

Arizona Treasure Hunt, Est. 1951

HISTORY

The Phoenix section of the IEEE initiated the Hunt in 1951. The Hunt had been an annual event in the Chicago area, and with the development of the electronics industry in the Valley, many transplanted Chicagoans (mostly Motorola engineers) persuaded the Phoenix section directors to sponsor a Valley version. It has run annually since then (with 2020 being the only exception due to the COVID pandemic).

In the early years, The Hunt had a definite engineering flavor, but it has evolved to be more reflective of the social nature of the event. While there are still some occasional clues requiring engineering knowledge and proficiency, the material relates more to current events and general knowledge. This evolution has made it more enjoyable for participants. In the past, each of the 78 six-person teams historically consisted of three couples or a small group of co-workers, but present-day Hunts have consisted of more diverse teams, and the number of teams has increased. Currently, we cap the number of teams at 90 to prevent overcrowding at clue sites.

OVERVIEW

The basic idea of the Hunt is quite simple: solve as many clues (or puzzles) as possible in the given time (approximately 5 hours).

There are a total of 26 clues, labeled A through Z. The committee has placed the clues in an open desert area that is roughly bounded by Bell Road to the south, the Cave Creek/Carefree/New River area to the north, 35th Avenue to the west and 132nd Street to the east. This is roughly 300 square miles.

Hunt procedure:

1. CHECKOUT -- all Hunt teams meet at the designated checkout location.
2. THE HUNT -- 5 hours of delightful mania.
3. CHECK-IN -- you "drop off" your Score Sheet and unopened emergency envelopes and the committee records your finish time.
4. DINNER -- you enjoy dinner while the committee tallies the scores.
5. WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED! Shoot for second place ... you'll find out why!
6. IF YOU WIN, YOU GET THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING ON THE COMMITTEE -- you and your teammates will plan and conduct the Hunt with two other teams for the next three years. Any remote committee members must be able to attend three planning events IN-PERSON preceding the Hunt Night itself.

Now this might seem like a lot of work but you will have lots of help if you do win. Just consider the perks: There are 18 committee members so the workload is shared.

You get to learn new job skills that look great on any resume.

You'll have lots of guidance with a process that has been honed for more than 60 years.

You get to INFLICT the confusion on your fellow Hunters, instead of being the recipient.

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

A FEW TRADITIONS

In keeping with the Engineering traditions and hunt lore, be sure to have knowledge of and/or have access to the following:

- Hexadecimal to Decimal conversion
- Binary to Decimal conversion
- ASCII table
- Periodic table
- Blacklight
- Morse Code
- Braille
- Logic Gates
- Semaphore Flags
- Current Events (past year)
- Deceased Celebrities (past year)
- Popular Movies (past year)

PREPARATION FOR THIS YEAR'S HUNT

The website will be updated with the release and registration forms. The release form can be filled out in advance. Also, a list of registered teams and their assigned car numbers will be posted on the website. Please review this list prior to Hunt night so that you know your car number. Watch for email notices regarding the opening of registration and other important information.

ROOKIE TEAMS

Rookie team members (with no previous Hunt experience) are strongly encouraged to contact any available Committee member (those wise-looking people with this year's t-shirts and red Wizard hats) prior to checkout. Every effort will be made to answer questions concerning Hunt night procedures so that your first Hunt will be an enjoyable one. Want to learn more before Hunt night? Wizards can help with that, too. Email the Hunt Committee to learn about dates and times for virtual Rookie Info Sessions prior to Hunt Night.

CHECKOUT

You should plan to be at the assigned checkout location well before the first checkout time of 6:15pm. Committee members will begin accepting release forms at 5:00pm. To check in, Hunt teams must turn in their completed waiver forms, with signatures of ALL participating team members.

