

HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

Bob Haase's Bear Encounters

- 
- A large brown bear is the central focus of the cover, walking directly towards the viewer through shallow water. The bear's fur is thick and brown, with some darker patches on its face and legs. Water is splashing around its paws, creating white foam. The background is a soft-focus green forest.
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 - Conservation Updates
 - Chapter News & Events
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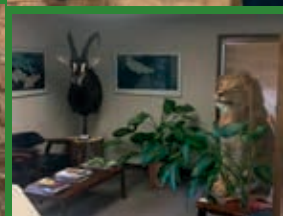
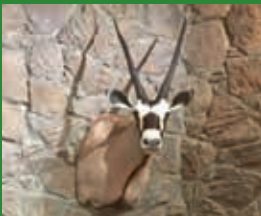
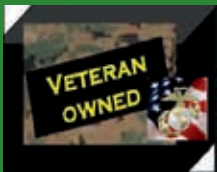


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Editor/Publishers: Mark & Coni LaBarbera
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HUNTERS is a bimonthly publication for members of SCI chapters in Illinois and Wisconsin, plus bonus electronic circulation, which includes some of the world's most avid and affluent conservationists who enjoy hunting here and around the world. They have earned a reputation of leadership on natural resources issues and giving to protect and support the future of hunting and conservation here and abroad. To share your message with them, send ads and editorial submissions to Mark LaBarbera at mlabarbera57@icloud.com.

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HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois
November/December 2026

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New members and your families are always welcome at SCI! Visit these websites and join a chapter to start your adventure. Members enjoy great fun, meet new friends, make a difference in their community and help the future of hunting, plus you will discover new deals and opportunities that improve your hunting skill and enjoyment. We invite you to join online today.

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Illinois & Chicago Chapter

President Dale Rimkus

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President Kathryn Thede

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President Monte Whitaker

www.sciwi.org

SCI Region 16 Representative

Charmaine Wargolet

charmainew@ameritech.net

Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet,
Regional Representative

So, fall hunting season is in full swing! Hope everyone is out there enjoying the crisp fall air and our abundant wildlife! Whether we get to shoot or not, the hunt is always exciting.

I also hope you have been able to enjoy one of your chapter events. Member picnics, sporting clay shoots, golf outings, chapter meetings and programs, hunter happy hours—our chapters have many wonderful opportunities to enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow hunters. You never know when you will find someone who wants to go on the same hunt as you. A lot of lifelong friendships have been made within our chapter walls!

Come January, as usual, I will be hosting the annual Region 16 meeting for all of our chapter leaders. Our region is rather special due to the incredible spirit of “working together” that all our chapters have. Jason St. Michael has mentioned our region on a number of Regional Rep zoom meetings as we are the poster child of solidarity. You have elected great leaders to your chapter offices!

This is going to be a short message this issue. As we head into the holiday season, first we have Thanksgiving which reminds us to be grateful for first, and foremost our families and then for our happy, healthy lifestyles that enable us to pursue our hunting dreams.

Then comes Christmas, where we celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love



of our Creator who has also blessed us with the land and the wildlife.

Finally, the New Year. Another year to find new mountains to climb and adventures to be had.

So, as we navigate the holidays, may you always be grateful for the blessings in your life, and celebrate every day the wondrous love that surrounds you.

And, as always, shoot straight, be well, and God Bless

Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

The Badgerland Chapter has some great events coming up! To start it off, we have our Christmas Party on Saturday, December 12th at Buck N Honey's in Sun Prairie. Buck N Honey's is a favorite venue for many of our members including myself. Great food and ambiance!

Next, on Wednesday, January 16th we will have a special “Bourbon Tasting / Member Appreciation Social”. This will also be at Buck N Honey's, but this will be the one in Monona. There will be some GREAT items to give away! Word is there will be a special bottle of “Pappy Van Winkle” to raffle off! This is one of the rarest and most sought after bourbon's out there! Of course, we are known for having top notch guns to give away at our meetings and this one will not disappoint! It will be a Weatherby

Vanguard First Light Spector in 6.5 x 300 Wby. Mag with a Vortex Scope. We will also have other fantastic Vortex optics to send home with some lucky members! We are limited to 80 people at this event and pre-payment is required. Check out the ad for this event in this issue of Hunters magazine for all of the details.

As if this wasn't enough, we will be having our 40th SCI Badgerland Hunter's Expo on February 12-13, 2027, at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. You can also get more information on this in the ad in this magazine as well as checking out www.scibadgerland.com.

I've never been much for the term “Winter Blahs” and I know we've got a little bit before we get to winter, but in winter, there's still some hunting to do and I love ice fishing so no “Blahs” for



me! But if you tend to experience this type of thing, these events should help you through that! Nothing like winning a great gun or a bottle of “Pappy” or just meeting with friends and sharing stories about hunting to cheer you up!

I hope you find time to be with and enjoy your friends and family during this upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays! I also hope to see you at some of our great events!



Colton Casey shot his first turkey with dad Chris and grandpa Kevin.



Northeast Wisconsin SCI Chapter's Mark Snyder shared this photo of his grandson Noah, 16, with the buck he shot in Portage County at the “Janke Hunting Camp.”

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Illinois & Chicago Chapter Report

by Dale Rimkus, President

If you're reading this then you are already a member of Safari Club International and an SCI Chapter. Every member of SCI shares something important: a commitment to hunting, wildlife conservation, and the protection of our hunting heritage. But preserving that heritage for future generations requires more than simply maintaining the membership we have today. **We need to grow it.** Bringing new members into SCI is one of the most important things each of us can do to strengthen our organization and ensure that hunters continue to have a strong and effective voice.

Hunters face challenges on many fronts. Decisions affecting hunting opportunities, wildlife management, public access, and conservation are made every year at the local, state, national, and international levels. When SCI speaks on behalf of hunters, the strength of that voice is directly connected to the people standing behind it. A growing membership demonstrates that hunters are active, organized, and committed to protecting responsible hunting and science-based wildlife conservation. One new member may seem like a small addition. Multiply that by thousands of SCI members each introducing a friend, family member, hunting partner, colleague, or neighbor to the organization, however, and the impact can be enormous.

SCI brings together people who understand that hunting and conservation go hand in hand. Hunters contribute directly to wildlife conservation, habitat protection, and responsible wildlife management while carrying forward traditions that have been passed from one generation to another. New members bring new energy to that mission. They bring ideas, talents, experiences, professional skills, and relationships that can make our chapters and our entire organization

stronger. They also become part of something larger than themselves—a community of people working together for wildlife and for the future of hunting.

Perhaps nowhere is membership growth more important than among younger hunters and families. It is not enough to assume that our hunting traditions will simply continue. They must be taught, shared, encouraged, and defended. Young hunters need mentors. New hunters need welcoming places where they can learn. Families need opportunities to experience the outdoors together. SCI chapters can provide that connection. When we

survive—they thrive. And recruiting a new member does not have to be complicated. In many cases, the best invitation is simply personal. Think about the people you already know. Who do you hunt with? Who joins you at the range? Who shares your interest in wildlife and conservation? Who has attended one of our chapter events but never joined SCI? Ask them. Explain why **you** belong to SCI. Invite them to a chapter event. Introduce them to other members. Show them that SCI isn't just an organization they can join—it is a community in which they can participate.

Growing SCI isn't solely the responsibility of national leadership, chapter officers, or a membership committee. It is the responsibility—and opportunity—of every member. Imagine what could happen if every current SCI member made it a personal goal to bring just **one new member** into the organization. One new member into your chapter.

One friend. One family member. One hunting partner. One young hunter. The result would be extraordinary.

SCI has accomplished a great deal because generations of hunters understood the importance of standing together. Our responsibility now is to make certain the organization we pass on to the next generation is even stronger than the one we inherited. That begins with membership. So, the next time you head into the field, attend the range, participate in a chapter event, or simply talk hunting with a friend, ask yourself one question: **Who can I bring into SCI?**

If each of us brings one more person into our organization, together we can strengthen SCI, strengthen conservation, and help protect our hunting heritage for generations to come.

The future of hunting needs a strong SCI—and a strong SCI needs all of us.



invite younger hunters and families into SCI, we are doing much more than increasing a membership number. We are helping create the conservationists, volunteers, chapter leaders, mentors, and advocates who will carry our traditions forward long after we are gone.

