

WISCONSIN Game Warden

Fall 2017



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in this issue

- 3 State wardens win gold, silver & bronze in pistol contest
- 4 African Safari: 'Once-in-a-lifetime trip' turns into two
- 8 Let the battle begin
- 11 Two memorable events in my past
- 12 Harland Steinhorst: Sharing his love of warden history
- 18 All in the family
- 23 Backdating a fishing license can be hazardous to health

departments

- 7 Looking Back
- 10 Fruits of their Labor
- 14 Obituaries
- 16 WCWA-Sponsored Programs

on the cover

Wisconsin warden and WCWA member Dan Michels takes part in the ceremonial shooting of Basil Irwin's handgun to start the 51st annual pistol match competition. See story on Page 3.

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Honoring our wardens who served in the military

Editor's Note: As anticipated, the listing of wardens who served in the military was well received in our last issue. And, as we also anticipated, it was incomplete. Here is some more information that came in after our Spring 2017 issue.

World War I

Arthur C. (Doc) Chase - Oshkosh warden who was considered the best rifle shooter in the warden force and was used as a sharpshooter when one was needed.

World War II

Earle Gingles - U.S. Army Air Corps fighter pilot in the Pacific Theater who flew a P-38 Lockheed Lightning. Served as a warden pilot from 1971-80.

Roger Lichtenwalner (Not Harley, as stated in the Spring 2017 issue) - Served as a warden from 1950-75.

Korean Conflict

Edward L. Hill - U.S. Army. Served as a staff sergeant from Jan. 14, 1952 - Dec. 19, 1954, in the 101st Airborne Division.

Norman Wood - U.S. Army. Served as a warden from 1950-86.

Walter J. Zelinske - U.S. Army, 1950-52, Stateside. Also served in World War II

Cold War Era

Joe Davidowski - U.S. Army Airborne, 1958-61

Donald G. Manthei - U.S. Army, 1948-51, Germany

Vietnam War Era

Dennis Kirschbaum - U.S. Army, 1970-1973, Stateside

Larry Kriese - U.S. Army (Military Police), 1969-71, Germany

Charles Petrie - U.S. Army (Signal Corps), 1969-71, Germany

THREE FOR THREE

*State wardens score gold, silver & bronze at
51st annual Basil Irwin Pistol Match*



From left, the 2017 Wisconsin team included David Allen, Dan Michels, Ryan Volenberg, Wade Romberg, Bob Jumbeck and Russ Fell. Far right, Romberg took gold in the individual overall match.

By Joanne M. Haas

A Wisconsin conservation warden ended a 44-year gold drought, while other wardens brought home silver and bronze at the 51st annual Basil Irwin Memorial Pistol Match, which also featured training from the FBI.

Warden Ryan Volenberg said he is proud of the focused performance by the six-member Wisconsin team at the multi-agency match held Aug. 17-18 in Durand, Wisconsin.

“Not only is this an incredible and fun event for shooting skills, but it also is a time for the wardens to share and to learn from officers from the other states,” Volenberg said. “This is why I have returned for six years. I have a blast, and I learn so much from the other states’ officers who I may not have an opportunity to meet (otherwise).”

This year’s annual shoot was hosted by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which sent its team to compete with warden teams from Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. There were also retired wardens competing for their states of Iowa and Minnesota.

The competition includes three parts that total 120 rounds. One is a 30-round bull’s eye target. Second is a 60-round course that involves moving and shooting from cover and involves reloads and shooting at targets from 3 yards to 50. The third part is a 30-round tactical course of steel knockdown courses and shooting from movement.

Wisconsin Warden Wade Romberg took gold in the individual overall match. “The last time a Wisconsin warden won first place in this individual category was 44 years ago when Jim Palmer scored the highest in 1973,” Volenberg said.

But Romberg was not done. He also took bronze in both the Practical Pistol Course and the tactical course.

Wisconsin Wardens David Allen, Bob Jumbeck, Russ Fell, Dan Michels, Romberg and Volenberg together took silver overall. First place went to the Minnesota wardens, bronze to Iowa wardens and the federal agency took fourth.

Volenberg says besides the highly competitive and satisfying shoot competition, the annual event has grown to include training. This year’s offering was the Sovereign Citizen Awareness training from the FBI.

“I would encourage all the wardens – on duty and retired – to consider participating in this annual event. It is a worthwhile event on all sides – educational, enforcement and fun,” Volenberg said.

Wisconsin wardens are moving up. Last year, the team took bronze. This year, silver. Watch out, Minnesota and Iowa, next year could be a golden Wisconsin year!

JOANNE M. HAAS is public information officer of the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement.



African Safari

Once-in-a-lifetime trip turns into two

By Mike Spors

I had always hoped to hunt in Africa. From early on, I had read the adventures of Theodore Roosevelt, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Ruark, Peter Hathaway Capstick and others. I actually booked my first hunting trip in 2007 and planned to go in 2009. Then the economy went south in 2008. I got cold feet watching retirement accounts taking a swan dive so I canceled the trip.

But in 2014 my friend, John, mentioned he was going back to Africa to hunt plains game with a bow. He knew I had a desire to go and asked me to accompany him. He had hunted various countries in southern Africa several times, often going alone. He said he preferred having a traveling companion, and assured me he would help me through the process.

We booked a hunting and photo safari with Motsomi Safaris, owned and operated by Pieter and Ria Potgeiter and family. They have two lodges in the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa. Limpopo is the most northeastern province of RSA, and is bordered on the west by Botswana, the north by Zimbabwe and the east by Mozambique. We planned to hunt seven days utilizing both lodges, followed by two days of a photo safari in Kruger National Park.

Gracy Travel in Texas handled travel arrangements and took care of flight schedules, letters of invitation, firearms permitting, airport greeting and firearm retrieval at the airport.

John and I met up in Atlanta on Sept. 1, 2015, for the 15-hour flight to Johannesburg. We arrived at 4:20 p.m. the following day, also losing several hours to the difference in time zones. After we cleared customs and retrieved firearms and bows with no problems, a Motsomi driver met us and took us to the President's Lodge. After supper and some intermittent sleep, we were picked up about 8 a.m. and driven to Sun City, about two hours north of Joburg. In Sun City, we were met by Dirk, one of Motsomi's professional hunters. Dirk would be my guide for the week, and John would be hunting

with Pieter.

Another 1.5-hour drive to the west brought us to the main lodge, Nyala, near the Botswana border and the Madikwe Nature Preserve. After meeting Pieter and Ria and settling into our quarters, we were served a lunch of kudu lasagna.

I had signed up for six animals and Pieter advised I would be hunting gemsbok and warthog out of the Nyala Lodge, and then would head about 5 hours northeast to Sable Lodge near the Zimbabwe border. There I would hunt kudu, impala, blesbok and blue wildebeest.

After lunch, I started out on my first African safari. A driver took Dirk and I out into the bush in a Toyota pickup, and we rode in seats in the bed of the truck. We were dropped off and began still-hunting an area where we expected to find gemsbok. We were not out of the truck 10 minutes when we walked up to two adult giraffes eating in the treetops.

After considerable walking, we came upon a herd of seven or eight gemsbok. Most safari hunts for plains game utilizes either still-hunting or spot-and-stalk. Hunting from a blind over a waterhole is also effective, but is used primarily for bowhunting. The gemsbok herd had a couple good bulls (only mature male animals are shot on safari) and Dirk wanted to set up for a shot. I was uncomfortable with the 350-400-yard distance, especially with several animals milling around, so we changed to a stalking tactic to try to close the distance. We spooked the herd several times and had to keep up a brisk pace for about an hour, keeping parallel while merging closer. We managed to luck into a lone bull that had separated from the herd and presented a reasonable broadside shot. Dirk set up the shooting sticks, and being somewhat winded and very excited, I managed to jerk the trigger and miss. Not a very auspicious start to my African hunting trip!

After a waterbuck steak supper, I was up at 5 a.m. the next day and hunting by 6. Nyala Lodge is 8,000 acres, so we hunted in a

totally new area. Dirk tried spotting an area from a tower, but when he saw only giraffes, we decided to start walking. Our driver picked us up after about a 90-minute hike. We spotted a lone bull gemsbok at about 500 yards, but there was no way to successfully stalk it. A while later, the driver spotted a second bull that was feeding away from us and Dirk felt it was worth a try. We were dropped off beyond the bull and began working our way back.

We were able to stay undetected in some brush as the bull continued to feed facing away from us. As we closed the range to a bit over 200 yards, Dirk set up the sticks and gave a couple loud whistles. The gemsbok quartered slightly, and I sent a 165-grain Hornady Superformance .300 Winchester Mag. downrange.

I had been told to shoot plains animals directly in the shoulder to ensure they drop immediately. But I was pre-programmed by too many years of shooting whitetails behind the shoulder, and my shot was a tad back. Dirk said I missed again, but I told him I didn't think so. The bull walked a few steps and stopped again. My second shot dropped him. When we reached him, the two bullet holes were about 3 inches apart.

Dirk radioed the lodge and the skimmers came out with a four-wheeled man-powered cart and got the animal back to the truck. I had my first trophy, a 39-inch gemsbok.

We were back to the lodge about 10 a.m. for a brunch of impala steak. We then headed out to Rondo Ranch, Motsomi's warthog concession. We spent most of the afternoon on foot and saw many sows and little ones. We had a couple close calls with large boars, but warthogs are very wary animals and can be gone in an instant. I did get to see a number of different species at Rondo, including waterbuck, tsessebe, duiker, steenbok, jackal and African wildcat, the last which is very rare to see, especially in the daylight.

A non-typical rainstorm came in on Friday evening, so we decided to use Saturday morning for the five-hour trip to Sable Lodge. After a supper of wildebeest stew and nyala steak, we hit the rack early and were up at 4 a.m. Saturday.

After settling in and eating a lunch of wildebeest sausage at Sable, a small outpost lodge accommodating only up to four hunters, I killed a very nice 50-inch kudu after a short stalk. After my kudu was brought back to the skinning shed, Dirk and I continued to hunt all afternoon. About 5 p.m., we spotted a decent lone impala ram that I was able to take nearly head-on.

