Michigan Reforms
Mining Tax Law
Page 1

Gov. Snyder Vetoes
Concealed Gun Bill
Page 3

Mary Lou Sheppard
1933-2012
Page 1

2012 Reader
Survey Results
Page 3

New Law Allows
Wolf Hunting
Page 5

“The Bringers
of Winter”
Page 8

Snow Country:
Living in a “Winter Wonderland”
Page 4

Happy New Year!
2013
Mary Lou Sheppard loses battle against cancer

Mary Lou Sheppard, widow and longtime business partner of former North Woods Call publisher Glen Sheppard, died December 29 at her home near Charlevoix. She was 79.

She had battled cancer in recent months, undergoing treatment last summer. In August, however, she was told by her doctor that the treatment was not working and that nothing more could be done.

Since then, she has been at home, being cared for by one of her daughters. In a recent e-mail to The Call, Mary Lou said she planned to stay there “until the end.” “Some days are good and some are not,” she said, “but there will be no more chemo or radiation treatments.”

During the last several weeks, low energy and “chemo brain” sometimes made it nearly impossible for her to answer e-mail and otherwise operate her computer—or even talk on the phone—but she still enjoyed hearing from friends, loved ones and those she became acquainted with through The North Woods Call.

Despite her deteriorating health, she was reported fairly and good spirits over the Christmas holiday. In fact, she was delighted by several well-wishes and cards during the yuletide season, according to her daughter, Jackie Anderson.

“Last August, she flew out to see my sister in Seattle,” Anderson said in a recent e-mail update. “They had the best time. She really wanted to travel more and invest in the Upper Peninsula, creating good-paying jobs and inspiring economic development in the region.”

As appealing as good-paying jobs and economic development are, conservationists say that the last thing state forests and natural areas need are large-scale mining operations to scar the land and pollute the waters of the Upper Peninsula. Besides, they say, promised financial returns for local governments often don’t fully materialize and the State of Michigan stands to make the lion’s share of any profit.

Supporters of the legislation, meanwhile, insist it is good for both local governments and new mining operations. Not only does it ease up-front costs for companies—they will no longer pay mining taxes until they start extracting minerals—but it also provides local communities with stabilized revenue for small townships throughout upper Michigan, they said.

Mary Lou & Glen Sheppard

GREAT LAKES REPORT: The Michigan Office of the Great Lakes released its annual State of the Great Lakes Report in mid-December. The report—compiled by the Office of the Great Lakes and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality—includes an introduction by Gov. Rick Snyder and discussions of such relevant topics as the sustainability of systems, water quality, water use, aquatic invasive species, Great Lakes Fisheries, coastal wetlands, localized restoration efforts and shared governance as key to the Great Lakes’ future. Overall, the focus is on cooperation and collaboration, and tangible improvements through restoration projects and partnerships.

SKI THE PORRIDES: Pseucoleum Mountains State Park in Ontonagon County is hosting cross-country skiing and snowshoeing by lantern light on Saturday evenings in January and February. The one-mile trail is rated “easy,” although snowshoeing at night can be a challenge. There is a warming shelter where skiers can join the park naturalist for a campfire and refreshments.

SLED DOGS AT MUSKALLONGE: The 14th Annual Tahquamenon County Sled Dog Race was held January 5 at Muskallonge Lake State Park. The race, which had been at the Rainbow Lodge on the mouth of the Two-Hearted River for the past 13 years, was changed due to the 2012 Duck Lake fire, which swept through the northern section of Luce County last spring, destroying the lodge and much of the trail system that the race had run on in prior years.

WINTER CAMPING: A handful of select Michigan State Parks are offering a unique winter getaway experience—“yurts.” Yurts are sturdy, round tent-like structures that have become popular alternative lodging options for winter hikers and cross-country skiers. They are available at the Pseucoleum Mountains State Wilderness Area and Craig Lake State Park in the Upper Peninsula, as well as at the Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Areas in the Lower Peninsula. They are equipped with bunk beds and mattresses, a table, chairs and wood stove. Cost is $60 per night, plus an $8 reservation fee. The yurts can accommodate four people.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP: The Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies near Mancelona, Michigan, continues to play a lead role in equipping Christian students for the important work of serving and protecting God’s earth. In 2012, Au Sable added an Applied Geographic Information Systems (GIS) course, grew its river research program and added two new graduate fellowship chapters at the University of Minnesota and the University of California-Berkeley, as well as 11 new graduate fellows. The institute is looking forward to continuing this work in 2013. For more information, or to contribute to the Au Sable Institute’s work, visit ausable.org.