Strong chapters are the foundation of SCI. More members mean more people attending events, volunteering for projects, supporting fundraisers, serving on committees, participating in conservation efforts, introducing young people to hunting, and eventually stepping into leadership positions. Every organization needs new people and new ideas to remain vibrant. Membership growth helps ensure that our chapters do not simply

Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Monte Whitaker, President

This year is one for the history books! During our weekend celebration, 50 guns will find new homes as we mark the 50th Anniversary of our Grand Banquet. We're excited to celebrate five decades of tradition, friendship, and great memories with our members, friends, and supporters.

To help commemorate this special occasion, we are offering exclusive private-label Bourbon and Vodka. These limited-edition bottles are a great way to celebrate our 50th anniversary and have a special keepsake to remember the occasion.

- Private-Label Bourbon — \$50 per bottle
- Private-Label Vodka — \$30 per bottle

Limited bottles are available, and sales will begin at our October meeting. Get yours while supplies last!

Table of 10 Special. Planning to attend with a group? Purchase a table of 10 and you'll be entered into a special drawing for the Table Captain's Gun! Plus, each table of 10 purchased will receive \$100 worth of Gun Board raffle tickets.

Mark your calendars! Registration for the 50th Anniversary Grand Banquet will open in early December!

Start getting your group together now and plan to join us for a weekend filled with celebration, camaraderie, and 50 years of Grand Banquet tradition.

That's 50 Years. 50 Guns. One Great Weekend. Don't Miss It!

Good Luck, Hunters! As hunting season gets underway, we want to wish all the hunters heading into the woods the best of luck! Enjoy your time outdoors, make great memories, and most importantly, stay safe and shoot straight! Good luck, everyone, and we hope you have a successful season!



Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame Inducts SCI's Dale & Marla Rimkus

The Illinois Conservation Foundation announced SCI's Dale and Marla Rimkus are two of the four new inductees into the Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame, recognizing their contributions to conservation and outdoor recreation across Illinois. The 2026 class also includes Kim Compton and Arnold

Randall. Only 99 individuals have been inducted since its founding in 2002.

Jenny Vaughn, executive director, said "Dale and Marla have demonstrated what a lifetime of hands-on service to Illinois' outdoor community looks like. They are a wonderful reflection of what the Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame was created to recognize."

Illinois DNR Director Jim Montgomery added, "The work of conservation is built on commitment. The Hall of Fame recognizes

people who have made that commitment a lasting part of their lives and whose service has made a difference across our state. I'm proud to congratulate this year's inductees."

Dale and Marla have served in leadership with the Illinois Chapter of Safari Club International for more than two decades, helping unite the Illinois and Chicago Chapters. They have supported the disabled deer hunt at Wayne Fitzgerald State Recreation Area, Fishing Has No Boundaries outings, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' chronic wasting disease research.

Their conservation work also extends to Africa, where they have supported anti-poaching efforts, water wells and community projects. Together, they have expanded outdoor opportunities for people with disabilities and strengthened Illinois' hunting, fishing and conservation traditions.

The Hall of Fame recognizes people whose work has had a lasting impact on conservation and outdoor recreation in Illinois. Past inductees include educators, volunteers, sportsmen and women, agency leaders and advocates. The 2026 inductees will be recognized at the Hall of Fame Gala on Thursday, April 8, 2027, in Glen Ellyn. Details will be announced later.

Founded in 1995, the Illinois Conservation Foundation is the official nonprofit partner of the Illinois DNR. A 501(c)3 charitable organization, ICF raises private support for conservation, outdoor education and public access to Illinois' natural resources.



Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Kathryn Thede, President

It has been a busy few weeks. I helped teach hunter safety and we welcomed 51 new hunters into the woods and into the wide world of hunting! May this be their favorite new obsession and a hobby to last their entire lives!

My husband and I attended the Annual Range Safety Day at the Shiocton Rifle Range, September 5, 2026. Our SCI Northeast Wisconsin chapter helped sponsor it. There was a good turn out and it was a great time talking with people of all ages and experiences.

I met a girl there who had only ever shot two guns and was excited to try out different calibers. There were families there. The kiddos were able to collect different items from the vendors and have the opportunity to learn hands on. It was a free event with the only costs being the food trucks and ammunition if you shot the .50 BMG. I seized the opportunity and was amazed that the recoil wasn't as bad as I was anticipating. It was definitely a unique experience and, although I didn't make the target at 500 yards, I am glad I was

able to take the shot! Not many people can say they have shot a gun of that caliber, and I have the spent cartridge as a souvenir.

With hunting season upon us, this is the perfect opportunity to introduce hunting to someone in one form or another; whether taking them in the woods with you, letting them taste venison sausage, or sharing stories of your hunt. You never know how impactful those experiences may be. My last few weekends have been in the deer stand bow hunting. Although I have seen deer, none have made my trigger finger itch. We head to Maryland this weekend for a Sika deer hunt. I am sure memories will be made, and an adventure is waiting for us. Hopefully I will have pictures to share in the next article.

In closing, I pray that this hunting season is full of memories waiting to be created, days filled with friends and loved ones, and that your target be met. May the success of your hunt be in the excitement and moments that spark the flame that keep us willing to go out on cold, quiet mornings and eagerness to wait patiently for and enjoy the animals we see. Good luck and stay safe!

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, and/or to share hunting photos. I can be contacted by phone or text at 920-450-



Kathryn Thede and Brett Johansen (from the DNR who coordinated the 2nd Annual Range Safety Day)

0765 or email me at Kathryn.Thede.SCI@gmail.com.

Visit www.NEWISCI.org for our upcoming member meetings and for the



President Thede with her .50 cal. memento.

latest information on our banquet and fundraising event February 27, 2027, at Stadium View in Green Bay. Also, mark your calendars to join us at the Wisconsin Hunting and Fishing EXPO at the Resch Expo Center in Green Bay, February 26 – 28, 2027



Kendall Hubertus shot the BMR, only her third time ever shooting rifles.

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WI SCI HUNTERS – November/December 2026

Legislative Update:

SCI Steps Up Big for Tom Tiffany!

by Dan Trawicki, Lobbyist

SCI First for Hunters has always played a part in the political process here and nationwide. But no political race has seemed as important as the race for a new Governor here in Wisconsin.

SCI has essentially four chapters in Wisconsin, The Wisconsin chapter from the Milwaukee area, Northeast Wisconsin chapter from the Green Bay area, Badgerland Chapter from the Madison area and the Southeast Wisconsin Bowhunters chapter. There is a fifth chapter, the Lake Superior Chapter, that has members in both Wisconsin and Minnesota. All of the chapters get involved in the political process in some way shape or form. Because of the way the chapters were formed, they may be restricted by the degree and amount of participation per IRS rules for 501(c)3 vs 501(c)4 nonprofit organizations. The SE Wisconsin Bow chapter was formed more than 25 years ago with the primary goal of being involved in the political process by donating to Republican, Democrat and Independents legislators that support our constitutional right to hunt and fish in this state.

The Bow chapter has led the way in not only providing that funding but



making sure our legislators understand the position of SCI and the importance of supporting our core mission. The Northeast chapter has also provided substantial funding and support. While the other chapters may be limited in funding certain events, the four main Wisconsin chapters all contribute to pay a lobbyist that represents the views and wishes of all chapters and members.

For a long time now, we have been frustrated with the lack of support from our governor's office in general and the DNR in particular.

I'm regularly asked why we can't get a certain rule or law changed when it is an obvious error or is overwhelmingly supported at our spring hearings. The simple answer is that many of our legislators are reluctant to put a lot of effort and time into something

we know the current governor does not support or will sign. That's when SCI here in Wisconsin decided to push all our "chips" in!