Sunday was wildebeest day and Dirk and I were hunting by 7 a.m. We stalked a pair of bulls, but they spooked before we got into position for a shot. We stayed on fresh tracks and Dirk eventually heard and spotted a bull before I did, and I again had a near head-on shot at the old past-prime, non-breeding bachelor. Now I had only blesbok and the elusive warthog to go.

Later Sunday, we went to Pieter's brother's 1,500-acre ranch near the 5,000-acre Sable Lodge Ranch. His brother's ranch specializes in blesbok. Pieter said he couldn't keep many blesbok on Sable as they are fairly easy prey for the occasional leopard. We still-hunted and then stalked a decent ram that I killed about 9 a.m. Next, we scouted a waterhole that looked like it was getting some warthog activity; we built a makeshift brush blind there and went back to Sable for lunch.

Returning to the waterhole after lunch, we set up two lawn chairs

in the blind and Dirk set up the shooting sticks for a standing shot, even though we were seated. About 2 p.m. a small male and a very large, ivory-tusked boar showed up. As I stood to get to the sticks, they spooked and were gone. I figured that was the end of that and sat back down. Dirk said they winded us. I never dreamed I'd see them again, but a mere 10 minutes later they were back, and the same sad scenario repeated itself.

We rebuilt the blind in a different location, this time with the sticks positioned for a seated shot, and I hunted that waterhole for two more days, never to see another boar. Just bad luck I never got my warthog. However, I was able to see a few new animals from the blind, including slender mongoose, banded mongoose, cape buffalo, sable eland, nyala and monitor lizard.

On Thursday we left for Kruger National Park. Dirk was our driver and guide. We spent a great two days and nights in Kruger and saw an incredible amount of African wildlife. The park is one of the largest in all of Africa at 4.5 million acres. It also abuts Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe and Limpopo National Park in Mozambique. We explored the northern half of Kruger in our two days. Our only mild disappointment was that we never saw any of the big cats that inhabit primarily the southern half of Kruger.

We got back to Joburg on Saturday after lunch, and had an uneventful return journey home. I opted for no full head mounts, but rather had horns only mounted on plaques by an African taxidermist. This was very reasonable, and my taxidermy bill for five horn mounts was less than my combined shipping and import fees. The horns arrived in November 2016 — yes, taxidermists are very busy — and now hang on my basement rec room wall.

Many people consider an African hunt to be unaffordable, but compared to what guided hunts can cost for a single animal such as elk or sheep in the western U.S., it's quite reasonable. My six-animal package with up to 10 days of one-on-one guided hunting (I only used seven) and all meals and lodging was \$7,500. Pieter knocked off \$300 when I didn't get a warthog. The Kruger add-on was an incredibly low \$230 each for John and I. That also included guide, transportation, food and lodging. Pieter gave us this outstanding deal because John was a repeat customer. Normally the Kruger tour would run around \$1,500.

Airfare is \$1,500 to \$2,000 depending on time and price fluctuations. There are tips for your professional hunter (generally \$50 to \$100 per day,) drivers, trackers, skimmers, cooks, and housekeeping and laundry staff. The food is outstanding, almost all wild game, and you have clean clothes every day.

As I mentioned, there will be taxidermy, shipping and export and import fees if you want to bring home more than photographs. I kept the price down by mounting horns only. If you prefer head/shoulder mounts, they can be done in Africa, or your trophies can be skinned, dipped and packed and sent back to a U.S. taxidermist of your choosing.

Folks told me this was the trip of a lifetime, and in many ways, it was. But lifetimes are a lot longer than they used to be. By the time you read this, I will be back from my second hunting safari in South Africa. This time I am going with my son-in-law to Sandstone Safaris in northern Limpopo Province, not too far from Sable Lodge. After all, I still need that big old warthog.



Bud Knudtson: A friend and mentor

By Glyn A. “Bud” Roberts

If ever asked to name someone who has had a profound influence on our lives, most of us would require additional time to think it over. Answers would likely include parents, friends, relatives, teachers and clergy.

Ranking names in order of importance would be a daunting, if not impossible task, to complete. However, I would not hesitate to include Arthur “Bud” Knudtson’s name among those sharing the top positions on my list.

Early in my life, I had the good fortune to meet and get to know him. It all began in the spring of 1947 when Bud stopped at my parents’ resort to introduce himself as the area’s conservation warden.

We had moved from Kenosha, Wisconsin, to become permanent residents of Arbor Vitae. Quite often following that first meeting, Bud would stop by for brief visits and to provide answers to questions we had as newcomers.

One early summer day, Bud drove into the resort in his maroon, two-door sedan. His passenger seat was fully occupied by a large dog sitting very stately at his side. Dad and I met him in front of the lodge and asked about the dog. He explained that Spot liked to chase deer and he had to pick him up because of the number of complaints filed against him. Bud further explained that although he disliked the task of putting Spot down, it was his only option.

Dad suggested we take Spot in and try to change his habits first. About that time, my mother joined the discussion about Spot’s fate. She completely agreed with the idea of fostering Spot.

I soon realized that Bud was looking for three softhearted dog lovers; he had chosen well. The Roberts family had suddenly become Spot’s new guardians and Blue Island Resort would be his new home. Dad and I began building a spacious doghouse and strung a long cable between two large white pines behind the lodge.

Spot was easy to like because of his well-mannered disposition. We took him for long walks on the gravel road and on wooded trails, but we always kept him on a long leash.

One day when his leash unsnapped, Spot took off in quest of two deer. His long legs carried him far and fast. Throughout the summer, Spot repeated his favorite hobby of chasing wildlife whenever he got loose, and he always returned thirsty and exhausted.

Bud continued to check on Spot’s progress of rehabilitation, but we couldn’t provide any positive results. So in the fall, Bud found a new home for the dog in Minong with a forest ranger who agreed to run him with his bear hounds.

One Sunday afternoon Bud stopped by the resort towing an Alumacraft boat and asked if I would like to go along with him to row the boat while he checked fishermen.

As a former city kid of 19, I eagerly accepted his invitation. This was the first of several outings with Bud.

During the following spring, Bud took me along to sit in the dark and listen for the clinking sounds of a fish spear striking rocks at one of several streams.

Two years passed and I was hired at the Wisconsin Conservation Department’s Fish Management Division in Woodruff. In 1951, I became a member of Calvary Lutheran Church at Minocqua where Bud was also a member. Four years later, Bud was an usher for Cleo’s and my wedding there.

As time went by, I began to realize that Bud was more than a friend; he had become my mentor.

A fellow department employee once confided in me that he admired Bud. He admitted that he had frequently trapped illegally or hunted out of season prior to Bud’s arrival to the area. But after getting to know Bud, he said there was no way he could violate the law, knowing that he would have to face such a fine and fair man in court.

Bud Knudtson was one of the finest men our family was privileged to know. Our friendship continued until his death on May 13, 2010. During his later years of life, I had the opportunity to share and discuss some stories I had written about the area and department. Those are now treasured memories for me because Bud would enhance each story with his perspective.

in brief

Articles, photos sought for Spring '18 issue

Wisconsin Game Warden Magazine is looking for articles. The deadline for the Spring issue is Jan. 15, 2018. We are particularly looking for stories that highlight the history of the warden force, as well as highlight the great work that wardens do in their communities to protect our natural resources and promote outdoor recreation.

Articles can be submitted to Managing Editor Barbara Schmitz at 1705 Graber St., Oshkosh, WI 54901, or emailed as a Word document to barbara.a.benish@gmail.com. (Please note the new email address and update your records.) Photographs are strongly

encouraged. Please remember to set your cameras to the highest resolution setting. Emailed photos should be at least 4" x 6" and 300 dpi, or 8" x 10" and at least 150 dpi.

Do you have a picture of you or your family with fish or game they've harvested in Wisconsin or elsewhere? These will be included in the "Fruits of their Labor" feature.

Photos can be mailed to Schmitz at the above address. They will be returned, if requested. If you have questions, you can also call Schmitz at (920) 235-0972.

Don't forget to notify us when you move

If you are moving or have moved, don't forget to tell Wisconsin Game Warden magazine.

The post office does not forward or return the magazines since they are mailed Third Class. That means the As-

sociation has no way of knowing which members are not receiving their copies.

For address changes or general mailing questions, contact Ryan Propson at wcmembership@gmail.com.

Renew your WCWA membership online

If you want to subscribe or renew your membership to the Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association, all you need to do is go to its website.

Go to www.wigamewarden.com, click on the "About" link and then "Become a member" link.

All memberships expire June 30. A one-year membership is \$25, a three-year membership is \$50, and a lifetime membership is \$250.

If you have questions, contact Ryan Propson at wcmembership@gmail.com.

Save the date for 2018 WCEF banquet

The annual Wisconsin Conservation & Education Foundation/Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association fundraising banquet will be Saturday, March 3, 2018, in at the VFW Post

7591, 301 Cottage Grove Road, Madison.

Tickets and Lucky Bucks can be ordered now at wiconservationfoundation.org.

WCEF scholarship applications due May 1

WCWA members or their immediate family members are eligible to apply for the \$1,000 WCWA/WCEF scholarship. Applications are due May 1.

The scholarship will be awarded upon a student's successful completion

of his or her first semester or subsequent semesters with at least 12 credits earned and a GPA of 2.8 or higher.

To download the application form, go to wiconservationfoundation.org.

LOOKING BACK

By Harland Steinhorst

125 years ago

- A deer hunter was killed by a set-gun in the town of Chelsea, Taylor County.
- Head Fish and Game Warden Fernandez of Oshkosh had a personal budget of \$1,752.66 funded by state taxpayers. He worked on developing a "contingent fund" to pay for the salaries of field wardens.

100 years ago

- Deer tags made of paper were required for the first time. The cost was 10 cents per tag.
- No person while hunting or in possession of firearms could possess any lights for the purpose of hunting deer.

75 years ago

- The first year of the deer hunter back tag was required by Commission order.
- Deer license sales were 120,605 with an estimated kill of 45,188 deer.
- Despite that only 31 counties were open for deer hunting, 12 people died and 17 more were wounded during the 1942 hunt.

50 years ago

- The Wisconsin Conservation Department was reorganized into the Department of Natural Resources.
- Warden Dale Erlandson was appointed as the first Hunter Safety Education Program supervisor.