FUR-BEARER REGISTRATION: Several Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offices are offering registration hours for successful trappers and hunters during the 2012-2013 fur-harvesting season. Anyone taking a bobcat, river otter, marten, or incidental catch must bring the animal to a designated check station for examination. For a full list of locations—including hours and contact information—visit www.michigan.gov/trapping.

SPRING TURKEY APPLICATIONS: Spring turkey applications are now on sale through February 1. The application fee is $4. Hunters may apply for one limited-quota license, or purchase a license for Hunt 234, which does not require the application fee. Licenses can be purchased at any authorized license agent, as well as online at michigan.gov/huntdrawings. The turkey season runs from April 22 through May 31, with hunts lasting from seven to 39 days, depending on the hunt unit. A total of 114,290 licenses are available.

TRAIL PLAN: A draft plan for motorized, non-motorized and water trails in Michigan can be viewed at the DNR’s State Parks and Trails and Pathways web pages. Comments will be accepted through Jan. 25.

MOONLIGHT SNOWSHOE HIKE: The Pierce Cedar Creek Institute near Hastings will host a moonlight snowshoe hike from 7 to 9 p.m. on January 25. Snowshoes are available for rent ($5), or participants can bring their own. Hot chocolate and treats will be available in the visitor center after the hike. You can register by calling (269) 721-4190, or at www.cedar creek institute.org. The cost to non-members is $6, while members are free.
Mary Lou Sheppard died after battle with cancer

(Continued from Page 1) and thought that she would have more for us to do, but then the cancer hit.”

Anderson said her mother was doing “OK” before she got a cancer spot on the neck at the top of her spine. That spot was treated, Anderson said, but the treatment weakened the neck so much that it broke. “So, along with the cancer, Mary Lou had broken a hole and had to wear a neck brace 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ‘I think if she didn’t have the neck issue she maybe would have fought harder,’ Anderson said, but the neck is what she couldn’t do and couldn’t be left alone—which she hated.

Anderson said it was difficult to watch her mother go down so fast, but Mary Lou held up as well as could be expected and they had a Hospice team helping with her last wishes.

As of this writing, no memorial services had yet been scheduled. Arrangements were being handled by the Winchester Funeral Home in Charlevoix.

Anderson said she talked to her mother about these things even a shared a few laughs over it.

Mary Lou wanted to be cremated, she said, then divided up among her children. “Whenever one of us travels she wants a little bit of her taken with us and then spread somewhere special,” Anderson said. That way, she said she will be traveling with each one of us and see life through different eyes. Occasionally, when her mother would get frustrated or upset, Anderson would joke that she was giving her “Mary Lou’s ashes somewhere ‘yucky.’”

“I’d get that look only a mother can give you,” she said.

Mary Lou was preceded in death by her husband, Glen, in January 2011. The couple had gone on to live in death by her husband, Glen, in January 2011. The couple had been stews of The North Woods Call legacy since 1969. After publishing a special memorial edition in February of that year, she closed the business and looked forward to other things.

In August of 2011, she sold what was left of the publication—basically the name and any remaining listing— to the current publisher.

“I don’t know why you would want to take all that work,” she said; she was better off diversifying. That was finally getting out from under the constant grind of the newspaper’s production schedule.

“Those who knew her best say she had a ‘heart of gold,’” said Anderson. “She really seemed to be Shep’s compass and the one who held the business together all those years. There was a reason she was often referred to her as ‘The Boss.’”

“I very much enjoyed the time I spent with her—both before and after Shep’s passing—as I tried to negotiate with the two them over a period of several years about The Call’s future. I will treasure the lunches I shared with Mary Lou in the little Ellsworth restaurant they frequented, and the encouragement and support she offered me during the past several months.”

