

SNAKE MEADOW HAPPENINGS

News, Stories and Tidbits from

Snake Meadow Club, Inc.

Moosup, Connecticut

Volume XIX, Issue #1, February 2006

New Member

David Bousquet of P.O. Box 241, Putnam, CT is our newest member. Brother of Steve, Dave is “environmentally conscious, a good sportsman, a hard worker, and will be a solid club supporter.” As a non-member, he has been helping around the club for years and knows many of our members. Sponsors (a bit confusing) are Steve Bousquet, George Pearce, and Kevin Brignole. Dave works in management. Welcome Dave!

Accorded regular member status at the December board meeting were Bob Darigan, John Darigan, Don Bond, Dave Bogle, and Tom Bogue.

New Director

Our newest director elected at a special membership meeting held January 9 is Tom Tessier. Tom has been a member almost three years and replaces Howard Parker, who resigned for personal reasons. Nice going, Tom!

“Our own,” Dave Geer

I have had the pleasure of knowing H. David Geer for many years. While not exactly a club member (although he was in past years), Dave is a permanent fixture at Snake Meadow Club, that is, at all the steak dinners. (No steak-loving patron would ever dare sit in his seat in the fireplace dining room.) Why do I single out Dave Geer? Because he is the consummate World Champion Lumberjack, a terrific guy, and an extraordinary gentleman to boot. Everybody seems to take Dave for granted, but step back a moment and review his achievements.

At age 80, he recently beat all the younger competition—the first 80-year-old to win a World Championship in Lumberjacking—at Lake Haywood, Wisconsin to win the Axe Throwing contest—15/15 bull’s eyes—for the 8th time!

Dave has won the following World

Championships:

....5 times Champion Woodchopper
....5 times Champion Power Sawyer
...22 times Champion Double Sawing
....1 time Champion Single Sawing
....8 times Champion Axe Thower
....4 times Best All Around Lumberjack

Whew! That’s a total of 45 World Championships! In addition, Dave has won over 600 state and regional championships.

When competing in New York State, he tells of the time when he continually bested a bruising 6’4” lumberjack. Dave says he was a good-looking physical specimen but not a very good woodsman. After being humbled by Dave several times, he quit competition.

Presidents Ford, Carter, Truman, and Nixon decorated Dave. Additionally, Nelson Rockefeller, John D. Rockefeller IV of West Virginia, and Norman Vincent Peale recognized him for his extraordinary achievements. He appeared on many television shows over the years. Joining him the last time he appeared on the Johnny Carson Show in 1970 were Loren BaCall and Dr. Spock. The Prime Minister of England acknowledged Dave as the first American lumberjack to compete in Australia.

Several years ago, I attended one of Dave’s exhibitions at the Brooklyn Fair. He carved a chair from a block of wood with his chair saw, a feat he performed often. My

granddaughter Brittany was selected to receive the chair but I recall she was too shy to retrieve it from Dave in front of the grandstand crowd. Yours truly did the honors.

In addition to his exceptional success in his life-long hobby, Dave is a well-known businessman in Griswold and surrounding towns, sand and gravel being his vocational pursuit.

Why not come out to the February 2nd steak supper, bring a guest, get an autograph, and chat with Dave? He's easy going, unaffected by fame and achievement, and a pleasure to talk to. **An autographed, double bit throwing axe actually used by Dave in competition will be raffled. Here's a chance to own a valuable piece of history with guaranteed collector value. This is a very special item.**

Annual Hunt & Banquet

The Annual Hunt & Banquet at Snake Meadow Club is a gala affair that would tickle the trigger finger of any upland hunter and cause the gastronomical juices to flow for anyone who enjoys excellent cuisine. No, it's not about wingshooting wild game, but it is as good as it gets with released birds. And no, Snake Meadow Club is not a five-star restaurant employing area-renown chefs, but it's an acceptable substitute using in-house member talent. This function has been an annual event for as long as I can remember and probably dates back to the early 1970s.