25 years ago

- The authorized strength of the warden force was set at 181 wardens.
- The Hunter Safety Education program celebrated its 25th anniversary. With all counties open, there was one fatal deer hunting accident and three fatal small game accidents.

HARLAND STEINHORST was a retired conservation warden and WCWA historian who died in April 2017.



LET THE BATTLE BEGIN

A fishing tale about a shark that got away

by Jim Blankenheim

Last January, after spending a week with us on St. George Island, my son, Josh, and his girlfriend, Larissa, headed home to Duluth, Minnesota, where he is a fisheries biologist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. After fishing nearly all day, every day, we were ready for a break. So my wife, Susi, and I headed to Port St. Joe for a little shopping and lunch. One of the first places we stopped was Blue Water Outriggers, a sport shop specializing in saltwater fishing equipment.

At some point a rack of long-sleeved fishing shirts caught my eye. They were on sale and a second one was free. The shirts had the PENN logo sewn into the front and lettering on the left sleeve read, "LET THE BATTLE BEGIN." There was no hesitation; I bought a blue one for Josh and a yellow one for me.

What prompted the hasty decision to buy the shirts, from a guy who usually ponders a purchase for hours, days and even weeks, was something that had happened earlier in the week.

St. George Island is about 20 miles long and a half-mile wide off the Florida Panhandle in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Because the island lays in front of a couple

of busy towns with commercial and sport fishing operations, a channel was cut through a narrow part of the island to allow more direct access to the open ocean. The larger, eastern portion is developed and has a Florida state park, while the western section is devoid of development. The Cut, as it is called, has two large rock jetties, one on each side, extending out into the ocean.

Sheepshead are always present in the Cut because they feed on the barnacles that grow on the rocks. Bull redfish also frequent the Cut so when I fish there I usually put out one rod baited with a chunk of mullet while I use a 14-foot crappie rod to tackle the sheepshead. The outfits baited with the cut bait are heavy saltwater spinning rods with large PENN reels spooled with 50-pound braided Power Pro. Often we will drag my 17-foot Bell canoe a quarter mile from the beach access point to the Cut and paddle over to the uninhabited side to fish.

That is exactly what we had done this particular day. After catching some sheepshead and a couple bull redfish, Josh had a pick-up on the big rod he and Larissa were using. He grabbed the rod and tightened the drag, which had been set very loose to prevent the rod from being pulled into the

ocean. When the drag was screwed down, the 5/0 circle hook took hold and, well, the battle began.

Josh handed the rod to Larissa and she followed his instructions to pump, reel down and repeat. But this fish wasn't having any of it and she was unable to gain any line. So she handed the rod back to Josh. He had no better luck and he began to find it necessary to follow the fish out toward the end of the jetty. I advised against it as the rocks are a real jumble and slippery. But Josh and Larissa worked their way all the way to the end. After a while, I saw the battle was over and they were heading back. The 50-pound Power Pro had parted. We suspected large sharks or stingrays, and Josh was determined to catch one. I told Josh the only way he would catch one of those would be to jump into the canoe so we could follow it out into the open gulf.

So it came to pass that on Jan. 18, 2017, Josh, Larissa, Susi and I dragged the canoe down to the Cut and paddled across, making two trips. It was a nice day, sunny with a 3-5 mph wind. The current was running through the channel at a slow pace.

We got the two big rods baited and firmly set in a couple openings in the rocks that



Left: Josh battles with the fish and grows weary. Top: When he finally brought the fish up to the boat, he was shocked to discover it was actually a shark!

formed natural rod holders. We reminded each other to double check the drags to make sure line could easily be taken out. That done, we baited up the long limber crappie rods with fiddler crabs or ghost shrimp and began to fish for sheepshead. Then I noticed a fisherman come to the rocks on the side we just left. It was Bruce Nimz, a good friend and fishing partner. I jumped back into the canoe and ferried Bruce across so he could join us. It didn't take long and something was peeling line off Josh's big rod. He took the rod and screwed down the drag so the resistance set the big circle hook.

Once again the battle was on as it soon became apparent this was not a bull redfish. Josh started moving down the breakwater with the fish. About the time I was thinking it was time to get the canoe, the line parted. Whether the line touched a barnacle-encrusted rock or perhaps had been weakened by rubbing on the broken shells that pave the bottom of the Cut is anyone's guess. So Josh rigged up again. First a slider with a 5-ounce pyramid sinker, then a heavy snap swivel and finally 2-3 feet of 50-pound mono and the 5/0 circle hook baited with a golf ball sized chunk of cut bait.

About 20 minutes went by and the same rod indicated something had picked up the cut bait and was slowly taking out line. It was happening again! Josh watched as line continued to peel off the big reel. I motioned to Susi to follow me and we hurried

down to where we had beached the canoe. We donned our life jackets and paddled out to where Josh was standing. He climbed down the rocks and got into the canoe while Larissa steadied it. Susi and I pushed off. It then became a question of who had who.

The fish dragged us slowly out toward the end of the jetties, and then out into the open Gulf of Mexico. Susi and I were kept busy keeping the canoe positioned so that Josh could apply pressure from a somewhat comfortable position as he was kneeling in the center section of the canoe. While the ocean wasn't rough, we were suddenly dealing with a series of huge rolling swells. I reminded the crew not to shift position without warning and not to reach for anything if it falls overboard. In fact, I was thinking about calling it quits when the swells subsided. About that time, the fish decided to head west and we were dragged along. Then it angled in toward shore, but just as suddenly, it headed back out to sea. I saw a large dark shadow pass by the canoe and both Josh and Susi said they thought they could see a large dorsal fin. Shark!

The shark dragged us back out in front of the Cut and then decided to head back into the Cut. Soon we were right back where the battle began. The fish went first to one side, then to the other. The shark began to swim back out toward the open ocean. We were slowly dragged out toward big navigation buoys located about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from shore. I kept picturing scenes from "The Old Man and the Sea" as Josh had begun talking to the fish much like Santiago did during his epic battle with a large marlin. "OK shark, go ahead and take out line. I'm just going

to get it all back," Josh said. "Why don't you just give up so we can all go home?" I'm sure Susi and I concurred.

Josh continued to fight the shark out near the buoys. It seemed to be tiring and it finally was allowing itself to be raised to the surface. There it was, alongside the canoe. I looked at my landing net and smiled. Not enough net. Actually, not enough boat. Josh let out an euphoric, "I got him and it only took three hours!"

It was a Sandbar shark about $7\frac{1}{2}$ -feet long and weighing 150-180 pounds. Susi had picked up her smartphone and took a short video. It was time to cut the line, but the shark decided to take off on another run. By now, Josh was really beat so he handed the rod off to Susi. She tried to work the fish back to the boat, but after a short period gasped, "Oh my gosh!" and handed the rod back to Josh. So he slowly brought him back alongside a second time. But before he could swing the rod up to the front so Susi could reach the line, the shark took off again. After some more give and take, Josh was able to bring it alongside the canoe. This time Susi reached out with a small scissors and cut the braided lines. I looked at my watch. It was just about 4:30, so it had taken about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours from start to finish.

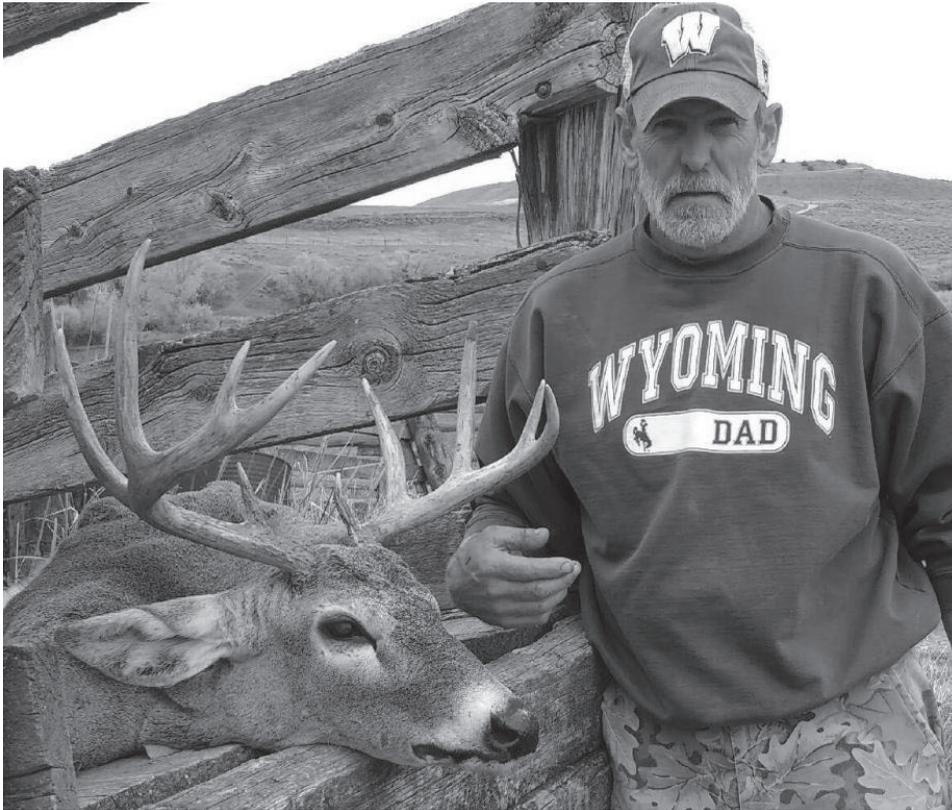
When we returned to shore, a visibly concerned Bruce said: "I had thoughts of calling the Coast Guard. You three are certifiably crazy!"

Maybe so. Bruce is rarely wrong. And yes, Josh was wearing the blue PENN fishing shirt that had "LET THE BATTLE BEGIN" embroidered on its left sleeve.

JIM BLANKENHEIM is a retired Wisconsin conservation warden living in Tomahawk.

fruits of their labor | photos of harvested fish, game

If you have pictures of you or someone in your family who has harvested game, we would love to feature them! Email photos to the editor at barbara.a.benish@gmail.com, or mail them to 1705 Graber St., Oshkosh, WI 54901. Please make sure to include a brief photo description.