In 2008 that pays for junior hunting licenses. Many local programs aimed at getting Michigan residents outdoors, recognize this Michigan-based company for supporting the youth of this Michigan conservation. “Meijer is a valuable partner in our efforts to

HUNTER EDUCATION AWARD: Richard Woodbury of Hart, Michigan, has been named the 2012 Volunteer Hunter Education In- structor by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Woodbury started teaching hunter safety in 1997 and serves with his wife, Melissa, as co-instructors of Oceana County’s hunter education efforts. The couple not only conducts hunter education classes, but also assists other instructors in developing their classes and recruits and trains other instructors.

“HUNTER CONSERVATION: The informal giant Meijer Inc. was recently presented with an award honoring the company as a partner in Michigan conservation. “Meijer is a valuable partner in our efforts to increase participation in hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation,” said Drake. “Meijer’s retail stores, together with its Meijer Foods, are major contributors to wildlife in three important cultural areas and deer-car collisions.”

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Rushing for minerals in the Upper Peninsula

There seems to be somewhat of a mining renaissance in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, as mineral extraction firms rush in to capitalize on high commodity prices. According to industry analysts, the number of metals trading on commodities markets at consistently high levels, companies are eyeing long-neglected areas that could be billion-dollar industries in dollars of profits. Many local citizens and conservationists, of course, are concerned about these activities and are scrambling to find ways to protect the land—not if only the mining alogether.

According to a recent report in The New York Times, Rio Tinto, the world’s second-largest mining company, is going after nickel and copper near Big Bay and Marquette, and expects to start pulling ore out this year. Elsewhere to the south, Hudbay Minerals, a public mining company, is pursuing an estimated $225 million project to mine precious and heavy metals, including, gold, silver, zinc and copper. And Orvana Minerals, a Canadian-based company, is seeking chalcocite in another project near Ironwood that the firm says will create $2 billion in economic activity over 20 years. Smaller companies are joining the rush, too, searching for new ore deposits and studying known ones.

According to industry analysts, prices for copper, zinc, iron ore and other metals are likely to remain strong and continue to feed this flurry of activity. Among other things, opponents are worried about long-term dam- age to the environment and how sustainable a mining-led eco- nomic recovery would actually be. But supporters see it as a wel- come comeback for an industry that historically helped shaped the social and economic contours of the region. Support has been particularly strong in the western U.P. commu- nities, as the news media report on dozens of iron ore mines once employed thousands of people. Many residents have hopes that some of those mining jobs might return—if only temporarily—to help reduce high un- employment rates.

Critics say that communities have exaggerated expectations for what mining will do for the local economy and warn that mining towns never succeed over the long haul. U.P. communities, they say, would be better off diversifying. Others say that mining could hurt water resources—especially Lake Superior—and that state and provincial laws protecting these resources are inconsistent and in- adequate.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, meanwhile, reportedly re- quested that the United Nations last year to investigate and confirm oral traditions to protect the land and resources. So the battle lines are clearly being drawn on a variety of fronts among communities everywhere, which will all leads. Conservationists say that those with concerns need to make their voices heard—NOW!

Hunters and Wildlife Reserve

Though often not widely rec-ognized for their efforts, hunters are major contributors to wildlife conservation. They help conserve and manage wildlife in three important ways.

First, for many wildlife species, hunting helps maintain populations at levels compatible with human activity, land use and available habitat. For example, it helps limit deer browse in agri- cultural areas and deer-cut con- flicts.

Secondly, hunters pay for the bulk of wildlife conservation across the nation. The Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, which created an excise tax on guns, ammunition, bows, arrows and other hunting-related equip- ment. This money—which is matched by state hunting license fees—is then dis-tributed to state wildlife agencies based on the land area and the number of li- censed hunters in each state. For example, our state has huddled together in local sportsmen’s clubs and national organizations to raise funds for conservation, preserve private lands for habitat and lobby for legislation that ben- efits wildlife.

How many other resource- users can make these claims?

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Wanted Correspondents

We would like to hear from quality writers & reporters interested in contributing conservation-related content. Advertise from across Michigan—particularly in the northern lower and upper peninsulas, and the capital city of Lansing.

Display Ad Sales

We are seeking self-motivated and conscientious individuals who want to sell display advertisement for a percentage commission.

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Guns targeted by U.S. lawmakers

Law-abiding gun owners would be required to submit to photographs and fingerprinting under proposed legislation aimed at preventing accidental shootings and furthering gun control. But the legislation approved by U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-California). Feinstein said she and her staff have been working on the legislation for three years, and she is planning to introduce the bill early this year.