The waiver form will be posted on the website. This will give teams the ability to complete the form and get all team member signatures before the Hunt. Each team is encouraged to have the team member expected to arrive at Checkout first, bring the completed and signed form (or the team could sign multiple copies if they aren't sure who is going to arrive first). When the team member arrives at Checkout, the waiver form will be reviewed for accuracy by a Committee member. Once the Committee member determines that the form is correct, the team will receive a numbered

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

“Checkout Ticket”. The number on this card is the team’s car number. **The Checkout Card will not be handed out unless the Release of Liability form is completely filled out and signed by all Hunters on the team.**

The Checkout Ticket will include your team/car number and also the official checkout time for that team. The first team (Car 1) will check out at precisely 6:15:00 p.m. Car 2 will check out at 6:15:12, etc., and each team will leave 12 seconds after the previous team. **Even if the Team fails to show up at its scheduled checkout time, the Team will still be checked out at that time and its Brown Bag set aside until the Team shows up. THIS WILL BE A DETRIMENT TO THE TEAM, SO TEAMS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BE ON TIME.**

This policy will also be stated on the numbered card so that all teams understand that their official start time will be the time on the card, even if the team is not physically present to take possession of the Brown Bag.

YOUR STARTING TIME COMMENCES ACCORDING TO THE TIME INDICATED ON YOUR CHECKOUT CARD.

A sample of the check-out ticket is shown below.

Below is your Car Number and checkout time for the Hunt. You must be in line at least 10 minutes before your checkout time and in numerical car number order. Your Hunt Clock starts at the time listed below even if you have not yet checked out.

**Checkout time 6:15:00PM
Car #1**

Above is your Car Number and checkout time for the Hunt. Your Hunt Clock starts at the time listed above even if you have not yet checked out. You must be in line at least 10 minutes before your checkout time and in numerical car number order.

Checkout will be in the parking lot to the southwest of the giant Westworld tent. The entrance will be off of E. Polo Field Way immediately south of the tent. Enter from E. Polo Field Way (entrance coordinates: 33.630645, -111.883178)

Prior to actual checkout, there is a good chance (nearly 100%) that you will have the opportunity to purchase a small item (or two or three) from a Committee member. It is suggested that you have several dollars handy and take advantage of this opportunity, as debit/credit cards will not be accepted. In no event will this amount be greater than \$10. Your team may encounter a clue that might involve using one or more of these items.

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

There is also a small chance that a team will have the opportunity to purchase an item at a clue site during the Hunt. The cost at the clue site will always be less than \$5, so make sure that at least one team member has cash during the Hunt.

THE BROWN BAG

Each team will be presented with a large manila envelope (called "The Brown Bag") at their checkout time, and not one second sooner. On the outside of the bag is your car number. Attached to the outside of the Brown Bag is an envelope with the directions that will lead you to your first clue. There are 26 clues, one for each letter of the alphabet in sequence. Your car's starting clue may be any letter, not necessarily "A".

The Brown Bag envelope contains the following:

1. THREE NEARLY IDENTICAL COPIES OF THE HUNT MAP
2. EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS
3. A SCORE SHEET
4. CHECK-IN INSTRUCTIONS
5. A COPY OF THE HWOW
6. MISCELLANEOUS "STUFF"

THE MAP

The map is drawn closely to scale -- down to 1/50th of an inch accuracy on a 2-inches per mile scale. At this scale, each tick on a 1/50th scale engineering scale equates to approximately 50 feet of distance. Use this as an approximation when measuring distances, especially distances that you will travel into the desert by foot from your parking location.

The map is edited each year to accommodate the changing face of the desert. The Committee goes to great pains to place important landmarks and major streets in their proper locations -- to keep you from getting lost! There are, however, some "slight adjustments" (where needed) to enhance a clue site. These adjustments do not detract from the quality of the map.

There are generally around 200 clue sites located on the map. The map identifies each clue site (including the bogus ones) by a circle with an arrow protruding from it. The clue site is at the tip of the arrow, but only 26 arrows point to a clue. The circles typically contain numbers, letters, words, symbols or shapes, and an arrow extending from each circle to a point on the map.

