just before Christmas in North Las Vegas, with Beth Hovanec, an artist from Pittsburgh, PA, decoding a message that sent her friend Nancy Zitko to Eldorado Park to find a Silver Z under a picnic bench.

A mathematician, a truck driver, and an artist. Three winners with three very different backgrounds.

One item remains to be found in the nationwide hunt. "The Great U.S. Treasure Hunt" e-book is available exclusively [at Amazon](#).

According to hunt organizers, the final item is hidden somewhere east of the Mississippi River and south of the 40th parallel.

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“The Great U.S. Treasure Hunt” e-book link: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08KHQFFV6>

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