The bill ostensibly aims at stopping the sale of thousands of so-called “assault” rifles and handguns, while exempting more than 900 hunting and sporting firearms, the senator said. Feinstein authored the 1994 “Federal Assault Weapons Ban” that expired in 2004 and this bill would be the first to address gun control would update that earlier law, she said.

“It will be carefully focused on the most dangerous guns that have killed so many people over the years,” Feinstein said, “while protecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners to engage in legal and constitutionally recognized activities.”

Feinstein said the legislation would protect legitimate hunters and the rights of existing gun owners. It would ban “grandfathering” weapons legally possessed on the date of enactment and exempting hundreds of specifically named weapons used for hunting and sporting purposes, as well as antiques, manually operated and permanently disabled weapons. But the bill said that a resulting ban, and their supporters might have American citizens believe.

In addition to banning the sale, transfer, transportation, importation, possession, ownership, and trade of certain semi-automatic rifles, handguns and shotguns that can accept detachable magazines and/or fixed magazines that take more than ten rounds, the proposed law would outlaw large-capacity magazines, clips and drums capable of holding more than ten rounds.

What bothers gun-rights advocates the most of all, that effort would be to make it legally defined and make it illegal to make such weapons.

Full text for 2012 survey results

Call readers share broad range of outdoor interests

The 2012 Readership Survey has revealed a broad range of personal interests among members of The North Woods Call community.

An equivalent of 12.5 percent of current subscribers—six percent of those who have completed additional training to carry a concealed pistol in Michigan's counties, the forest industry, conservation agencies and government organizations, and the public review and comment period through March 8, 2013. Resources (DNR) has extended the public review and comment period through March 8, 2013. The two gun-related bills that Snyder did sign were House Bill 2525 and Senate Bill 984.

Under House Bill 2525, sponsored by Rep. Paul Ossomper (R-Dewitt), the permit to purchase was retained for non-concealed pistol license holders who wish to purchase a handgun through a private person-to-person sale. Under Senate Bill 984, sponsored by Sen. Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba), elimination of the requirement for a permit to purchase a handgun through a private person-to-person sale.

The Michigan Pistol Database, managed by the State Police, is also retained under the law and citizens can obtain a permit to purchase a handgun at any law enforcement agency, rather than at only in the state. The governor said that new gun laws actually are numerous and complex. With that in mind, we must consider legislation like Senate Bill 59 in a holistic manner. While the bill’s goal is to help prevent needless violence, Michigan will be better served if we view it through a variety of lenses. A thoughtful review that examines issues such as school gun policies, disenfranchised youth and mental health services may lead to more answers and better safeguards.

Michigan firearm purchases

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DNR officials said, “Review of the plans has been under way since early October,” Bill O'Neill, chief of the DNR’s Forestry Division said. “While we’ve already received great feedback, some interested individuals and organizations asked for more time.”

The extension also gives the DNR an opportunity to update the plan and adjustments to the previously approved draft plans, O’Neill said. The update will provide a larger number of harvest areas for a number of species, including aspen, he said.

Those with comments should submit them via e-mail to the DNR’s Community Relations Office, or by mail to DNR Forest Resources Division, Forest Planning and Operations Section, P.O. Box 30452, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7052.
Snow country: Living in a “winter wonderland”

Winter has finally arrived in Michigan. We’ve settled in for at least three more months of snow and ice.

At least that’s the expectation—assuming we don’t have a string of unusually warm years. But even that’s up in the air.

The root cause of this unspeakable mayhem run much deeper than the constitutional right of citizens to keep and bear arms. Society itself is broken and we’ve allowed evil in various forms to seep across our culture. Simply adding to the myriad laws already on the books that regulate weapons and outlaw violent assaults will not fix this problem.

And blaming those who have taken the appropriate classes, submitted to background checks, and voluntarily allowed police to take their fingerprints so they could be legally licensed to carry a concealed weapon is counterproductive.