Above left: Retired Wisconsin warden Bill Miller with a 10-point buck harvested in Wyoming in October 2016 and another (above right) 10-point kill harvested on his land in Adams County in November 2016.



Wisconsin Warden Jeff Lautenslager, right, and Darren Kuhn, a South Dakota conservation officer, shot these ducks over a picked cornfield during a waterfowl hunting trip to South Dakota in November 2016.

Warden Adam Hanna and Deputy Warden Aaron Bembnister took three people out on their first goose hunt, including two of Coach Hanna's hockey players and an Indiana State Trooper.



Two memorable events in my past

By Harland Steinhorst

It was the fall of 1963 and I was a special warden for Jim Chizek, a Columbia County warden stationed at Portage. I had graduated from UW-Stevens Point and had completed my fifth summer season as a park police officer at Devil's Lake State Park near Baraboo, my hometown. My goal was to add to my resume and compete for a conservation warden position in spring 1964.

Game cases had been few, so when a farmer in the Town of Lewiston reported after-dark shooting at a beaver-created pond to the rear of his property, I was ready to go. Since my days off fell during the week, Jim told me to take the next two days and be rested up for the coming weekend. However, I decided to work the complaint, hoping to get a good recommendation from Jim.

I drove to the complainant's farm and scouted the area around the 2-acre pond; it had a small island in the middle and there was enough vegetation to conceal a duck hunter. On the far side of the pond, I found a small wooden rowboat filled with empty shotgun shells. I selected an observation point and waited for the duck hunter.

At the exact minute that shooting closed for the day, a hunter rowed out to the island and began hunting. Wood ducks began arriving and he fired 12 times, never dropping a bird. I made my way around the pond to intercept him at the shoreline. I identified myself as a conservation warden and seized the shotgun he was holding.

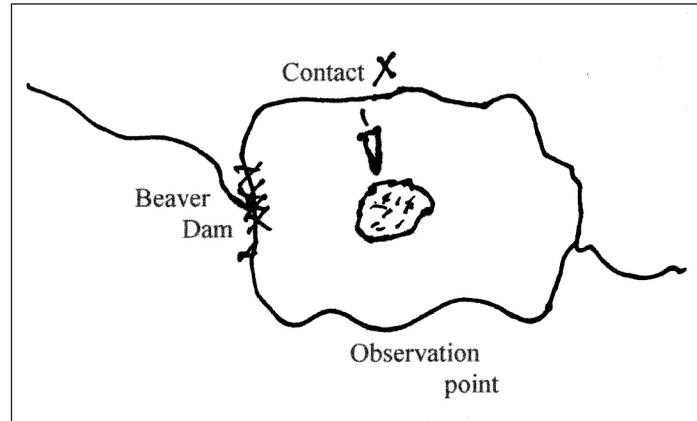
I then made a "rookie" mistake. As I went to open the action to check for live rounds – it was a Winchester lever-action shotgun – I announced I was seizing the firearm for evidence. I had both hands on the firearm when he grabbed the shotgun with his left and went for my nose with his right fist. I snapped my head back, throwing my glasses off before his fist connected with my nose. My defensive action was to slam the gun barrel twice against his forehead. I was not armed and I did not know whether the shotgun was still loaded or not. It turned out that he had fired all the 12-gauge shells he had brought along.

The double strike to the forehead took the fight out of him and I escorted him to the farmhouse and called Jim to come to the farm. Jim transported the suspect to the Columbia County Sheriff's Department where he was placed in jail for the night.

The "wheels of justice" turned very fast. Jim and I met with the district attorney the next morning, and he drafted two charges. At 11 a.m., the defendant, still wearing hip boots and duck hunting clothes, was arraigned and pleaded innocent. The judge trial started immediately.

I testified, and then the defendant testified. The judge took note of my split nose and the large bruise on the defendant's forehead. He found the defendant guilty, fined him \$100 plus court costs for hunting after hours, and sentenced him to 10 days in jail for the assault on a conservation warden.

I had many cases go through the court system, but this was my first case in county court; it was also the most unusual of my 25-year career.



The trial was over by noon and Jim and I stopped for lunch. There was a pre-deer season meeting at the Poynette Game Farm. Jim had missed the morning session and said I should attend the afternoon session with him. As we walked into the meeting room, a warden stated to the group, "President Kennedy is dead."

It was 1 p.m. on Nov. 22, 1963, and Kennedy had been assassinated shortly after noon as he rode in a motorcade in downtown Dallas.

Two memorable events, back-to-back, that will always remain in my memory bank.

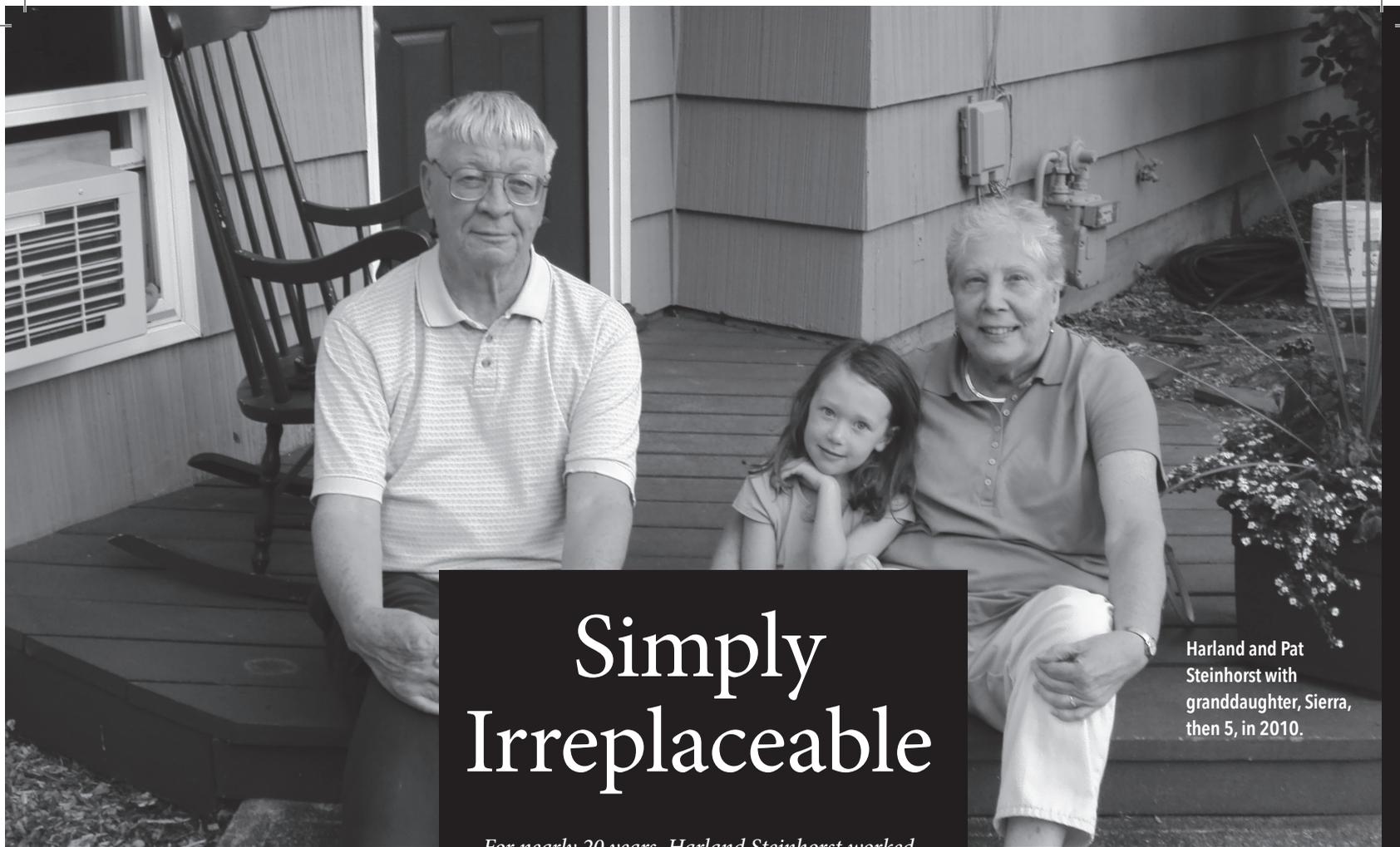
HARLAND STEINHORST was a retired Wisconsin conservation warden and warden historian who lived in LaValle, Wisconsin and Citrus Springs, Florida. He died in April 2017.

Steinhorst at a glance

Harland Steinhorst was born on Sept. 20, 1936, in Baraboo, to the late Raymond and Gladys (Sonnichsen) Steinhorst. He grew up in Baraboo and graduated from Baraboo High School in 1954 with four years of perfect attendance. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving most of his tour in Germany and France as a loadmaster. After his four-year enlistment, he went to UW-Stevens Point, majoring in conservation under the GI Bill.

In 1963, he was hired as a special warden for Jim Chizek at Portage for the hunting season. In February 1964, Steinhorst accepted the position of conservation warden for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, starting a month later on March 23. His first permanent field station was Green Bay, which was followed by Wild Rose, Fond du Lac and Sturgeon Bay. In 1976, he was promoted to recreational safety specialist at Madison where he worked until his retirement in 1990 with 25 years of service. Steinhorst enjoyed hunting, fishing, wildlife, and playing cards and tennis with friends. He was also a great carpenter, a skill that he learned from his father.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Pat, of Citrus Springs, Florida and Reedsburg, Wisconsin; his daughters, Heather (Tim) Burdick of Bellevue, Washington, and Stephanie Steinhorst of Greeneville, Tennessee; his brother, Gary (Carol) Steinhorst of Baraboo; his granddaughter, Sierra Burdick of Bellevue, Washington; and other relatives.



Harland and Pat Steinhorst with granddaughter, Sierra, then 5, in 2010.

Simply Irreplaceable

For nearly 20 years, Harland Steinhorst worked tirelessly to share his love of warden history and uncover the stories and lives of former wardens dating back to 1879. These stories and his dedication to the WCWA will be deeply missed.