On a local level between the SE Wisconsin Bow chapter and the Northeast Wisconsin chapter we raised and donated \$65,000 to Tom Tiffany for Governor. One of the largest single political donations ever given by a sporting group in this state. We all felt it was time to make a

statement and support someone like Tom Tiffany that supports us. Heck, when I went to talk with Tom at the capital in Madison, the guy had a life-size mounted black bear in his office! This is the same guy that in Congress introduced legislation to delist wolves here in Wisconsin and bring back a much-needed hunting season. Tom supports a sandhill crane season here and wants to see a complete audit of the DNR and other state agencies to assure accountability. That is the guy we want as governor. What ever happened to commonsense politics and accountability? Seems like commonsense is not all that common. Tom Tiffany is a commonsense guy with Wisconsin pride and integrity. That's why SCI First for Hunters is backing him financially and with all of the energy our members can generate.

SE WI Bowhunters Chapter Report

by Dan Trawicki, President

We surpassed 60,000 views, according to Kyle Schmidt's last update before this issue was going on press, for our ads urging fellow hunters and other like-minded conservationists to get out and vote! He pointed out that it's getting a lot of attention, some good, some bad, but nonetheless, the message was getting out to vote early.

Joel Kleefisch said, "I think the ads look fantastic. If only every view was an actual vote."

And Steve Van Lieshout noted that, "With all the blatant attack ads out there, what negatives can there be with these SCI ads promoting voting?"

He's right.

We could literally change the outcome of every election in this state if we got more than the turnout our men and women have typically given. Voting is our most important tool to combat complacent legislators.

The two ads we cut and released to surpass 60,000 views as of press time will be followed by two more ads we'll be sharing while this magazine is being

printed and mailed. By the time you read this you probably have seen our ads reminding people to vote. They are not endorsed by any particular candidate, we just want hunters, anglers, trappers, and others who share a love of our outdoor heritage to help shape the future of conservation and our favorite traditions and lifestyles. Sportsmen have the power to impact this election in our favor.

As I always say, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

I look forward to seeing you in Nashville and at our banquets!

SCI Applauds Executive Orders Expanding Hunting & Fishing Access

by SCI HQ

Region 16 SCI members in Wisconsin and Illinois and elsewhere welcome recent executive actions to strengthen America's hunting and fishing outdoor heritage. The executive orders, "Reinvigorating America's Hunting Heritage" and "Restoring American Saltwater Angling and Recreation," are intended to expand access and opportunities for hunters and anglers across the United States.

Members here are using this to remind your Illinois and Wisconsin contacts that SCI has long championed policies that recognize hunting and fishing as essential components of wildlife conservation and America's outdoor traditions. The executive orders support increased access on federal and state lands, expanded hunting opportunities on national monuments, greater use of skilled volunteers in

wildlife management, and enhanced venison donation programs. These measures align with SCI's longstanding

priorities and commitment to ensuring future generations can continue to enjoy the outdoors.



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First Learn to Hunt Doves

by Mark LaBarbera

Lee DeBruin and his son Blake, 13, drove more than 200 miles in September to be students in the only learn to hunt doves event registered with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources R3 program. SCI members made it possible but chose to stay anonymous.

"Quality time together was as much a motivator as learning how to hunt a new species for both of us," said Lee.

"It was fun, and I got birds," Blake added with a wide grin revealing shiny braces as he held up three mourning doves.

Eighteen-year-old Gabriel Wedig of Cuba City was Top Gun with 11 doves of the 40 doves killed that Saturday afternoon. His secret?

"I didn't hesitate to shoot. You can't get 'em if you don't take the shot," said Wedig, who became a prolific wing shooter through the Benton High School clay target team. His brother Caleb, 10, shared the blind with him and got two birds. Their trap coach and her daughter were also in the blind with them and their mentors.

Coach Marion Lovell of Benton, Past President of the Izaak Walton League Southwestern Wisconsin Chapter and IWLA Wisconsin Division Secretary, recruited the Wedig's and her daughter Alexis Fladseth, 27, who drove 93 miles from Helenville for the Mineral Point training and Hazel Green hunt.



Fantasia with doves

The family teams were six of 11 students participating in the Grant County Outdoor Sports Alliance (GCOSA) event. About the same number of volunteer mentors stayed within reach of the students to answer questions, call the shots, and keep everyone in each blind focused on safety.

Dieter Johnson, 11, of Mineral Point and Marshall Braun, 15, of Platteville dropped birds with their 20 gauges, while Jameson Tranel, 12,

of Bloomington, had success with a 12 gauge. Fantasia Johnson, 40, of Gurnee, Illinois, was comfortable in the field and on the practice range with a variety of shotguns shared by mentors. She has had success on learn to hunt events for other species, but this was her first time for doves.

"I like it," she said. "It's fun in the blinds and at the shooting range."

Historically, the most common learn to hunt events are for deer and turkey, with some bear, waterfowl, and small game hunts throughout the years, but no registered dove hunts, according to Emily Iehl, Hunting & Shooting Sports Program Specialist with the DNR's R3 program focused on recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters,



Lee & Blake DeBruin

trappers, and anglers. She notes that dove hunters across the state are introducing others to the country's most popular game bird, but they are not necessarily official learn to hunt events coordinated through the DNR.

GCOSA President and hunt organizer Chuck Horn said, "Dove hunting is a great early season hunt! Dove season starts while the weather is still really nice, can provide ample opportunities to harvest an abundant species, and doves are found all over the state and all over the country."

According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banding studies, about five million mourning doves migrate from Wisconsin each year. The feds estimate



the mourning dove population is about 350 million birds in North America and doing well. The birds raise multiple broods each year, contributing to the steady population. Predators, hunters, and other causes of mortality have not hindered the doves from sustaining healthy populations here and across the continent.

Horn added, "Dove hunting provides many unique and challenging shooting experiences and is a great way to sharpen your shotgunning skills. If you're a proficient dove hunter, most other wing shooting will be a piece of cake! Last but not least, doves are a tasty source of protein. Bacon-wrapped dove breasts are a great appetizer for just about any meal!"

In fact, he prepared and served doves to students after the classroom session required for the learn to hunt program. Horn, a retired conservation warden supervisor, shared his PowerPoint presentation covering fire-arms safety and specifics related to dove hunting. In addition to explaining safe zones of fire, he emphasized bird identification to help students recognize shapes and flight patterns of other birds



that could be confused with mourning doves.

He was assisted by a new hunter education instructor who has participated in other GCOSA squirrel and pheasant hunts. Megan Dudenhoeffer, 32, of Madison was both a student at this dove event and an associate instructor.

GCOSA Treasurer, Rick DeWitte, mentor Larry Hazen, Dr. Scott Sandholm of UW-Platteville's Pioneer Sportsman's Club, and others worked





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with students on safe firearms handling and wingshooting techniques during the classroom session and practice at the Point & Flush Kennels clay target ranges near Dickeyville.

DNR Conservation Warden Jane Voskuilen explained the 15-bird daily and 45-bird possession limits along with other laws. For example, steel shot is required only on public land when hunting doves, which is a federal migratory species.

The group used only a few of the 40+ Promatic target throwers on the sporting clays and five-stand courses. Point & Flush's Chris Fields and Kate Koester said they are in the process of adding trap fields and centerfire ranges for pistol, tactical, and rifle out to 1,000 yards. They also run Point and Flush Sportsman's Club with pond and marsh hunts, and with Master Gunsmith Shawn Rickelman, they own Top Gun Sporting Goods in nearby Dickeyville.

Warden Voskuilen also worked comfortably with male and female students on the unique five-stand course that was a symmetrical series of steps and shooting station platforms in one continuous wooden structure in an open field. Trap throwers in nearby prairie grass and pine woods



Doves students Caleb Wedig and Marion Lovell



threw birds in all directions and distances. It helped prepare students for typical dove hunting where birds can come from any direction and at any height or speed.

After the morning class, range practice, and lunch, everyone drove to the Hazel Green private property that was planted last May and early June by volunteer Eric Moltzan of Muddy Miss Guide Service. He makes his living guiding waterfowlers on the Mississippi River each fall, snow goose hunters in the spring, and Lake Michigan anglers each summer through his Blue Fin Charters business.

"There's just something special about dove hunting that makes you want to volunteer and help others get into wing-shooting," said Moltzan, who planted sunflowers, sorghum, and other grains from local Wings Over Wisconsin, National Wild Turkey Federation, and Pheasants Forever chapters in small fields owned by willing neighbors.