The day starts very early with most members and guests arriving around 7:00 a.m. Travel distances are occasionally great, sometimes as long as two hours of driving time, although most members live within a few to 35-miles from the club. Breakfast is simple, usually coffee and donuts, unlike weekends during the 2½-month regular season when the morning meal is complete and hearty (also cholesterol filled!). The reason for this disparity is the addition of a full-fledged bill of fare for the noon meal on the day of the Annual Hunt.

Although the club membership is less than 100-individuals, normal attendance for the regular weekend bird hunts—Saturday and Sunday—probably averages only 8 to 12-hunters with dogs per day. There are 10 designated hunting areas—each composed of several acres—in which one hunter with a dog has sole “ownership” during his hunt. There could be two or more hunters per area if a member invites a guest or agrees to share the area with another member. Five birds are usually released per area. During the Annual Hunt, 45 to 55-participants enjoy the day. These numbers indicate a very special occasion.

Like any club, Snake Meadow has rules and regulations governing daily and weekly limits for birds' shot and fish caught, although there are no season limits. There is no per bird charge. Each member and guest are allowed 2-birds—usually pheasant—in the bag per day. Sometimes chukar partridge and occasionally, Hungarian partridge are an added bonus. At the Annual Hunt, Hunting Chairman Tom Dufficy, invariably, will bend the rules somewhat to allow for greater indulgence. This is one reason why this special day is probably unique and exclusive to Snake Meadow Club. To many, including this writer, it seems too good to be true.

Obviously, with 10-hunting areas and an increased number of participants, the organized—what we call formal—hunts must be accommodated in “waves,” on a first come first served basis. As with any “checkerboard” hunt (or any hunt for that matter), safety is always the primary concern. There will be several stockings to accommodate increased participation of members and guests. Incidentally, hunting takes place during the week, but no stocking of birds is allowed unless members, by prior arrangement, choose to buy birds (private hunts) at a price that basically represents cost to the club.

But ah, the camaraderie! For those who don't have specific jobs, such as cooking and stocking, the Annual Hunt and Banquet is an occasion to renew past acquaintances and to talk the talk that

sportsmen are wont to do on such occasions. The discussion around the flaming open hearth is both animated and festive. Of course, bird-hunting topics seem to be the most popular. At the last Annual Hunt, I overheard conversations regarding dogs, shotguns, sporting art, sporting books, deer hunting, hunting trips, an up-coming gun show, and fishing for Snake Meadow's giant trout. The list goes on but by and large it's all sporting related.

One of main attractions of the day is the banquet. This eminent and time-honored affair is a full-course meal prepared by the usual—and much-appreciated—coterie of club chefs. *Several* come to mind. This year, Stan Ward, with ample assistance, prepared succulent roast pork with all the fixings. A selection of hors-d'oeuvres, including lobster dip, fresh shrimp, and myriad other equally delectable preparations, preceded the entrée. If anyone had the stomach capacity, a choice of mouth-watering desserts was available. Phew! But, it ain't over yet!

Care to hunt again? You could pursue the remaining ringnecks that by word of mouth, for example, are known to exist in Area 2. You might succeed in convincing Tom to stock a few more birds in prairie-like Area 8, or for the lissome younger set, Area 11—Heart Attack Hill. You'll never know unless you ask!

The cost for participation in this annual event is obviously not included in membership dues, which are modest for the benefits available. Members are charged \$40 for the day. If they bring a guest, the price is \$80. What a deal!

Hunting Committee

By Tom Dufficy

Another hunting season has come to an end. This past season we stocked 1,569 birds including private and junior hunts. We held our Tim Brennan Jr. Junior Pheasant Hunt, a late hunt at which we cooked a roast and baked beans in the ground, a Veterans' Day Hunt, and a very successful Hunting

Banquet. No deer were reported as being harvested this year. Spring Turkey Season will open May 3. Please remember to sign in. A deer / turkey hunt sign-in sheet is located on the porch. To date we have had no injuries / accidents related to hunting or shooting at the club.