While most of the streets and roads (and other details) on the map are labeled with their actual names (e.g., Bell Road, 56th Street, Cave Creek Dam, etc.), there are a few "assigned" names - with no basis in reality but a strong potential of being part of a clue solution.

IMPORTANT - ROAD CONDITIONS MAY HAVE BEEN ALTERED BY CONSTRUCTION OR THE WEATHER SINCE THE MAP WAS DRAWN.

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

THEREFORE, YOU ARE URGED TO BE EXTRA CAUTIOUS IN DRIVING THE NIGHT OF THE HUNT. WE WANT TO EMPHASIZE EACH DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SAFETY OF THE TEAM. THE LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED OF THE DATE AND GENERAL AREA THAT THE HUNT WILL COVER. PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY, ABIDE BY ALL SPEED LIMITS, AND KEEP IT A SAFE HUNT.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS

There is a stack of sealed envelopes in the Brown Bag. Should your team get stuck on a particular clue, these are the emergency solutions that, when opened, will give you the clue solution and exact clue site location. The text of each clue will identify one specific emergency envelope to open if you are unable to solve the clue. Your team is assessed a 20-minute penalty for opening an emergency envelope. ALL UNOPENED envelopes must be turned in at the end of the Hunt. Each missing emergency envelope will be counted as an opened emergency envelope and will result in a 20 minute penalty.

THE SCORE SHEET

Also included in the Brown Bag will be your Score Sheet. It will have a rectangular area for each letter of the alphabet. At each clue site there will be a device that will dispense a self-adhesive, peel-off clue label. To receive proper credit for finding a clue, you must put the label on the **correct space** on the Score Sheet. Stick carefully: improper sticker placement makes you look like a jackass and you may be penalized accordingly.

HWOW

There will be an additional copy of the HWOW in the Brown Bag.

CHECK-IN LOCATION

There will be a small map in the Brown Bag showing the location of the check-in site. Specific check-in instructions are listed in the Hunt rules.

MISCELLANEOUS "STUFF"

The Brown Bag is loaded with stuff! Previous Brown Bags have included such neat things as: a keypunch computer card, a strip of paper with letters all over it, a copy of National Weather Service reported temperatures, a library card, and a page of movie listings. Hunters are likely to find almost anything in the bag! These items are HINTS and/or will be required to help Hunters solve the clues! Well, at least SOME of them are. It is up to you to determine if one of these items will help you solve a clue. Some of these items are indispensable to the solution of certain clues. Other items are "noise" to keep you guessing. There may be additional information sheets in the Brown Bag that cover general emergencies, last minute Hunt instructions, and check-in location and procedures.

HINTS WISE AND OTHERWISE

And speaking of hints ... The "Hints Wise and Otherwise" sheet available on the website

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

prior to the Hunt may (or may not) contain helpful hints to aid in the solving process or to indicate additional items to take on the Hunt. Sometimes, the "HWOW" sheet contains the clue solution itself! The HWOW will be available on the Hunt website 30 days prior to the Hunt. In recent years, the HWOW has incorporated (potentially hidden) links to web pages. Please print out a copy or two for team use, but take advantage of the information provided in these links as well.

And a "word to the WISE": it may even be necessary to combine something from the HWOW sheet with something in the Brown Bag, along with the clue!

CLUES

Regardless of the clue type, at every clue site there will be a short pole with a 3-ring binder attached on top. Inside that binder will be identical sheets of paper. Each paper will tell you, at minimum, which clue you are visiting, which emergency envelope to open if you cannot solve this clue, and which emergency envelope to open if, even with the emergency instructions, you cannot find the next clue.

Attached to the binder on the clue post, you will find a dispenser with a roll of LETTERED peel-off clue credit labels. One of these labels from each site found/visited must be affixed to the score sheet in the designated space for that clue. Because the peel-off label is the only proof that you visited a clue site, great care should be taken not to lose or forget the label.