"One thing we learned that might be helpful to anyone else wanting to hunt doves," said Moltzan, "is that it might be easier to just work with local farmers who chop corn and coordinate with them so you bring students to hunt right after the fields are harvested. We've seen birds just pile into those fields. If there's water and gravel nearby, that's even better. Doves use sand and small stones for grit to grind food in their gizzard."

To learn more about learn to hunt opportunities, visit <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/lth>.



HUNTERS' HAPPY HOUR

Join the Illinois & Chicago Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI) for Hunters' Happy Hour to mingle with other hunters and Chapter Members. Bring a friend, enjoy food & drinks, share stories, and learn about upcoming events.



Enjoy a night of food, camaraderie, and door prizes!

When is it? Wednesday, November 11, 2026

What time is it? 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Where is it? Shoeless Joe's Ale House & Grille
1480 West Lake Street
Addison, IL 60101

Coming soon to your email and our website
www.sci-Illinois.com
on how to register for this upcoming event!



RSVP to: Annette Jones, Secretary for the SCI
Illinois & Chicago Chapter, at (630)864-8351 or amj223@outlook.com.
Please RSVP by November 7

Hunt Iguana Rut

by Jay Trudell

Other than alligators and crocodiles, there aren't a lot of lizards in the SCI record books. So why a story about iguana hunting? Because it's crazy fun! I've been blessed to do a lot of big game hunts in my life, but this hunt tops all of them on the fun meter!

It all started when a client and friend of mine came into my taxidermy studio bragging about how much fun he had hunting iguanas in Florida. He, his wife, and their kids all went on this hunt and had a blast. Their guide took them out on a bass boat with a black lab by his side, so I was immediately interested! I have and love labs. Then he told me it was in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and I knew that my wife and I were already headed down there for a cruise.

Cheri, my wife, and I were able to add a day to our vacation before our cruise. I booked the hunt with Captain Mike of the Florida Outdoors Company (floridaadventureoutfitters@gmail.com). Mike told me we would be hitting the iguana rut perfectly. As it turns out, the rut is really a special time to hunt iguanas because the males turn a bright orange color, making them easier to spot. Everything was coming together and sounding very exciting.

The morning of the hunt, we took an Uber to a boat landing off the canals of Fort Lauderdale. It was kind of a secluded spot where we met Captain Mike, his wife, and the star of the hunt, a black lab named Scout. We loaded up on Mike's bass boat and drove a bit through the canals. After a short while, we slowed down and started looking for iguanas in the trees and on shore. It wasn't long before we spotted one.

I took the first shot; it seemed like I missed, but Mike said I'd hit it. It didn't even flinch! We then learned that sometimes it takes a few shots to either kill or knock them out of the trees for Scout to retrieve. Game on! I'd cock one gun and hand it to Cheri, and then I'd shoot the other one.

We got locked in on where to headshot them, and we had iguanas falling into the canals. Scout would grab them, surprisingly careful to avoid getting bitten by them, they have a lot of teeth! He'd bring them back to the boat and Mike finished a few with a billy club. We soon had a pile of them.

Some were pretty big! Cheri got the first

giant lizard with a perfect head shot way up in a tree. We then went to an area where Mike had seen a big one that they were unable to get a few days before because it was by a house. We floated the area quietly and, sure enough, we found him. He was in a tough spot where we had to get just the right angle on him. I drew a bead and nailed him! After that, we decided to be done, but on our way back, we found the biggest one of the day. He had a broken tail, but his body and head were huge!

Cheri and I unloaded on him, and after several shots, we knocked him down to where Scout could grab him. He was cool: bright orange and big!

Overall, I'd rate this half-day hunt a ten out of ten. If you're ever around the Fort Lauderdale area, give Captain Mike a call, you won't be disappointed!



Illinois & Chicago Chapter and Friends Donate to Scouting America Camp Sol R. Crown Fishing Project

by Annette Jones, Secretary

Camp Sol R. Crown, located in Trevor, Wisconsin, has served Scouts since 1959, when the Crown family donated the property to the North Shore Area Council. The camp honors Solomon Robert Crown, a Chicago-born entrepreneur and World War I veteran who was born in 1893 and died of tuberculosis in 1921 at age 27. Prior to dedicating the camp with Solomon's name, the camp had provided a venue for Scout camping, leadership training, and Klondike derbies.

Today, Camp Sol R. Crown is a 148-acre Scouting facility just north of the Illinois border. While the camp is in Wisconsin, most participants come from Lake, McHenry, and northern Cook counties in Illinois. The Northeast Illinois Council is proposing a two-acre fishing pond as a year-round destination for Scouts and families. The vision is to have a lasting conservation and outdoor education resource, with a fish habitat, spawning areas, shoreline access, fishing piers, and infrastructure for hands-on learning and future conservation initiatives.

- The planned features are as follows:
- Two acres of surface water, with depths reaching 18 feet;
 - Purpose-built fish habitat and extensive spawning flats;
 - Fishing piers and accessible shoreline opportunities;
 - Dedicated water well and water-level management infrastructure;
 - Gravel perimeter walkway and access;
 - Gravel parking area, including ADA parking;
 - Initial fish stocking and ongoing fisheries management;
 - Storage to support fishing and program equipment; and
 - Future program pavilion adjacent to the pond.

This initiative was introduced to the Illinois & Chicago Chapter and was a natural fit with the Chapter's conservation initiatives and creating a platform for future youth-led conservation work. Conservation was the forefront of this

project to ensure that Scouts have a place to fish, learn and serve. The opportunities are endless for the potential with this project which could provide fishing merit badges, family fishing events, responsible angling instruction, habitat projects, Eagle Scout service projects, and youth service projects to help with conservation education. The timeline for completing the major milestones include earthwork, well and pond infrastructure, filling the pond, and initial fish stocking with a target opening for Scout programming in May 2027. The Illinois & Chicago Chapter have generously

donated to this project and will have an opportunity for our members to donated at our upcoming Hunters' Happy Hour in November.

Already, the chapter's involvement raised awareness of this worthy effort. As a result, the Outdoor Heritage Education Center (www.OHECyes.org) has arranged with partners like Daniel and Brenda Syvrud of Windy Corner Wings and others to help OHEC deliver more than 200 Zebco youth spincasting rod and reel combos.

For more information on this project, contact Nick Roberts, South Executive & CEO, at Nick.Roberts@scouting.org.



36 Years of Deer Hunt Wisconsin TV

by Dan Small

The 36th annual episode of *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* will air in November on The Sportsman Channel (TSC) plus multiple Wisconsin public community media stations, as well as on Milwaukee PBS and PBS Wisconsin.

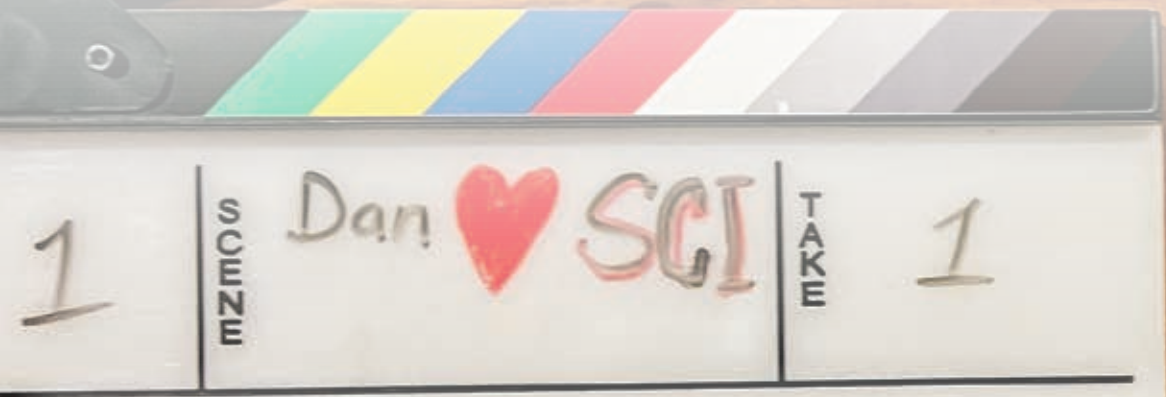
Historically, the deer show has first aired the week before the opening weekend of Wisconsin's firearms deer season and multiple times after the initial airing. Continuing the tradition, it will air on PBS Wisconsin across the state on Thursday, November 12 (time

TBD) and on the weekend. Catch it on Milwaukee PBS on Thursday, November 12 at 9 pm and Saturday November 14 at 9 am. Plus it will air on The Sportsman Channel Saturday, November 14, anchoring the whitetail block that runs from 5-8 pm. Dan will be talking about it on Wisconsin Public Radio's Lee Rayburn Show November 11 at noon, and will share updated airtimes. Lee replaced Larry Meiller when he retired this year.