The new rifle range rules went into effect this season. With the exception of a few minor problems, everything is going well. Please be sure to know the new rules before using the range. They are posted in the clubhouse and at the range.

Our annual Game Dinner was held on Friday January 20 and was a great success. Thanks to Stan Ward and his committee, which faced some unexpected problems this year. The club was without power all day Thursday until approximately 1 pm on Friday. Bill McCourt, Don Bond and Stan Ward provided the club with generators. Bob Bogle, Dave Belanger and George Pearce did some emergency wiring to ensure that everything went smoothly. Al Muttart did a great job of drawing up a seating plan, and he also printed and donated the tickets. Bob Bogle made the necessary adjustments and repairs to our stoves. Jim Murray was at the club every day of the week to defrost and check on the meat. Don Greene did a great job on the raffle. Over thirty members worked Thursday and Friday. Others also donated game. Thanks to everyone who made this dinner a success.

Looking forward to next year, Roger Tessier has come up with a great idea for the Junior Hunt: a mini game dinner and possibly a venison stew and pheasant. If you are able, please save some venison / pheasant for this hunt.

I would like to thank the Hunting Committee for all the work they did to make this a successful season and for all the additional work they did that is unrelated to the Hunting Committee.

A Hunting Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m. at the club to draw up our 2006 budget. Please plan on attending. Thanks again. Tom

Editor's Note: Following are the financial results for the Game Dinner: Good job and congrats to all for the club-wide effort!

Kitchen Profit	\$3,922.62
Raffle net	\$ 835.00
Bar net	\$1,081.63
Total	\$5,839.25

Thanks go to Don Greene for purchasing sporting items and running the Raffle, and special thanks to Amy Armstrong for donating a gentleman's Buck knife, which she hand-engraved with scroll and a leaping trout.

Fishing Column

By Don Greene

Well it looks like the annual Ice Fishing Derby is in jeopardy if we don't get some continuous cold weather soon. Let's hope for some cold weather so this popular event will occur!

I'd like the Fishing Committee to consider a rule change for the upcoming season. I would propose that a guest could accompany a member if he and the member fish on the "member's" limit. In other words, a member and guest could only keep 3 fish between them *and* they could only catch and release 10 trout. The number of times a member could bring a guest should be high, say 10 times per year or unlimited as long as they fish on the member's limit. If the choice is to exceed the 3 fish per outing limit and the guest keeps 3 fish, then this should be recorded and the member charged some amount for the fish. I would suggest \$15 per fish. A member would be charged \$45 if he and his guest kept a total of 6 fish during an outing. Also, the total fish kept by the member and guest would apply to the member's weekly limit of 6 fish. So if a member and guest fished on a Monday and kept 6 fish, the member could not fish again until the following Sunday (since the 6 fish limit is from Sunday through Saturday).

The advantages of this, as I see it, would allow members to bring more guests without it costing them if they stayed within the member only limits for fish. Also, it should result in more released fish to be caught another day.

The present charge of \$25 for a guest is too low to cover the cost of 3 trout if they are caught and kept. It is also restrictive to a member and guest if they just want to go bass fishing in the summer. Anyway, this is something to consider. Please pass on your thoughts to the Fishing Committee.

As far as the upcoming season is concerned, the upper pond should offer better fishing this year because of the improvements that were completed late last year. Many thanks to the members who donated their time (and \$ in some cases) to make this happen. The deepened areas should keep the water temperature lower at the bottom thereby increasing areas for the trout during the warmer months.

Also, by the pond being drained for quite awhile, the weed growth should be minimized this year and make fly fishing better in the summer.