The clue at a site can be one of four types: paper, visual, working visual, or living visual. The type of clue is defined by the parameters below. In some instances, a visual clue may have multiple copies to avoid congestion. In this case, the clue site will be clearly labeled as a visual clue (and NOT a working visual) to avoid unwanted manipulation. Descriptions of the clue types are provided below.

PAPER CLUES

At a paper clue site, only a single 3-ring binder will be present, with copies of the paper clue within it. Each team should take no more than 3 copies of the clue. The solution of the clue will direct the team to the next clue site.

EXAMPLE: A direct solution: The clue is $5 + 3$ and the solution is 8. You will find a circle on the map with the number 8 in it. An "association" solution: The clue is Sylvester and the solution is ROCKY on the map, because there are two "roads" in close proximity labeled Stallone Drive and Rambo Way. The circle can contain any number, letter, or symbol, possibly totally irrelevant to the clue.

VISUAL CLUES

At the site of a visual clue, in addition to the binder, is some "object" or set of objects from which you are to derive a solution to get you to the next clue site. The object includes anything that is not specifically on the clue sheet or standardized materials provided to you in advance of the hunt or at check out. Visual clues do not require any physical manipulation of the image or object itself beyond shining a (regular) flashlight

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

to illuminate the clue. Please DO NOT TOUCH visual clues, but rather use your observation skills to solve the puzzle. In some instances, there may be multiple identical visual clues to prevent crowding. These clues will be clearly identified as “visual clues” and not working visual clues.

WORKING VISUAL CLUES

The site of a working visual clue is very similar to that of a visual clue, but with two differences: (1) There are two or more identical clues at the site so that more than one team may be working on a solution at the same time. (2) You will be required to interact with the clue at the site. As the name suggests, you will need to make the clue “work” by either measuring something, manipulating something, using a UV light, pressing play on a device, or somehow doing something that will allow you to arrive at a solution. Please note, however, that working visual clues are often fragile. Take care in not using brute force on the clue unless expressly stated by a sign near the clue or by one of the Wizards that might manage the clue site. Note that sometimes only a portion of a working visual will be fully duplicated.

LIVING VISUAL CLUES

A living visual clue is very similar to that of a working visual clue, but with one major difference: You will need to interact with a (presumably) living person, possibly in addition to the physical clue itself. The person may be a Wizard, a clerk at a restaurant, a policeman, a person dressed as a zombie, or any other person or combination of persons. There may be one or more than one person at the clue site. You may need to physically hand something off, ask a question, perform a task, etc. You need to determine what specific interaction is required—that is part of the clue! If you are getting vague answers or silence from the person, perhaps you need to figure out what to ask/discuss.

THE “SPECIAL” LOCATION

There is just one more type of location that has not yet been mentioned - the Jackass. The tradition behind the Jackass site is that every clue is solvable, and the correct solution will lead you to one, and only one, correct clue site. Occasionally, however, there is that certain clue that is, indeed, very, very tricky. Solving it incorrectly will lead you to a location that has **ONLY** a figure of a jackass. A member of the Committee may be there to snap a picture and preserve the moment for posterity. If nobody is located at the Jackass site, please consider taking your own picture and presenting it to a committee member during the evening. There is no shame (well, maybe a little) in visiting a Jackass site. We have ALL experienced it over the years.

Clues are located so that you will not need to climb fences, go through closed gates, park in dangerous spots, disobey posted signs, or enter private property or driveways. The Hunt Committee has attempted to avoid danger spots; however, there is much that cannot be foreseen, so PLEASE BE CAREFUL.

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

EXAMPLE OF HOW THE HUNT WORKS

CLUE LETTER	CLUE	LEADS TO CIRCLE	CLUE SITE FOUND	MAP REQUIREMENT
A	5 + 3	8	B	None
B	Sylvester	773	C	Stallone Drive & Rambo Way
C	Let's Twist Again	XX	D	Drawing of a tornado
D	Those with Physical <u>Attraction</u> live under a <u>Lucky Star</u>	15	E	None - the HWOW #15 "Madonna's on the <u>borderline</u> ; she knows <u>everybody</u> "

Your first clue can be any one of the 26 clue sites. An emergency envelope will be attached to the outside of the Brown Bag. This will lead you to your first clue. Open it quickly and read aloud the main intersection (to at least get you going in the right direction).