Our goals with this show are to provide an update on deer biology, research, and hunting opportunities

and help new and seasoned hunters prepare for the annual firearms deer hunt. This year's show includes tons of great deer footage and, among many segments, one about SCI Life Member Mark LaBarbera's odd-antlered buck taken during bow season.

Deer Hunt Wisconsin was originally a joint production of Milwaukee PBS and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. For the first several years, it aired for a full hour as a live simulcast on Milwaukee PBS, all PBS Wisconsin stations, and WDSE-TV in Duluth/Superior. Milwaukee PBS



Watch Deer Hunt Wisconsin TV Special!

Catch the broadcasts of Dan Small's award-winning show on these stations:

The Sportsman Channel
PBS WISCONSIN (Wisconsin Channel)
MILWAUKEE PBS (Flagship Channel)
Wisconsin Community Media Stations

Throughout November & December!
Check local listings for dates & times.

Mark LaBarbera & Dan Small

DEER HUNT WISCONSIN
View Segments and the Entire Show!

Find us on: **facebook.**

See **Deer Hunt Wisconsin Facebook Page** for updated air times and stations

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Viewers love having photos taken with Dan at the Milwaukee JS Sports Show.

produced the live broadcast, which featured interviews with DNR staff, pre-recorded segments, and several dozen DNR biologists, wardens, and administrators manning phones to answer viewers' questions.

The very first episode in 1991 garnered the largest audience of any program aired on Milwaukee PBS for the entire month of November, beating out everything from *This Old House* and *Sesame Street* to *Nature* and *National Geographic*. A perfect storm of new regulations, partnerships with the DNR

and PBS Wisconsin, and the lack of online sources for information combined to create a huge and engaged audience for a live, call-in show. The phones were still ringing an hour after the show ended, so several of us took all the phones off the hook to put an end to the calls.

Deer Hunt Wisconsin no longer airs as a live broadcast, but programs follow a familiar pattern. Each year, we offer information on new regulations, safe hunting practices, chats with DNR wardens and biologists, a hunting

forecast for each region of the state, and stories from successful hunters. Many episodes have featured hunters from diverse backgrounds, some with physical or developmental challenges. Viewers have consistently told us how much they appreciate the show and the information it delivers.

Over its long run, *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* has undergone many changes. My company, Dan Small Outdoors LLC, now owns and produces the show in partnership with Mark LaBarbera and Associates. Mark and I also shoot some segments, and we all contribute content ideas.

Funding sources have changed, too. The Wisconsin DNR was a major sponsor until 2017, and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism sponsored the show from 2011 through 2018. Several SCI chapters have provided funding support since 2011. SCI Wisconsin (14 years) and Badgerland (13 years) chapters have sponsored the show for more than a decade. SCI Bowhunters (two years), Lake Superior (three years), and Northeast Wisconsin (three years) chapters have also sponsored the show. Our friends at Northeast Wisconsin chapter are with us again, along with Wisconsin and Badgerland chapters. Bow chapter focused finances on helping Tom Tiffany's campaign for Governor, and we look forward to the possibility of them re-engaging on the deer show next year. Together, these chapters have helped us demonstrate to a broad and



diverse audience that SCI supports efforts to depict hunters and the hunting lifestyle in an accurate and positive light.

Additional sponsors this year help keep the tradition alive, including Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show plus MEC Outdoors (14 years), Outdoor News Publications (13 years), Serpent Arms (three years), Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's Cherish Fund (two years), EHD-fense (two years), Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors Association (two years), Wildlife Research Center (13 years), Waukesha County Conservation Alliance (two years), and Vortex Optics (six years). We are welcoming enthusiastically new sponsors Henry Repeating Arms, Conservation First

K5 Chosen as "Official Land Services Company"

by Mark LaBarbera

Phil Kieler is a hunter, planner, business owner, and equipment operator with specialized equipment that helps SCI members and other landowners improve each property's wildlife and conservation value.

Watching Kieler's videos, Dan Small was impressed. They talked. He was more impressed.

They struck a deal and now K5 Land Conservation Services is "The Official Land Services Company of Dan Small's *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* 2026."

When you see the videos, services, and coverage area on <https://k5land.com>, check out the forestry mulching information. Kieler notes, "This is a land clearing method that uses specialized machinery to cut, grind, and clear vegetation in a single process. Instead of piling and burning debris, the material is converted into natural mulch that helps protect the soil from erosion and promotes healthier ground conditions. It is ideal for residential, agricultural, recreational, and commercial properties.

Bank, Reveal trail cameras, Whitetails Unlimited, K5 Land Conservation Services, and RackJak. As of press time for this magazine, we are waiting to hear from other potential new sponsors. If you personally or your company or organization is interested in contributing and being included in next year's show as a Producer or Sponsor, please contact Mark at MLaBarbera57@icloud.com today. We are already working on *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* 2027. Use that same email to let us know if you have good deer hunting footage shot horizontally or in landscape mode to fit the TV screen.

The biggest change to *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* came in 2011, when we began producing two versions of the show: one for Fox Sports Network (which later became Bally and then

Fanduel), and one for PBS audiences. The Fox version allowed us to include commercial messages from our many sponsors, whereas the PBS version is free of commercials. In addition to Wisconsin, the Fox/Bally/Fanduel North network reached audiences in Minnesota, Iowa, and both Dakotas, which greatly expanded our coverage. Now, The Sportsman Channel helps us reach audiences in every state as we showcase the joys of safe, fun, and ethical Wisconsin deer hunting, as well as the hunter's role in conservation.

For the past several years, we have also made the show available to the Wisconsin Community Media Association, whose members operate local cable stations in every corner of the state. These stations are hungry for good content, and they often air our

Sportsman Channel Woos and Wows

by Pat Scuzzin

Program Director Jake Thoele works hard to get what he wants and what he knows is good for his company, the Outdoor Sports Group. This year, he set his sights on wooing "Deer Hunt Wisconsin" into a collaboration with The Sportsman Channel, and he got it in time for the show to air right before the Wisconsin gun deer season.

OSG owns top TV, magazine, and digital brands covering fishing, hunting, shooting sports, and the great outdoors. It owns 42 magazines like *InFisher*, *Guns & Ammo*, and *Game & Fish*, with 14 national and 28 regional titles. Altogether, they entertain an audience of more than 27 million enthusiasts "who devour over 13,000 editorial pages annually," he said, adding that OSG Digital Properties attract over 3 million unique monthly visitors.

"OSG has been a pioneer in outdoors-oriented television production and programming," said Thoele. "Living in Wisconsin, I'm very familiar with the great reputation and long history of *Deer Hunt Wisconsin*."

The show is still owned by two SCI members, Host Dan Small and Co-Executive Producer Mark LaBarbera. SCI Wisconsin, Northeast Wisconsin, and Badgerland Chapters helped sponsor the show on Fox Sports North, Bally Sports and FanDuel in recent years. There are at least two versions of the show, one for commercial television outlets and one without sponsored ads for public television and the "Deer Hunt Wisconsin" channel on YouTube.

Small said, "After exploring offers from various commercial stations owners in 2026, we chose The Sportsman Channel. Mark has a long history with folks there, dating back to when it started in New Berlin, Wisconsin. In fact, Outdoor Heritage Education Center worked with them decades ago on the huge Hunt.Fish.Feed. humanitarian service initiative that provided wild game protein to food pantries and shelters in Illinois, Wisconsin, and elsewhere. When they said this year they wanted us in their special whitetail block, we knew it was like, 'Wow!' and it would be a great place for us, SCI chapters who sponsor us, and our other supporters."



Jordy Zeller, 3, helps grandma Coni.



Jon Small shot this 2025 buck in far northern Wisconsin.