The Fishing Committee should consider stocking fat head minnows for the trout to feed on. Now is the ideal time: many of the other predator fish (bass, pickerel) are gone or very low in numbers due to the pond draining. This might give the minnows a chance to get established with a healthy population. This will go a long way in keeping the trout healthy throughout the summer and continue to put on weight instead of losing weight.

Now is the time to be tying your flies for the upcoming season. If anyone is interested in learning to tie the basic patterns please let me know and we can arrange a Sunday afternoon in February for fly tying at the club. Tight Lines!

President's Column

By Kevin Brignole

It's been a long and dusty road. There is so little time left to my presidency and so many tasks yet to complete. I thought I would take just a minute to let everyone know what I hope to complete before I "retire."

I think the biggest item would be the lower dam. All the studies appear to be

complete and our engineer is working on the design of the repair. At this point in his analysis the new spillway will be between 50 and 75 feet long. He has started submitting items to the DEP, and I'm hoping that we can wrap it up in the spring of 2006. Although I'm officially finished as of April 7, 2006, I will see the dam to the end if the new administration allows. Our work is not complete on the upper dam either; the spillway needs to be rebuilt and the size expanded. I'm sure we will not get to this by April but, it does need to be done and soon.

One of the next items would have to be the alarm system. We are putting the security system out to bid to three companies. Perhaps the bids will be available for the next Board of Directors meeting April 6.

There is also a possible land purchase of seventeen acres that abuts our club, which I will pursue on behalf of the club.

I am also going to try to get a meeting with the abutting landowners on the other side of the skeet field to see if there is some possible solution to the skeet field dilemma that does not involve the moving of them. You never know.....

If I can get most of these tasks completed, toss in a couple more steak dinners, all before April, I will be very happy.

I could not have made it through the past two years without the help and support of many wonderful members, thank you very much.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members that made our most recent game dinner a great success. It seemed to be touch and go on Wednesday and again on Thursday but by Friday we had the electricity back and Stan Ward and his crew rose to the occasion making it one of the best game dinners on record.

Thank you
Kevin

Treasurer's Report

P. Chase

At this time in our fiscal year, I always question if we'll have the necessary funds in the checking account to at least break even by the end of March. It's obvious that we won't this year. There are many positives and negatives when comparing the budget versus actual, that is, income and expenses that were not budgeted. Far and away the largest of these unbudgeted items was the upper and lower dam expense totaling about \$8,500. It appears from the following pro forma spreadsheet that we will end the year about \$4,500 short. In other words, we made up almost half the dam expense with other budget surpluses, and that's the good news.

How do we pay for the shortage? The answer will have to come from the members, the venue probably being in the form of a special membership meeting sometime in March. We can: (1) take the funds out of savings, (2) borrow against a \$50,000 line of credit established earlier this year, or (3) assess each member \$50.

In the argument for (1), we own a Stock Certificate CD that is the required reserve for paying off each member's stock certificate should the club fold. Since we have an authorized membership of 100, it makes sense to keep no more than \$10,000 in this account. The balance is \$14,155.30 (@5%); the maturity date is 3/15/07. Leaving the balance at \$10,000, we could realize \$3,600 (\$4155 less an approximate \$565 penalty). Or better yet, take all the required money from our "no designation" passbook savings account with a balance of \$5445 and repay these funds when the above certificate matures, thereby avoiding the withdrawal penalty. This option obviously does not jeopardize "land" and other encumbered certificates or investments, and it maintains our cash reserve. This scenario could change if the projected income and expenses are not accurate.

It's probably not wise to draw on the line of credit (option 2) this year. The Capital Committee needs to prioritize the

needed capital improvements, but implementation is a “next year” project. This “in-place” committee has no appointed chairman—add one more task to Kevin’s list!—before a meeting date can be established.

From the above list of options, it could be argued that we don’t need an assessment. Most members probably would be willing to cough up 50 bucks or so, but is it really necessary for this year?

So there you have it, and as they say, there’s more than one way to skin a cat.