By Barbara A. Schmitz

Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Winston Churchill uttered those now famous words, but Harland Steinhorst perhaps better understood the significance of that statement than most. He relished his role as Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association historian and supporter of the WCWA/WCEF and warden museum, and spent hour after hour searching newspaper archives to learn about past Wisconsin wardens and the warden service from decades ago.

Steinhorst, 80, died April 24, 2017, from a pulmonary embolism as he traveled from his Florida home to Wisconsin.

I've been editor of Wisconsin Game Warden magazine since 1998, and Harland has been a part of the coverage since then,

taking over the popular "Looking Back" feature that focuses on key department history in 1999 from Harold Hettrick. You'll find that same feature in this issue, as Harland submitted it well in advance. That's 19 years of contributing a column for each issue of the magazine. That's 19 years of never missing a deadline.

But in that same period, Steinhorst greatly expanded the historical coverage included in each magazine. Occasionally, he wrote stories about his time as a warden. But more often than not, he researched and wrote about former wardens from the past, or the history of things like warden uniforms or Wisconsin's seizure and confiscation laws. Just this April, I received three letters and a bunch of stories from Harland as he prepared to move back to Wisconsin

for the summer.

He was always looking for new features to make Wisconsin Game Warden magazine better. For example, in a letter dated April 11, 2017, he wrote: "I spent considerable time on the computer researching Wisconsin newspapers. Came up with another 100 full-time wardens, bringing the grand total up to 1,700 and many seasonal wardens I did not have."

Then earlier this year, he wrote: "Recently I went to the files to research what appointed wardens were doing before they were hired. I traced back 87 wardens, years 1870 to 1985, listing their latest two positions. Some were barbers or tavern keepers; others were a sawmill owner, cigar maker, prison guard, meat cutter, boat pilot, shipping agent, horse trainer, coal yard supervisor,

hunting club manager, justice of the peace, harness maker and the list goes on.”

He was looking ahead to the 150th anniversary of the warden force in 2029, and hoped to have a contest to select the top five Wisconsin wardens from 1879-1979, who would be profiled in the magazine while plaques honoring them would be displayed at the warden recruit academy, statewide warden workshops and elsewhere.

John Daniel, retired warden and deputy chief warden, as well as treasurer for the Wisconsin Conservation Education Foundation, said he first met Harland in 1974 since his family’s cabin was in Sturgeon Bay where Steinhorst was stationed at the time. They later both worked in the southern district, where Steinhorst was the law enforcement safety specialist.

“Harland was so dedicated and diligent about doing his job,” Daniel said. “He was enthusiastic about the safety programs, and particularly about the new ones coming in.”

Boating safety was new at the time, and Steinhorst made sure that wardens were trained properly in that area. “He was a hard worker and a straight shooter,” Daniel said. “He was always very honest. You could trust what Harland had to say.”

Besides his dedication to the warden service, Steinhorst had a real love for conservation history, Daniel said. “He became quite a resource for all the chief wardens. Who did they turn to when they would get a question if so-and-so was a warden? Harland.”

Steinhorst had developed files of all Wisconsin’s wardens dating back to 1879, including information on where they were stationed. Daniel now has those files at his home.

“Harland is irreplaceable as a resource on warden history,” Daniel said, noting that he and retired warden Bill Schwengel have started conversations on how Harland’s work can be continued, perhaps by a history committee. “I’d also really like to put all of his research on an online database,” Daniel said.

First chairman and longtime member of the WCWA’s publication committee, Schwengel agreed it will be difficult to replace Steinhorst. “Harland’s passing leaves



ABOVE: Harland Steinhorst in riot gear. Steinhorst was one of 13 wardens called to Madison for special duty to guard the State Capitol and State Office Building. The equipment and uniform were issued in 1971, but Steinhorst never was called for riot duty. In 1989, he turned in the issued equipment and took this photo. **BELOW:** Steinhorst in uniform about 1986.



a big hole in the retired warden ranks and the mission of documenting the 138-year evolution of the warden service,” he said. There is no one person who can replace Harland and his effort researching warden history, and a warden history committee may be the best option, Schwengel said.

Schwengel said he met Steinhorst in 1980 when he was stationed at Portage and Steinhorst was the district recreational safety specialist. “Harland liked to work in Columbia County and had many contacts there,” Schwengel said. “He often worked deer season and waterfowl openers in that area, as well as summer holiday weekends when not in other counties in the Southern District (now the South Central Region).

“Harland was like another field warden in the county during peak work times,” Schwengel said. “He had a quiet demeanor and was well respected by wardens, local law enforcement officers and safety program instructors, as well as the general public. Harland was also a skilled and meticulous investigator who readily assisted wardens with boat, snowmobile, ATV and hunting accidents.”

Chief Warden Todd Schaller also knew Steinhorst since Harland served as a safety specialist. “He was a people person who liked to train and mentor others,” he said. “He always had a smile and a positive attitude throughout his life.”

But it was Steinhorst’s interest, passion and commitment to the history of the warden force that really made him stand out from his counterparts, he said. “I don’t know of anyone else and there probably won’t be anyone else, who has that level of commitment and passion.”

Personally, Schaller said he relied on Steinhorst when looking to confirm department history. Thankfully, Steinhorst gave Schaller a reference book on warden history that he can continue to rely on.

“Whenever I get a death notification of a retired warden, I go to Harland’s book. It has information on when wardens were hired, where they worked and when they retired. It’s already been very helpful.”

Still, Schaller admits there will be a gap. “And it’s a gap I don’t know how to fix. He will be missed...”

obituaries

Maurice R. "Knute" Rands

Rands, 93, of Ladysmith, Wisconsin, died on Jan. 22, 2017, at Rusk County Memorial Hospital in Ladysmith due to complications suffered from a fall.

He was born at home in Rusk County on March 9, 1923. His grandparents, Eli and Ella Rands, of Ladysmith, adopted him as a toddler. As a child, he spent many evenings playing football under the streetlights. A neighbor once commented that "Morry" reminded him of the football great, Knute Rockney. From thereon, he went by the name "Knute."

Rands spent his entire life as a resident of the Ladysmith community. He attended Ladysmith High School, graduating in 1942.

After graduation, he entered the U.S. Army and spent nearly three years aiding the United States in Europe as they fought in World War II. He served in the Signal Corps, riding a motorcycle around England, France and Scotland to deliver messages between the various U.S. bases. He felt most honored for his years of service to the U.S. when he participated in the Never Forgotten Honor Flight in spring 2016.

Upon his return to the United States, he met a fellow Ladysmith native and WWII veteran, Esther Larsen. They married 10 months later on Nov. 2, 1946.

While still in high school, Rands was asked to assist the DNR in fire control during the springtime. Upon his return home from Europe, he continued his employment with the DNR in the fire control division, as well as the law enforcement division during the hunting seasons. He held special warden credentials for many of those years, working for wardens Chauncey Weitz, Alan Hanson, Leonard Urquardt and Ed Manthei.

Rands shared many stories of stakeouts to catch poachers, confrontations when issuing citations and many long days on the caterpillar fighting fires. He also assisted with the construction of many of the fire towers you still see dotting the horizon throughout the county.

After more than 35 years of service, he retired from the DNR in November 1980



at 55.

Rands was also an avid outdoorsman and hunter. He shared many stories of his childhood spending long days fishing, biking or walking miles to get to that special creek. As an adult, he particularly enjoyed using his favorite dogs as he hunted bear, coyotes and bobcat. He was part of the Rusk County Bear Hunters Club, guiding many hunters for over 30 years. After retiring from the DNR, he was finally able to hunt deer as he no longer was needed to assist with law enforcement during that season. Also, his love of fishing continued throughout his entire life, and he made his final cast in October 2016.

He also loved gardening, especially growing raspberries, blueberries, tomatoes and squash.

He is survived by his wife, Esther, and children Susan (Dave) Ley, Bill (Yvonne) Rands and Mary (Chris) Geiser; eight grandchildren, Beth, John, Ryan, Rachel, Sarah, Holly, Emma and Elizabeth; and three great grandchildren, Zoey, Franny and Nicholas. He was also survived by nieces, nephews, cousins and foster daughter Mary Ann Lathrop.

Rands was preceded in death by his son, Mark, his parents, and his only sister and her husband, Dorothy and Roman Kulikowski.

A memorial service was held on Jan. 27 at Hope Lutheran Church in Ladysmith with the Rev. Dwight Hanson officiating.

Donald F. Nimmer

Nimmer, 85, of Ripon, Wisconsin, died March 17, 2017, at Prairie Place in Ripon.

Nimmer was born in Rosendale on Oct. 26, 1931, the son of Leslie and Dorothy (Scribner) Nimmer.

He graduated from Laconia High School in Rosendale, and went on to work as a city, county and state patrol officer. Nimmer then became a conservation warden for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for more than 30 years until his retirement at Mellen.

On Oct. 28, 1952, he married Audrey Wegner in Rosendale. She preceded him in death in 2011.

Nimmer was an Eagle Scout, and served as a Boy Scout

leader for many years. He enjoyed the outdoors and loved to fish.

He is survived by his sons, Doug (Catherine) Nimmer of Arkansas, Wisconsin, Chuck Nimmer of



Concord, California, and Jody (Angela) Nimmer of Mellen, Wisconsin; daughter-in-law, Jill (Steve) Nimmer-Beres of Pine River, Wisconsin; grandchildren, Jesse, Bobby Gail, Katrina, Danielle, Nicholas, Nathan, Charles Jr., Calvin and Tracy; five great-grandchildren; a sister-in-law, Lois Hollander; and a nephew, Jeff Knapp, both of Virginia. Besides his wife and his parents, a son, Dennis Nimmer, also preceded him in death.

John P. Holmes

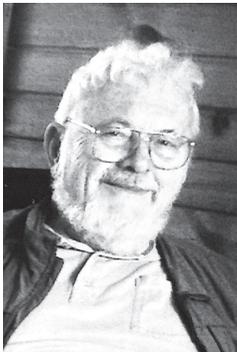
Holmes, 77, died on June 3, 2017, at Divine Savior Healthcare ICU in Portage.

Holmes was born on Nov. 26, 1939, in Adams, Wisconsin, the son of Frank and Helen (Bischoff) Holmes. He served his country in the U.S. Army following the Korean Conflict.