Dan Small Loves SCI

by Mark LaBarbera

For many years, viewers in Wisconsin and four neighboring states have seen and heard Dan Small promote the positive image of hunters on *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* TV specials with help from the SCI Badgerland Chapter, SCI Northeast Wisconsin Chapter, and SCI Wisconsin Chapter. SCI ads run twice in each airing on commercial TV plus in the credits. Public TV requires shows recognize sponsors only in the credits. And Dan talks about SCI on 20+ radio stations that carry his weekly "Outdoors Radio with Dan Small" program.

SCI leaders and fellow members recognize the value of having a trusted third-party endorsement and outdoor celebrity like Small telling others, including the general public, about the value of hunters as America's leading conservationists. He has met resistance during decades of working with some non-hunting and anti-hunting decision-makers at some media outlets. Next time you see him at a chapter fundraising event or in the Outdoor Heritage Education Center's booth at Open Seasons Sportsmen's Expo in the Dells or the Wisconsin Hunting & Fishing Expo in Green

show multiple times in November and December, adding greatly to our in-state audience.

Over the years, Deer Hunt Wisconsin has won many awards from the Outdoor Writers Association of America, the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers, and the Best of the Midwest Media Fest. We hope this year's show will be another award winner and continue the streak.

We began planning this year's episode during last year's deer season, when we recorded several hunts and interviews with successful hunters. Some of those hunters took their first

Bay, ask him about the behind the scenes battles on behalf of all hunters.

As usual, Dan Small over-delivered for SCI and other sponsors with bonus publicity on Outdoors Radio, plus extra audiences via community TV stations across Wisconsin. It helps that he is an SCI member who has seen the continued growth and good work of SCI chapters in Illinois and Wisconsin.

The sponsoring SCI chapter's names or logos also appear as part of Deer Hunt Wisconsin's promotional tune-in ads in multiple issues of Wisconsin Outdoor News, Illinois Outdoor News, and Minnesota Outdoor News.

Small also included SCI in the show credits when it aired on PBS Milwaukee, PBS Wisconsin statewide, and community media stations across Wisconsin. The public TV version cannot include commercials, he explained. The show is also on YouTube without commercials.

The production relies on support from many sponsors and underwriters who each contribute to getting Deer Hunt Wisconsin's positive hunting and conservation message to the public.

invite you to send photos of yourself, your family and friends with deer for possible use in this year's show to dsoradio@gmail.com. We think you'll enjoy this year's show and learn something as well.

Editor's note: Past episodes of *Deer Hunt Wisconsin* are archived at <https://www.youtube.com/@DeerHuntWisconsin>. This year's show will also be archived there in early November.



Illinois Hunt Camp 2026

Our nation celebrated National Hunting and Fishing Day on Saturday, September 26th. In honor of this day the Illinois & Chicago Chapter exhibited their Wildlife Trailer at the Illinois Hunt Camp, a one-day social event for adult hunters of all types and abilities. Hunt Camp helps new hunters find their place within the outdoors community. This annual event is hosted by the Illinois Learn to Hunt Program out of the University of Illinois.

The location this year was the St. Charles Sportsmen's Club in Elburn, IL. It's a great event with dozens of exhibitors and hundreds of attendees all eager to learn about hunting. Attendees talked to a variety of vendors and conservation organizations like SCI. They won dozens of prizes, including the grand prize of a lever action rifle donated by the Illinois & Chicago Chapter. They also won mentored hunts for their first hunting experiences.

These included hunts for deer, pheasants, ducks, geese, turkeys, doves and squirrels! Attendees could try their hand at trap shooting, archery and fishing. And a popular contest was the wild game recipe cook-off. Everyone sampled the different cuisines and voted on their favorites. The winning chef featured venison curry over rice! But the biggest winners for the day were all of the new hunters being introduced to our nation's hunting heritage.



NDA Joins SCI, Others for FFA Wildlife Career Development

by Mark LaBarbera

The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter of the National Deer Association joined SCI Wisconsin, Badgerland, and Northeast Wisconsin Chapters and others supporting students and educators statewide through the Outdoor Heritage Education Center's work on FFA Wildlife Career Development Exam program, including a new October workshop OHEC ran at UW-Platteville.

"We're glad to help connect youth and families to conservation," said the NDA Chapter's Dr. Matt Andrews of Cuba City Family Dental. No, it was not like pulling teeth as OHEC engaged schools, volunteers, and sponsors all across Wisconsin.

Creating future leaders each year will be easier with continued support from

groups and individuals as diverse as SCI, Owen & Mary Demo, Izaak Walton League, Cuba City Lions, Pheasants Forever, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, National Wild Turkey Federation, and State Farm Insurance Agent Jordan Holthaus.

Ruth Ann Lee has been serving the ag and wildlife communities for years as superintendent of the State Competition of the Wisconsin FFA WCDE as part of her Executive Director role at the charitable nonprofit Outdoor Heritage Education Center organization. Regional WCDE competitions culminate with the statewide exam she created and administered each spring. Students from school districts across the state are welcomed to the UW-Madison campus to share what they have learned with her OHEC judges panel. Lee worked

with FFA and OHEC partners to create the written and identification exams and team practicum exam.

This year, a new fall workshop was added at UW-Platteville with key funding from Owen & Mary Demo of Belmont and others. The couple's commitment to conservation and education is part of their ongoing legacy. Their matching funds helped multiply the impact of many other groups to make this all come together for students, educators, parents, and partners.

Designed to enhance student achievement and knowledge and set them up for success at the regional and state competitions, the new workshop added to the year-round value of this statewide educational initiative. Each donation to the October workshop and

May state competition plays a key role for FFA WCDE to not only create more conservation-minded citizens but also steer students toward careers that serve all of us who care about wildlife conservation and healthy natural resources.

Leaders of the OHEC FFA WCDE collaboration will be generating publicity for the initiative and the current roster of donors. For now, Lee said, they simply want to say thank you

to the following featured sponsors who are helping support expansion to recruit, educate, and train future leaders who can help conserve wildlife resources long after we're gone: Owen & Mary Demo; Cuba City Lions, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation; SCI Wisconsin Chapter; SCI Badgerland Chapter; Pheasants Forever Marquette/Columbia Co. Chapter; National Wild Turkey Federation Tri-State Gobblers

Chapter; Jordan Holthaus, State Farm Insurance; Izaak Walton League of America Watertown, Southwestern WI, and A.D. Sutherland Chapters.

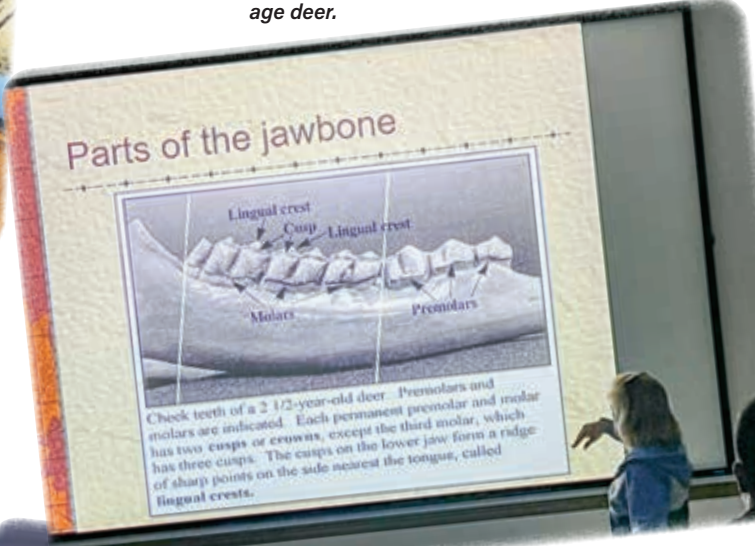
SCI and other sponsors helped students and educators through support for OHEC's FFA WCDE Workshop at UW-Platteville.



Students explore Touch of the Wild



Students identify scat.



FFA's Diane Morgan shared National Deer Assoc. video to help students learn to age deer.

Humanitarian Services:

Big Al Charity Pheasant Hunt Sets Record

by Mark LaBarbera

Forty-eight shooters raised about \$26,240, a new record at the 28th Annual Big Al Charity Pheasant hunt, October 4.