Using the example from above, let's say that your starting emergency envelope is for clue site C. The directions in the attached emergency envelope will lead you to the clue site at Circle 773. At clue site C, you grab a label from the dispenser and affix the label to your Score Sheet in the C position.

Solve clue C (which is "Let's Twist Again"), and follow the same procedure as above to get you to clue site D at Circle XX.

Now, let's suppose that at clue site D, where you find the clue about "physical attraction", you do not know that "Physical Attraction", "Lucky Star", "Borderline", and "Everybody" are all songs sung by Madonna. You might decide the clue really means that the clue site is the one on the map that has a big star in the circle. Well, if you did this, you would be looking and looking and would be finding cactus, palo verde trees, and washes, but no clue site. After a "reasonable" amount of time, you might consider opening the emergency envelope, since you could be looking in the wrong spot all night! The correct emergency envelope to open for this particular example is provided on the sheet you pulled from the binder for clue D. (In this particular example, the solution to the clue is the HWOW number 15.)

SCORING

While the Hunters are enjoying a late dinner and looking through the solution book (distributed upon arrival at Check-in), the Committee processes the Hunt results. The method for scoring the Hunt has evolved over the years in an effort to be as fair and evenhanded as possible to all teams. The scoring rules are intended to cover those situations that the Committee can foresee. However, if a situation arises that is not handled by the rules, the Committee will use its best judgment in an attempt to be fair to all. Any decision of the Committee on Hunt Night is final. The winning team is the one with the lowest time per clue solved, and the peel-off clue labels and unopened emergency envelopes are the evidence. Note that it is **NOT** the total number of clues found, but the **number of clues found divided by the sum of the elapsed time and**

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

penalty time. Adjustments are made for the distance from the checkout site to the first clue and for the distance from the last clue to the check-in site. See the Hunt Rules for a more detailed explanation of scoring.

RESULTS

The second and third place finishing cars are recognized for their accomplishments and are presented with appropriate prizes to acknowledge their performance. The top finishing team is presented with a coveted "Wizard" hat for each team member and a symbolic prize (often a treasure chest) for each team member. They also receive the "privilege" and responsibility of serving on the Hunt Committee for the next three Hunts.

The final results and detailed clue statistics will be released on the Arizona Treasure Hunt website after the awards are announced.

PRO Team Exemption

A PRO team consists of at least 3 Hunters who have: (1) either: (a) served on the Hunt Committee within the past 3 years, OR (b) served on the Hunt Committee for a total of 6 years, AND (2) decided to declare themselves, at registration, a PRO team.

PRO teams will not be considered as competing against the rest of the "amateur" Hunters. If a PRO team manages to achieve the lowest time per clue of any team, amateur or PRO, PRO patches will be given to the members of the team with previous Committee service. However, their finishing position in the Hunt will not be tracked. In other words, Lowest Time per Clue and First Place are not identical designations for a PRO team. A PRO team can NOT achieve first place, since by definition that would result in 3 years of Committee service.

Last year's Committee members participating in the Hunt after serving their three years in the Committee participate in the Hunt for free (in their first year of Committee liberation only).

"HELPFUL"? STRATEGIES

A team can prepare for the Hunt by meeting for a strategy session on some evening before the Hunt. During this meeting, you can decide on:

- the vehicle to be used
- who will drive it
- who will navigate (take detailed measurements from the map)
- who will collect the labels and place them on the Score Sheet
- who will hold on to the unopened emergency solutions that must be turned in
- who will "manage" the Brown Bag contents
- who will bring the scale accurate to 1/50th of an inch
- who will bring the extra flashlight batteries (everyone?)