He married Sharon Lee Rice on March 11, 1962, and worked for the Grant County Traffic Police, the Boscobel Police Department, and from 1968-1988, for the



Wisconsin DNR as a conservation warden, Lake Michigan law enforcement coordinator in Milwaukee and area warden supervisor in Madison.



His passion for conservation and law enforcement was passed to his son, Lt. David Holmes, Natural Resource Academy director. Holmes was a supporter of the warden family,

which for him extended beyond Wisconsin as he had many conservation warden friends throughout the United States.

He is survived by his children, Christine Stanko of Nekoosa and David (Tammy) Holmes of Pardeeville; brother, David (Gloria) Holmes of Platteville; grandchildren, Brock Holmes, Cale Holmes, Kyle (Caitlyn) Stanko and Ryne Stanko; and special friend, Pat Halasz of Portage. His parents and his wife preceded him in death.

Memorial services were held June 8 at the Pflanz Mantey Mendrala Funeral Home in Portage.

Ken Kazmar



Kazmar, 94, of Niagara, Wisconsin, died May 4, 2017, at Maryhill Manor.

He was born in Milwaukee on Nov. 13, 1922, son of the late Walter and Gertrude (Lapin) Kazmarski. He married the former

Ann Brigham, who preceded him in death on Nov. 28, 2015.

Kazmar was an avid outdoorsman and

was actively involved with the sportsmen's clubs in Dunbar and Niagara. He worked as a conservation warden (Badge #17) for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for 28 years, retiring in 1978. The majority of his career was spent in northern Marinette County. He enjoyed giving lectures on furs and answering questions. After his retirement, he was active in the Conservation Congress for Marinette County.

He was also a big history buff and knew a tremendous amount of information in regards to Western and Native American history.

Kazmar is survived by his three children, Kathrine (Stephen) Potier, Glen (Debra) and Steven (Janet) Kazmar; four grandchildren, Jennifer, Dustin (Naomi), Keli (Toby) and Jessica; three great grandchildren, Zak, Ayla and Jax; and a brother, James (Sharon) Kazmar. Besides his wife, he was also preceded in death by his siblings, LaVern and Jerry.

Roubal Funeral Home of Wausaukee assisted the family with arrangements.

Milton G. Dieckman



Milton G. Dieckman, 85, of Hayward, Wisconsin, died on Aug. 10, 2017, at Hayward Health Services Nursing Home.

He was born on Nov. 30, 1931, and was hired as a Wisconsin

conservation warden in 1958. He retired in 1986 from the Hayward station that he had managed since 1960. While working, Dieckman had a close relationship with Jay Reed, outdoor writer for the Milwaukee Journal, which regularly benefitted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Bureau of Law Enforcement from a public relations aspect.

In 1976, Dieckman and three other employees of the Department of Natural Resources formed the Spooner Musky



Club, with the idea to force colleagues and others interested in natural resources issues to get together once a month outside of work to share experiences and forge closer relationships.

Dieckman was also featured in "The Old Masters of Musky Hunting" video.

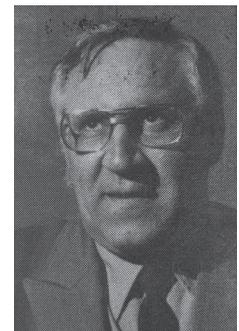
After retirement, he stayed active in the Hayward area and was well known as a local fishing guide and his traditional shore lunches of fish chowder, cowboy beans, coleslaw and fish fried in an iron skillet over a fire, which is pictured above.

The Rev. Gerard Willger of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Hayward officiated at Dieckman's funeral Mass on Aug. 17.

Did you know?

The Wisconsin Conservation Warden Honor Guard regularly attends funerals for retired wardens to remember and honor those who have worn the uniform before them.

Jeremy Peery said that the Honor Guard was present at all the services for these retired wardens, except for Don Nimmer.



wcwa-sponsored programs



LUCKY 13: Nearly 200 attend Heritage Youth Day

Thirteen years ago, then-Warden Supervisor Randy Falstad was selected to the Department's Leadership Academy and needed a project. He chose to organize a youth day. The idea wasn't original, by any means, as Falstad was familiar with similar projects in two of the counties he supervised. But despite many youth living in the urban Wausau area, Marathon County did not have a youth day, and Falstad felt an event was needed there.

He contacted every outdoor-type group he could think of and asked if they would be willing to spend a day trying to spark an outdoor interest in youth who may not otherwise have that opportunity. He soon learned that the hunting, fishing and trapping community was truly interested in getting kids outside, and the Marathon County Sporting Heritage Youth Day was formed. Five and a half years after his retirement, it is still an event Falstad leads in his community.

Many of the groups that mentored the nearly 170 youth at the 13th annual event on Aug. 26 have been with the program since its inception. Those groups, and the stations they offer, include the Friends of Mead/McMillan Wildlife Areas, hunting safari; Marathon County Sheriff's Depart-

ment, recreational vehicle safety instruction; the Wisconsin Trapper's Association, trapping demonstrations; the National Wild Turkey Federation, turkey hunting clinic and BB gun shoot; the Wausau School District, .22 range; Weston Hit and Miss Trap Club, trap shooting range; Weston Safety Instructors, tree stand safety station; Rib Mountain Bowmen, archery range; Elks Lodge #248, drug awareness trailer; Wausau Noon Optimists, GPS instruction; Bill's Musky Club, bait casting instruction and contest; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's optics demonstration; DNR employees and volunteers, muzzleloader shoot; Trout Unlimited, fly tying and fly casting; Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association, laser shot; Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, duck calls and boats; Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development, invasive species station; Pheasants Forever, habitat display and hands-on shoot/don't shoot and corn give-away; Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructor's Association, pellet gun range; and Western Fraternal Life Association, bike give-away.

Each year, Falstad reaches out to the urban community and recruits youth from Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Boys and Girls Club, the Women's Community and

YMCA youth programs. Falstad's program is unique in that he requires all youth to attend with an adult. That's because he knows that if you spark a child's interest in an outdoor activity but that child has no one to take him or her outdoors, you have not done any good. All the instructors try to involve the parents, grandparents and "Bigs" in their activities, he said. Many times, the philosophy has resulted in parents and their children continuing in an outdoor sport together, where none of them had been involved earlier.

Falstad said he has seen a big change in the acceptance of this requirement. In the early years of the event, he often received calls asking if kids could come with a friend whose parent would take them. Now the calls come asking if the whole family can come. It is now more the norm to have both parents at the event with their children.

Falstad gives all the credit for the event to the participating organizations and clubs. This year he had 124 mentors who helped run activities. "I am amazed at how passionate our volunteers are about their sports and how much of themselves they are willing to give to share their knowledge and skills with the next generation," he said.

He said he believes the instructors do make a difference, citing a letter he received from a mother of a past participant: "I just could not let the day end without saying a huge thank you on behalf of my two kids. My son, who has a form of autism, has struggled with confidence for quite some time, but today I saw his chest puff up with pride when he grabbed that bow. I saw a sparkle in his eyes as all three of his arrows hit the target. For the first time, I saw confidence in my son! There is no going back now; I will do whatever it takes to get him involved in some

sort of archery club. God bless you for all you have done to put this event together, and a special thanks to the patient and understanding instructors..."

The youth day is funded by many of the same groups that mentor the youth. Different groups can afford different amounts based on membership numbers and national affiliations. The River Valley Chapter of Whitetail Unlimited has always been a huge sponsor, purchasing the participants and instructors a T-shirt every year of the event. The Wisconsin Conservation Warden As-

sociation has also supported the event all 13 years, awarding a grant to help finance the food, facility rental, shotgun shells, bullets and raffle prizes.

Other groups that helped fund the 2017 event included the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, as well as local service groups such as the Wausau Elks Club #248, Marathon County Sheriff's Benevolent Association, Western Fraternal Life Association and the Wausau Noon Optimists.

Woodruff Learn to Trap is hands-on event



By Tim Ebert

The fourth annual Learn to Trap, hosted in Woodruff, Wisconsin, on Aug. 12-13, was very successful. The 2017 class had 17 participants ranging in age from 9 to 72, and each student left the program with a trapper education certificate, a conibear trap, a dog proof trap, a stretcher and a catchpole to get them started trapping.

Instructors for the program included Program Supervisor Chris Thielman, Customer Service Representative Mike Schoblaska, Warden Supervisor David Walz and Wardens Mike Sealander, Jim Jung and Tim Ebert.

The course was based in an outdoor classroom with a "hands on" approach. Day one started with students entering an outdoor classroom setting of a small opening among red pines with a campfire and fresh coffee in the center. Students sat around the campfire with layers of trapping gear surrounding them.

The first half of the day was spent discussing the history and role of trapping, wildlife management, ethical considerations, trapping laws and trap handling. After a warm lunch, students broke into small groups of two and three to look for animal sign and decide on trap locations. Each student placed one conibear and one dog proof trap.

Day two kicked off by checking the traps students placed the



day before and discussing trap placement. The total catch for the night was two raccoons and one muskrat.

After lunch, students built catch poles and learned about skinning, fleshing and stretching fur. Students were provided a commemorative trap tag engraved with a recognition showing the support received from the Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association, which helps make this program successful.



From left, Bill, Larry and Sue Miller

all IN THE FAMILY

By Barbara A. Schmitz

It's said that blood is thicker than water. For these conservation wardens, it's certainly the case.

It's extremely uncommon that two in a family — siblings or parent/child — would have the same job. It's even more unlikely that they would work at the same place.

But then, conservation wardens are anything but common.

Chief Warden Todd Schaller said the Department of Natural Resources doesn't keep statistics on the number of wardens or DNR employees who are related. "But I know it's not common, although it isn't unusual or surprising when it happens," he said.

Schaller said children often follow in their parents' footsteps because they have similar interests. And in the cases of wardens, those interests generally include hunting, fishing and working in the outdoors.

In fact, according to 2014 U.S. Census data, 22 percent of working American men whose fathers were present during their teenage years will, by time they turn 30, have worked for the same employer, at the same time, as their dads. For women that figure is 13 percent.