More than \$400,000 generated by decades of tower hunts at Wern Valley has been donated to SCI Wisconsin Chapter's Big Al Fund for support of humanitarian services for disabled Vets and sick children wishing to experience an outdoor adventure we so often take for granted, according to SCI member Rick Rollo.

The one-day event is the culmination of planning and volunteer work that starts a year in advance by Rollo, his family and friends.

Everyone seems like family at this Sunday event. Familiar SCI faces like Regional Representative Charmaine Wargolet, Wisconsin Chapter Treasurer Tim Novak and President-Elect Steve Van Lieshout, plus Badgerland SCI's

Kevyn Quamme added to the success and the camaraderie.

Jake from Wern Valley said he normally needs to beg his staff to work a Sunday event, but for Big Al's the guys ask him well in advance if they can be on the work schedule. It shows. The friendly staff, amazing property and facilities, and great service create a giving atmosphere.

"Wern Valley Sportsman's Club and MacFarlane Pheasants are huge supporters of this event and have been for many years. Without their participation this event wouldn't even begin to happen," Rollo said.

He added that his family and team of volunteers agreed, "There was just something special about this year. Everybody was in a good mood. Everybody was light and fun. Everybody was super happy. My daughter said, 'I don't know what it was, but it was just a perfect year, the weather was great, and the people were in a great mood.'"

The shooting? Well, that's in the eye of the beholder. About 210 of the 500 birds ended up in coolers and freezers. Wern Valley owner Steve Williams pointed to the bright side, noting that about 290 healthy, fast-flying birds are waiting for you and your friends from now into next spring. And if you need more birds released, Patti and Riley Williams remind you that the flight pens have plenty of big birds ready to get out in the many fields and diverse terrain owned by the shooting preserve.

At this year's event, two flights of shooters were treated to lunch that included pheasant pies, cold beverages, and hot coffee. The day begins with quick registration, a safety talk, raffle ticket sales, and orientation.

SCI member Kevyn Quamme, who also serves as President of the Friends of Poynette Game Farm, said, "The action was continuous at most of the 13

stations we rotated through, with only a slight wind, and plenty of clear sky."

Back inside, the day continued calling out ticket numbers for tons of good raffle prizes donated by participants and others. The group also heard

stories about the good work resulting from their generosity and involvement. Two recent examples shared about how last year's proceeds were used helped everyone also feel fortunate to have good health and the ability to help others. First, came the

story of cancer patient Calin Volcensek, 25, whose wish was to go on a black bear hunt last year. Only through the efforts of Big Al's network of friends was Calin's last minute wish fulfilled. Thanks to proceeds from previous Wern Valley

hunts, the fund through SCI Wisconsin Chapter was able to treat Calin and his family to the total hunt experience in northern Wisconsin with help also from Pete Papageorge and SE WI Pheasants Forever. Volunteers Mike & Angela Fuge and others hosted Calin between his brain tumor chemo treatments. Everyone carried bait to the sites and did not complain about hot, sweaty, mosquito-filled hikes into the woods and swamps. In fact, they relished the experience. Not as much as they enjoyed the campfires and home-cooked meals, or

the tourist experiences on the lands and waters of northern Wisconsin.

At this year's fundraiser, participants also learned about Calin's failing health, pain, and lack of balance. He would not have been able to hunt bear this year, so it's by the grace of God and generosity of SCI, Fuges, PF, and Big Al's that Calin can look at his life-size bear mounted by Troy Piotrowski's New Life Taxidermy and find some relief. The dead bear is a living memory that will survive all of us, and Calin's family is forever grateful.

The second update at the fundraiser was about Big Al's and SCI supporting the purchase of an accessible mobile hunting blind similar to Fuge's personal Hjort blind used to fulfill Calin's wish. Charitable nonprofit Outdoor Heritage Education Center organization received a grant and bought a Hjort customize blind fixed to a trailer with removable ramps and doors wide enough to accommodate Action Track Chairs and other outdoor wheelchairs. Thanks to this event, the OHEC loaner blind is now available to anyone hosting veterans, people of all ages with mobility challenges or those with life-threatening illnesses. See www.OHECyes.org or email mlabarbera57@icloud.com.

Editor's Note: Official event photos will be in the next issue, but here's a sampling.

Steve Van Lieshout and Tim Novak pose with a few of the birds heading to the freezer.



Kevyn Quamme, Steve Van Lieshout and Charmaine Wargolet congratulate raffle winner Tim Novak.



Rick Rollo thanked volunteers, guests, and Wern Valley staff.



SCI members like Kevyn Quamme and Mark LaBarbera paused between stations.



Dogs and handlers added to the success.



Report:

Lake of the Woods Muskies

by Mark LaBarbera

Jarod Donar of Oregon, Wisconsin, and Pete Blicharz of Three Lakes, caught nine muskies up to 48 inches on their first trip to Lake of the Woods. Bob Harris of Monticello and his son Jackson caught nine muskies, including two about 50 inches long. Mark Lijewski of Minocqua and Ryan Wallis of Eagle River also caught nine fish, all at least 40 inches. This all happened September 17-19 during the Professional Musky Tournament Trail's first visit to Northwest Angle, Minnesota.

SCI members looking for a place to hunt muskies might note that all of those fish were among 117 muskies caught and released back into Lake of the Woods.

PMTT Tournament Director Tim Widlacki said it's probably the most successful tournament in the trail's 28-year history, for both numbers and size of fish.

It might help to note that Donar and Blicharz won the 2026 Recon Boats



Pete Blicharz with a 48-inch musky he put back in NW Angle, Lake of the Woods, MN.

World Championship by fishing big, natural color, rubber baits in shallow weeds, rocks and slop. They took home \$58,000-plus in prizes,

including a Recon 2085T boat with 150-hp Merc.

The Harris family took second, while Lijewski and Wallis won third place.

Joe Henry of Lake of the Woods Tourism, which hosted the event along with Jerry's Bar & Restaurant, plus Recon, Mercury Marine, Thorne Bros. and others, said, "The Northwest Angle sits right in the middle of Lake of the Woods' best musky water."

It's surrounded by islands, reefs, rocy shorelines and weedy bays that hold big fish, he said, and it's home to resorts that make it easy for SCI members and other musky anglers to spend their days on the water and their evenings on shore nearby comfortably. For more, visit <http://lakeofthewoodsmn.com>.



SCI members could catch this 51-inch musky Rick Hoover released.

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ILLINOIS & CHICAGO CHAPTER
ESTABLISHED 1972

Conservation Today for Generations Tomorrow

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SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2027

5:00 PM

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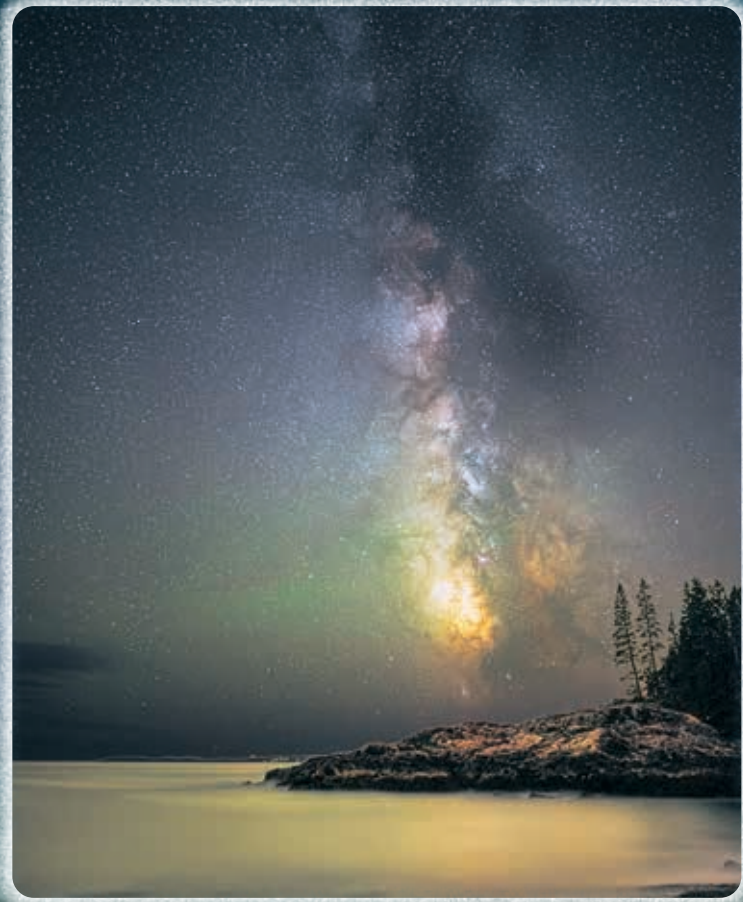
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WI SCI HUNTERS – November/December 2026

Zeller & Haase, Great Photogs



by Mark LaBarbera

Decades of magazine editing has its joys and headaches. Among the many pleasures are the great photos that SCI members and others share freely in support of the cause. Among the world's best, we have been treated to amazing images from members like Jeff Engel and Rick Sasek, and Michelle and Art Helin of Dodgeville.