It is advisable to have a "brainstorming session" on the Hints Wise and Otherwise and world events (news, sports, entertainment, etc...) that have occurred over the past year. Also, you can determine what helpful (or not helpful?) materials you'd like to bring along, such as a pocket knife, dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, first aid kit, bowling ball, black light,

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

and ten-foot pole. A "practice session" with a veteran Hunter using past Hunt materials can help to reduce rookie mistakes on Hunt night.

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

Old clothes are in order. Hunters generally wear jeans (beware of cacti). For newcomers to the Valley, desert evenings can be cold, so bring a warm sweater or sweatshirt. Most veteran hunters have found desert boots to be a wise precaution. Keep your eyes and ears open and remember: **NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER IS, THE HUNT GOES ON!**

You will need flashlights for each member of your car. A full tank of gas at the start may save you time during the Hunt, and you will want to make sure that your phones are fully charged. Other things that may come in handy: extra flashlight batteries, pocketknife, scissors, reference books, compass, accurate scale, and calipers. You might appreciate a thermos of water, coffee, or hot chocolate during the evening. The committee also recommends packing a first aid kit, including tweezers and pliers for removal of cactus spines.

A detailed map of the check-in area will be issued as part of the Hunt night Brown Bag. No one is permitted to bring in liquor of any kind.

Prizes in the Hunt have little monetary value; still, they are very dear to the heart of the Hunter. Remember, in your pursuit of them, be guided by your very finest sense of fair play. Also, by participating in the Hunt, you agree to serve on the Hunt Committee for three consecutive years if you come in first place.

DURING THE HUNT

Finally the moment has arrived! You rip the Brown Bag out of the Committee member's hand, make a mad dash for your vehicle (which has already started pulling out of the parking lot), take a flying leap through the window, **AND YOU'RE OFF!**

But **where** are you going?

Open the emergency envelope attached to the outside of your Brown Bag (**and don't forget to tell everyone the car number.**)

The next step is to examine the contents of the Brown Bag. It is a good idea to call out what is in the bag, so that everyone will have a chance to use this knowledge for clue association. Some Hunters bring a large box in order to see all the contents easily, some a folder with clear sleeves to file items for quick reference, and some use a pegboard to display the contents.

At any rate, be sure to "lug" the Brown Bag (or its substitute) to each clue site, "just in case" one of the items may be needed to solve a clue.

Also to be called out amid the confusion are **unusual map details** (which may be essential to solving a clue).

OK, you've gotten to your first clue site, and now you must solve a clue!

TIPS, TRICKS, AND OTHERWISE

Pre-agree on a **time limit** for solving a clue. If you feel that you are not close to a solution after that time, open the emergency (even though it will cost you an additional 20 minutes) and **get on with things!** Don't waste time if no one has an inkling of how to solve the clue!

At a clue site, the clue will be relatively easy to find - at the base of a saguaro cactus, under a palo verde tree, in a wash, etc. Look for other Hunt teams searching in the same area. If no other team is around and you just can't seem to find it, consider opening the emergency - you may have solved the clue incorrectly.

If you discover a clue site out of sequence, just go with it and solve the clue and grab the sticker. This out-of-sequence label will count only as a half credit, but all subsequent in-sequence clues receive full credit. You may wish to try to return to the original sequence by opening the previous emergency.

Be aware that, while everyone plays fair, there **IS** a certain amount of "gamesmanship."

Toward the end of the Hunt, **WATCH YOUR TIME!** Make sure you get to check-in at the Westworld tent (see below) by 11:30pm.

You do receive time credit for mileage for both your starting clue and the last clue you solved before checking in.

On the way in, be sure to bundle your **UNOPENED EMERGENCY ENVELOPES** inside your **SCORE SHEET** with the rubber band provided in the Brown Bag. Also, make sure that you have affixed all the clue labels to your Score Sheet.

GET YOUR ENVELOPES AND SCORE SHEET TO THE CHECK-IN TABLE AS SOON AS YOU ARRIVE AT THE GIANT TENT.

Please drive carefully. The Hunt does **not** reward driving "skill" - it rewards **THINKING** skills. **You can drive safely AND win!**