Some father/child duos who have both worked as Wisconsin DNR wardens include Werner and Doug Radtke, Ed and Mike Sealander, Tom and Nate Kroeplin, Matt and Mike Weber, John Plenke Sr. and John Plenke Jr. and Karl and Alex Brooks, to name a few. You can add in retired Wisconsin warden Todd Wipperman if you go out of state. That's because Wipperman's son, Chad, is a warden in Idaho.

Research done by WCWA historian Harland Steinhorst shows two relatives — a set of brothers and a father/son duo — have both received the coveted Haskell Noyes Efficiency Award. Frank Adamske took the honor in 1943, and his brother, John Adamski, who spelled his last name differently, took the top honor in 1953. Ron Kubisiak earned the award in 1977, and his son, Roy, received the award in 2002. Another Kubisiak, Roy's brother, Mark, also served in the DNR, but as a ranger. Coincidentally, Ron's brother, Harold, was also a warden for the Wisconsin DNR, Schaller said.

Then there are the siblings who follow each other into law enforcement, such as Roger and Harley Lichenwalner, Ben and Paul Nadolski, Matt and Mike Mackenzie, Tom and Bill Wrasse and others.

But having a sibling or parent already working for the DNR doesn't give one a leg up in getting hired. "The hiring process doesn't change," Schaller said. However, while siblings or parent/children can work together, they are prevented from supervising each other.

Schaller said there are advantages to keeping it "all in the family." "The person coming into the role knows what the job is and understands the culture and demands that come with the job," he said. "There is a naturally occurring advantage to that."

Some take "all in the family" theme even farther, particularly if you add in other types of law enforcement positions. Brothers Jeff and John King are both current wardens, but the Department just hired their nephew and their other brother works in law enforcement in southern Wisconsin. Warden Amie Egstad's husband is a retired sheriff's deputy. Greg Langehr was a warden and encouraged his brother-in-law, Mike Vogelsang, now retired, to become a warden.

Siblings Sue and Bill Miller are both retired Wisconsin conservation wardens who followed the career path of their father, Larry. He was hired as a warden in 1955 and retired from the DNR as training officer in 1987. His 1998 obituary stated that he was proud that two of his four children became wardens, and that he never felt being a conservation warden was just a job. It was a way of life.

Bill said his father played a key role in his decision to become a warden. "I grew up all around it. I saw it first hand all the time."



Hunting was always a way of life for the Nice family. Top: From left, Mike, Casey and Nick as boys in 1980. Middle: The Nice family shows off their successful duck hunt on the New River. Bottom: Mike, left, and Nick Nice still like to hunt together as adults.

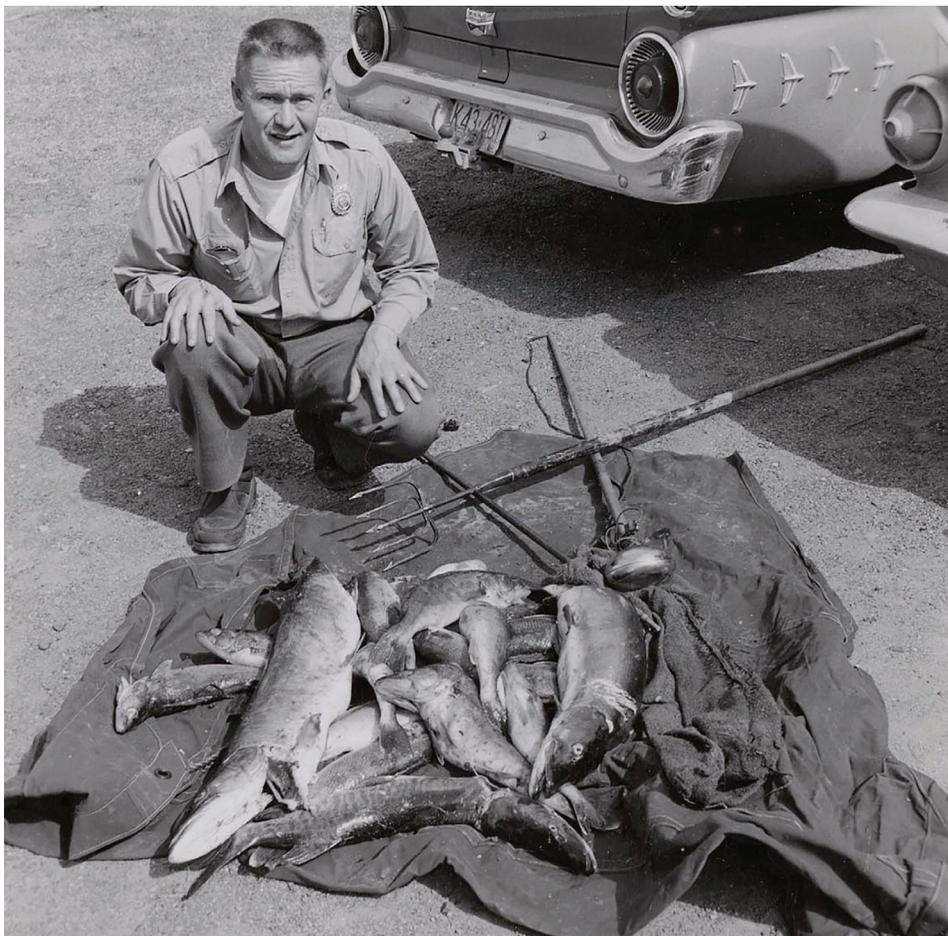


Photo courtesy Wisconsin DNR
Warden Ed Sealander in 1960; Sealander's son, Mike, also became a state warden.

That included going on ridealongs when he was younger, or going to warden get-togethers. "There were always wardens at our house or we were at their houses. I was surrounded by wardens and by high school, I knew what I wanted to do. It's like being a plumber's kid or a carpenter's kid. You see firsthand what the job is, get a taste of it, and decide it's the right career for you, too."

Bill was hired by the DNR in 1984, and worked in Adams County until his retirement in 2015. At the time he was hired, Larry was his training officer. He admits that was a little bit awkward. "Some of the guys probably thought I was hired because of who my dad was, although they never said that to my face," he said. "But I still had to take the test and go through the interview process."

Still, he said there are advantages to having the same job and employer as your father. "You see all the things that go on and hear all the stories. That background helps you when you're fresh out of college. You have a gist of what to look for and how to catch someone doing something illegal."

Despite three in the family being war-

dens, they had limited opportunities to work together. "My dad would come up to Adams County during deer season to work a few days," Bill said. "But Sue and I were never really stationed near each other. But when we'd visit, we'd always take along our gear and work together for a day or two."

When the family worked together, they enjoyed teasing each other, Sue recalled. "When Bill or I were working together, we'd tease each other about our approaches," she said. "I would tell him, 'I wouldn't have written that ticket' and he'd say the same thing to me."

Sue said it took her a little longer to figure out she wanted to be a warden, partly because it wasn't a traditional female job. "I was 16 before I had the courage to tell my dad that I wanted to go hunting, and I still remember the shocked look on his face. In that day and age, it never dawned on my dad that I might be interested; hunting or fishing wasn't something that girls did."

But even after that, being a conservation warden wasn't on the top of her list of possible careers. "When I was growing up, there weren't women wardens," Sue said. "I knew I wanted to do something outdoors

for a career, so I went to school for forestry."

However, it wasn't long before she realized that forestry wasn't for her. So when Bill, then a junior in college, said he was taking the warden exam, she decided to take it, too.

"It really was the first time it entered my head that this is what I wanted to do," she said.

Bill was hired and Sue, who missed the physical fitness test by 10 seconds, was offered a seasonal job under the affirmative action program. "I told them no, I didn't want to get hired that way. I wanted to compete like everyone else. I said I would apply again the next year, and I ran all year long and passed the test."

Both Bill and Larry supported Sue's decision to become a warden. Her mother, however, couldn't quite understand her daughter's career choice. "If anyone said anything about me, my mother would defend me," Sue recalled. "But to my face, she said, 'Why don't you meet someone, get married and settle down?'"

But there is one point both mother and daughter agreed on, Sue said. "Being a warden is way easier than being married to one," she said. "It's more of a lifestyle."

Sue started in 1985, training with Tom Kroeplin in Woodruff. She retired in 2013, after working in Eagle in Waukesha County, Hudson in St. Croix County, Mercer in Iron County and Hayward in Sawyer County.

But she said she wouldn't change anything about her career. "It created a special family bond," she said. "You think of all wardens as part of your family since they are the ones you are close to. But I came into the force already having people to talk to and knowing that they would understand."

Mike and Nick Nice are brothers who both became wardens. But it almost was a trifecta. "My only regret is my brother, Casey, passed away in 1983 in a car accident shortly after graduating high school," Mike said. "Otherwise the warden force would have had to put up with three Nice boys as it was the dream of us all!"

Mike said he and his brothers referred to his father's best friend, Paul, as uncle, even

though they weren't related. "He was a warden in North Carolina and a mentor to us prior to my dad's retirement from the Marine Corps," he said. When their father was stationed overseas, Uncle Paul and Aunt Cathy would take the boys in to give their mom a break. "We looked at him with that badge on his chest and we were all hooked," Mike recalled. "Dad had us growing up in the outdoors anyway. By the time we left North Carolina, we knew all three of us would be game wardens."

When they returned to Wisconsin, then in grades 4-9, they learned their dad's college roommate and football teammate was warden Chuck Wranosky of Eagle River. Chuck was another great influence, he said, and confirmed the Nice boys' decisions to become wardens.

Mike said: "Dad always said, 'Do what you want to do, but make sure you're happy with what you do.' This was our dream job."

Nick was hired in 1987, and served in Walworth, Sawyer and Taylor counties, before retiring in 2015. Mike was hired in 1991, and since 1994, has been stationed in Richland County.

The two brothers occasionally worked together, Mike recalled. "But in the day, you got credit for writing citations. It was super busy in the Dells so Nick would come down for the weekend to get boating citations. We'd be cruising around Lake Delton on the Lower and Upper Dells, and we'd always write on the ticket that they were observed by Wardens Nice and Nice!"