In this issue, the spotlight is on world class photographers Mel Zeller and Bob Haase.

"I'm still learning every time I step outdoors," said Zeller, who escapes to their land in Humbird, Wisconsin

with her husband Pete. The business executive got serious about nature photography after retiring and has an affinity for astrophotography.

"There are tons of links to articles and YouTube videos about how to shoot the Milky Way," she shared. "I've learned from Capture the Atlas online and have participated in a couple of their tours specializing in the night sky photography. The tours plan the locations and the optimal times to take the photos. I've also followed their editing methodology which is constantly evolving."

Modesty aside, this student could be the teacher. When pressed for a





few details behind her landscape night sky images from across North America, she reveals that she routinely shoots as many as 50 images of the same scene from the same spot at different times of day and night, and then “stitches” them into a “vertical pano” or “multi-row panorama” like her Totem Pole and Big Hogan images here or “stacks” 10 or 20 images like for her Hunters Cove masterpiece at Acadia National Park.

Astrophotography is also a favorite of our other featured photographer Bob Haase of Eldorado, Wisconsin. In this issue, we are featuring big bear images from his trip this summer to Alaska.

“It was the most challenging adventure of my life, but worth every penny,” he said. “My buddy on this guided trip had a cub next to him on a stream bank while momma and her other cub watched intensely.

Fortunately, the cub lost interest in his rubber boots and went back to fishing with the sow.”

Haase’s photos here speak for themselves. What SCI members don’t see is the tens of thousands of images Haase shoots and the hundreds of hours of prep time or post-production work, let alone his hundreds of miles of hiking over decades of being a professional photographer.

He is Board Secretary of the Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association and a long-time conservation leader and educator. His work with trout, walleye, muskies, and other species has had a positive impact on the resource, and his support for education is well-known, both as a teacher in the Fond du Lac area, a radio host, and photography instructor. His volunteer work includes leading fly-tying activities at





Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sport Show, Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expos, and Trout Unlimited youth camps.

Haase's technical skill complements his knowledge of all things wild and wild places. He has an understanding and ability to anticipate what wildlife is about to do, and he is ready to capture it, even if the shot opportunity comes and goes in a second. His equipment allows him

to capture dozens of frames in a few seconds. That helps explain how he comes back to the editing desk with so many images, and most of them are tack sharp, with special attention to focus on the eyes of his subject.

Haase also understands humans and the health benefits of time spent with nature. He promotes healthy outdoor activity, but he also brings nature indoors to senior centers and assisted living facilities where people

are physically unable to go outside. He presents free PowerPoint slide shows, and he gives his calendar photos for residents to put on bulletin boards in their rooms.

Feel free to share these images with others you know who may not be able to get outdoors. For now, we hope you enjoy these sample images from these two amazing photographers.





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Henry #1 Sold for Record \$5.8 Million

It wasn't a rare prototype or a one-off custom build. It was Henry rifle serial no. 1, the very first production Henry, built by New Haven Arms Company in the 1860s and presented to a man standing at the center of American history. Made for President Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, the gun sold on June 27, 2026, for \$5.875 million, the highest price ever paid for a rifle, according to Henry. Other Civil War era Henry rifles can sell for up to \$250,000.

The good news is that SCI members can own a modern one just like the first Henry but at a 99.95% discount!

Henry's New Original Henry Rifle is made in America line-for-line reproduction of the 1860 predecessor. Suggested retail price is \$3,015.

In the 1860s, arms makers often gave their finest work to people who could open doors. Benjamin Tyler Henry had just introduced a genuine breakthrough, a lever-action repeating rifle that could fire 16 rounds without reloading, at a moment when the Union needed every advantage it could get. So, the company presented engraved Henry rifles to three men close to President Lincoln: Secretary of War Edwin Stanton received serial no. 1, Lincoln himself received serial no. 6, and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles received serial no. 9. The rifle presented to Welles became the inspiration behind The Silver Eagle.

Today, collectors know them as the Lincoln Cabinet guns. Lincoln's rifle now sits in the Smithsonian. Welles' is at the Autry Museum of the American West. Stanton's, serial no. 1, was the last of the three still in private hands, and the only one anyone could actually buy.

Stanton is best remembered for the words he spoke at Lincoln's deathbed: "Now he belongs to the ages." It's fitting that the rifle he was given now belongs to history in its own way.

The Silver Eagle features engraved art inspired by Henry's serial no. 9



Here's the part that matters most to anyone who knows lever guns. Every lever-action rifle built in the 160-plus years since, every model, every maker, every variation on that under-barrel magazine and swinging lever, traces its lineage back to this one gun. The 1860 Henry was the design that proved a repeating rifle could actually work in the field, and it set the template that the entire lever-action category has followed ever since.

That's not a small thing. For a century and a half, the lever-action has been the rifle of homesteaders, hunters, ranchers, and everyday Americans who needed a dependable repeater they could trust with their lives. It is and forever will be America's Rifle.

In the late 1850s, metallic cartridges were the coming wave of firearms technology. The new ammunition needed new gun designs capable of taking full advantage of what the quick-loading cartridge offered. Soon, Benjamin Tyler Henry created the legendary repeating rifle that became known as the 1860 Henry in .44 Henry Rimfire.

A pioneering design in a reliable and practical lever action repeater, and adopted in limited numbers during the Civil War, the Henry was the 16-shot rifle referred to as "the rifle you could load on Sunday and shoot all week long."

In the days when the average soldier was expected to be able to fire up to three rounds per minute through his muzzle-loading Springfield rifle, a small unit armed with Henry rifles could provide the firepower of an entire company. That ground-breaking lever action rifle design was the foundation for a uniquely American class of long guns that's still with us today, over 155 years later.

With great effort, and more than a little pride in a job well done, Henry brought back the Original Henry Rifle, made entirely on US soil, just as B. T.

Henry's rifles were. The new Henry Original is true to Henry's 1860 patterns and patents, and virtually identical aside from concessions necessary to adapt to the .44-40 and .45 Colt centerfire rounds that replaced the long-obsolete rimfires. This H011 and H011C use a specially formulated hardened brass receiver with the same tensile strength as steel and they are fitted with a one-piece octagonal barrel and magazine, fancy grade American Walnut stocks, a classic folding ladder rear sight and blade front, traditional half-cock safety hammer notch, and no modernized manual safeties. Both calibers share a 24.5" barrel with a 13-round capacity.

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B. T. Henry gave the first Henry rifle to President Lincoln's Secretary of War.

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WHEN GOOD ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH

***Northwoods Taxidermy is proud to announce
a new, expanded facility coming in 2026!***

Before year's end, we will be opening the doors to our brand-new facility — designed from the ground up to better serve serious hunters and anglers who expect quality, detail, and professionalism.

Our new building isn't just bigger — it's built with purpose:

- ▶ More space for proper specimen care and handling
- ▶ Expanded showroom to display your trophies with pride
- ▶ Improved workflow to maintain our turnaround standards
- ▶ A comfortable, professional setting to meet with clients

This expansion represents our commitment to doing things the right way — investing back into our craft and into the hunters and anglers who trust us with their memories.

Every mount tells a story.

Every detail matters.

And now we'll have the space to showcase that work the way it deserves.

We're proud of where we've been — and even more excited about where we're going.

***Follow our progress and
watch for our grand opening!***

Contact: Kyle Schmidt
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