Mike said his deputy warden calls the two brothers Shrek and Donkey. "I'm always jabbing him that he looks like Shrek," he said. "We do have brotherly arguments, but we do get along. We agree to disagree on who's the better warden. There's brains and brawn in our family, and I'll let you decide which is who."

Yet Mike acknowledged that when he had questions about how to handle a case,

Ben Herzfeldt receives the Torch Award from Pennsylvania Warden Rich Cramer. INSET: Ben's father, Rick Herzfeldt, with then Chief Warden Randy Stark.

Nick was the one he usually called first. "It really is an advantage to have a sibling work with you," Mike said. "You can share information and knowledge. If you have that trust and respect like I do my brother and vice versa, it is a tremendous advantage."

Rick Herzfeldt was 15 when he began working for his uncle's gas station in Shawano. "All the wardens came there to get their vehicles serviced," he recalled. "It seemed like there was a lot of action, and back then, the ridealong policy was very loose so I rode with a number of them."

It confirmed what he wanted to do. By 20, he was credentialed and worked as a special deputy warden for a couple of years while in college. Rick was hired fulltime in 1974 and retired in 2003, working in Baraboo and Shawano.

The ridealong policy was still quite loose when his son, Ben, was small. "He probably started riding with me when he was about 5. I'd take him on the lake on the snowmobile, and he would pick up litter. He helped with small animals, too, like bobcats and fawns. He grew up in the outdoors and so did I. He knew the lifestyle."

It was those ridealongs that helped to convince Ben to become a warden. "I'd look for fish that were spawning, or look for blinds set up on state land before the hunting season," Ben said. "I really got the interest from my dad."

Ben also learned quickly, Rick said. "I had a Ram Charger, and during deer season, I'd put Ben in back wearing blaze orange with

binoculars and a cooler of snacks," Rick recalled. "He knew what to look for and what to do, and he was probably only 8."

Ben began with the DNR in 2006, and was first stationed in Port Washington and then Schofield. He is now in Antigo as an investigator for the Northern Region. The father/son team never worked together since Rick retired when Ben was still in school.

But while the job has changed, even in the 11 years he has been employed, Ben said he always enjoyed hearing his dad's stories about the people they caught and how they did it. "When my dad was working, it felt more like it was part of a family," he said. "Now it's become more of a job, although it is still a great job."

And now it's Ben who tells his dad stories. "He still likes being part of the whole DNR family," Ben said. "He likes being caught up in the stories and staying involved."

Rick said Ben always had a good insight into the job and its responsibilities. "He knew of the long hours and sometimes the hard things you had to do," he said. While it has helped the two form a special connection, it has also increased the amount of competition between them at times. "I have to realize the job has changed since I was a warden," Rick said. "Sometimes I get jealous of what he's done and what he's able to do. But I'm also very proud..."



interesting cases

Concerned citizen aids fish run enforcement

By John Sinclair

In late October 2016, wardens were wrapping up a long day of fish run enforcement on the Root River in Racine. Just as we were preparing to wind down our shift, a concerned citizen called me stating he had just observed three men with flashlights and a landing net walking the Pike River near Poerio Park in Kenosha.

We immediately suited back up and made a plan for apprehending the suspects. We would approach from both sides of the river while another warden would remain concealed near the suspects' vehicle, just in case the group decided to flee the area. Using night vision, we made our way toward the river. An occasional flash of light revealed the illegal anglers' location and, using the cover of darkness, we were able to approach undetected within 50 feet of the group.

We observed two men using flashlights while a third man waded through the river with only a landing net in search of fish. Unfortunately for the suspects, the mouth of the Pike River was closed at the time and very few salmon had made their way into the river. After illegally netting one fish and wading around in search for more, the suspects began walking back toward their vehicle.

The two wardens concealed in nearby brush quickly apprehended the group. The suspects were found to possess one illegally caught salmon, as well as 14 illegal snag hooks. The man with the net had failed to purchase a fishing license or Great Lakes salmon/trout stamp, was fishing by illegal means (the landing net), was fishing during closed hours on the tributary, and was in possession of illegal snag hooks. The accomplices were considered party to these violations as they had assisted, so we seized the flashlights, landing net and bounty of snag hooks.

JOHN SINCLAIR is a warden stationed in Fitchburg.

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Remember to check out the Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association online store for all your WCWA merchandise needs.

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Don't see something you want? Contact Neverman and let him know what items you would like to see.



Warden John Sinclair and his intern assisted with the capture of an injured owl in Kenosha County. The owl was later transferred to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Venison Fajitas Recipe

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

1 lb. venison roast sliced ½" stick and cut into strips
1 large onion, peeled, cut in half and sliced ½" thick
1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into strips
1 green bell pepper, seeded and cut into strips
4 tbsp. olive oil

Spice Mix

2 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. dried oregano
½ tsp. granulated garlic (optional)
1 tsp. sugar

Directions

- Combine the spice mix ingredients and divide into two portions.
- In a large bowl, toss the venison strips with 1 portion of the spice mix. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
- Preheat a heavy fry pan to medium-high heat. Add 2 tbsp. olive oil and fry the venison in two batches until brown on all sides. Place venison in a shallow baking pan and keep warm in a preheated 250-degree oven.
- Preheat the fry pan with high heat. Add 2 tbsp. olive oil. When very hot, carefully add the peppers and onions and sprinkle with the remaining spice mix. Cook until tender and crisp, 5-6 minutes. Add the venison to the peppers and onions. Toss and serve with warmed tortillas, sour cream, salsa, shredded cheese and shredded lettuce.

Note: You can package and freeze the fajita mixture for a quick meal.

Backdating a fishing license can be hazardous to your health

By Bruce Buening

Back in the 1970s, all conservation licenses were written out by hand and most Ma and Pa bait shops issued licenses as a convenience to their customers. There were no cell phones for wardens to call and verify if a fisherman who “left his license at home” actually had a license. So wardens carried a form that allowed forgetful anglers to send in their licenses within five days.

Of course this, on occasion, led to some problems for the less-than-truthful sportsman. One such occasion occurred when Warden John Lacenski sent me the license of a Milwaukee fisherman he had issued a five-day license check form to who had been fishing in Waukesha County. John suspected the license was backdated.

I stopped to see the fisherman named Hugh at his Milwaukee home and he insisted he was innocent of wrongdoing. After 45 minutes of telling Hugh he should confess, I gave up, but told him if he knew what was good for him, he shouldn't wait too long to call me with the truth. Perceiving Hugh to be pretty street smart, I figured I'd never see or hear from him again.

I was wrong. A half hour later, the phone

was ringing as I walked into my apartment. It was Hugh, confessing to the backdating.

Now the story gets interesting. I went to the central city sports shop to talk to the clerk there who issued the license. I first ran into the owner of the shop, Oscar, who looked at the writing on the license and said his stepson, Michael, had issued the license. I told Oscar backdating a fishing license was a serious offense and could have serious consequences for his business. Oscar then said something I didn't really believe at the moment, but came to realize he meant it a couple weeks later. He said, “I'm going 100 percent with the game warden.” If he said it once, he said it five times. “I'm going 100 percent with the game warden.”

A couple of weeks later, Hugh, Michael and Oscar met me at the Milwaukee County District Attorney's office for charging in the license backdate matter. As I walked into the office, I saw Oscar and Hugh sitting next to each other chatting amicably, but Michael was seated on the other side of the room looking defiant. Soon we were all called into an assistant DA's side office. Oscar and Hugh stood and went into the ADA's office, but Michael remained seating.

I went over to Michael and said we had to go see the ADA, but he stated, “I ain't going into the same room with that man.” I asked whom he meant and he stated Oscar, his stepfather. I asked why and Michael said, “He shot at me.”

I then talked separately to Oscar and asked about his stepson's statement. Oscar told me that after I had left his sports shop a few weeks earlier, Michael came into the shop and he confronted Michael about backdating the fishing license. The two began arguing, Oscar said, and then Michael went back out to his car. Oscar said he thought Michael was going to get his gun, so he got his gun, too. I'm not sure what happened next, but Oscar's gun was fired. “My gun discharged accidentally,” he told me. Oscar also said the two had already been to the DA's office regarding the shooting, but no charges were filed.

Hugh and Michael were convicted for backdating the license. Luckily, everyone survived. Hopefully, family relations were also restored.

BRUCE BUENNING is a retired conservation warden living in Milwaukee.

5 questions and 5 answers about 5 wardens

Five questions about five wardens from the past.

1. Who was the longest serving Wisconsin conservation warden?
2. Who was the oldest appointed fish warden?
3. What year was the warden force first paid out of the Hunting License Fund?
4. What warden trained “code talkers” during World War II? Hint: He was stationed at Portage and Friendship.
5. What year were all forest rangers, state park superintendents and employees of the Forestry Department commissioned as conservation wardens?

Five answers about five wardens from the past

1. Walter Zelinske served for 40 years, from 1934-74. He rose from a field warden to chief warden, and was stationed in Eau Claire, Eagle River and Madison – Bureau of Law Enforcement. Zelinske was a graduate of the Oshkosh State Teachers College.
2. Alanson Cooley was 75 years old at the time of his appointment in 1881. He patrolled the waters of Green Lake and Fond du

Lac counties. His only connection with law enforcement was his election as justice of the peace for the city of Ripon.

3. The year was 1898. Prior to then, taxpayer monies were only used to fund the position of head warden. Field wardens, or “deputies,” received a portion of the fine or “constable fees,” depending on the court, justice of the peace or county.
4. George “Buck” Johnson learned the Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) language early in his life. In 1940, he held the rank of 1st lieutenant with the National Guard when he was called into federal service. Members of four-based Wisconsin tribes were recruited as “cold talkers.” Buck was a member of G-2 Army Intelligence and retired as a major.
5. The year was 1915. Law enforcement funds were in short supply. A list of 26 game wardens (76 total) was prepared as “subject to dismissal in the month of August.” However, there is no record of any warden dismissals in 1915 or 1916.

Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association

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The 13th annual Heritage Youth Day in Marathon County included a variety of activities to get children, as well as their parents, trying new outdoor activities. This particular boy had come back to the pellet gun range to work on his shooting. One of the instructors worked with him to get him to squeeze the trigger instead of jerking it. His target is the result of that instruction. See story on Page 16.