This population growth was dramatically illustrated by an electrical Vice President Wayne LaPierre, who said, “The only thing that will stop the violence is the, you know, the gun owners both, adding to the myriad laws already on the books that regulate weapons and outlaw violent assaults will not fix this problem. There are many millions of law-abiding gun owners across this land who are as abhorred as anyone at the murderous rampages we have witnessed at the hands of outlaws and maladjusted miscreants. Encroaching further on the rights of gun rights in the face of what occurred recently at the Sandy Hook Elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut.”

That was nearly 45 years ago when the earth’s population was 3.6 billion. We continue to debate this issue today while human behavior, competition for food supplies, excessive pollution and blaming those who have taken the appropriate classes, submitted to background checks, and voluntarily allowed police to take their fingerprints so they could be legally licensed to carry a concealed weapon is counterproductive.

On that point, we agree with National Rifle Association Executive Director Wayne LaPierre, who said, “The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

Conservation Quote

“The purpose of conservation: The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time.” — Gifford Pinchot

The North Woods Call

Michigan’s Conservation Sentinel Since 1923

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Guns and Outlaws

When Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder vetoed legislation that would have allowed concealed weapons in churches, schools and day-care centers, he said the measure was dangerous and unnecessary. Simply adding to the myriad laws already on the books that regulate weapons and outlaw violent assaults will not fix this problem.

And blaming those who have taken the appropriate classes, submitted to background checks, and voluntarily allowed police to take their fingerprints so they could be legally licensed to carry a concealed weapon is counterproductive.

In one of former publisher Glen Sheppard’s first editorials after taking over The North Woods Call in 1927—a former member of the school board set bombs at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut.

We know that this is of little comfort to those wrestling with the moral and ethical alternatives. It is peaceful, exhilarating weather that precedes it.

Whatever happens, we’re prepared for the worst (or best, depending on your perspective). We must wait and see how the world evolves, and in those cases that citizens must have the weapons needed to defend themselves and their families.

On that point, we agree with National Rifle Association Executive Director Wayne LaPierre, who said, “The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

The Population Bomb

In one of former publisher Glen Sheppard’s first editorials after taking over The North Woods Call in 1927, he pondered a letter from a Cheyegogan mother of five who complained about his position on population control.

“Is not a human soul more precious to God than that of an animal?” she wrote.

Population control, Shep responded, is not to save the deer, fish, or quiet places. It is to save mankind from the problems asssociated with too much pressure on a finite number of resources.

That was nearly 45 years ago when the earth’s population was 3.6 billion. We continue to debate this issue today while human behavior, competition for food supplies, excessive pollution and blaming those who have taken the appropriate classes, submitted to background checks, and voluntarily allowed police to take their fingerprints so they could be legally licensed to carry a concealed weapon is counterproductive.

The chronological map had a series of lights that came on to show population density each year from the beginning of human history through the present. At first, the increase seemed minimal, but quickly grew in brightness and intensity during succeeding years, as mankind spread around the world and continued to reproduce.

That’s a disturbing message for those of us who don’t like crowds.

We’re not sure how to diffuse this ticking time bomb, but it’s worth thinking about the moral and ethical alternatives.

We’re not sure how to diffuse this ticking time bomb, but it’s worth thinking about the moral and ethical alternatives.

There are many millions of law-abiding gun owners across this land who are as abhorred as anyone at the murderous rampages we have witnessed at the hands of outlaws and maladjusted miscreants. Encroaching further on the rights of gun rights in the face of what occurred recently at the Sandy Hook Elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut.”

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**The Wild Nearby**

By Tom Springer

**Thanks, Woody. We hear you—and share your primary interest in the issues and legislation that impact the outdoors. As the editor, you have the right to give your opinion, but not everyone wants to hear what you think. I, for one, would rather hear about issues that affect nature, than how one feels politically.**

**Michigan is another step closer to wolf hunting under a new law signed in late December by Gov. Rick Snyder. Under the law, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission has the authority to establish hunt-seasons for the state’s wolf population. The Commission was expected to get an update on the once-endargered species at its regular meeting this month. The Humane Society and other opponents have been fighting the legislation for the past few months.**

**Late January 2013 Page 5**
NRA says Sen. Feinstein overreaches with new anti-gun bill

(Continued from Page 5)

- Targets handguns in defiance of the Supreme Court. The court ruled in District of Columbia v. Heller that the Second Amendment grants the right to have handguns for self-defense, in large part on the basis of the fact that handguns are the type of firearm “overwhelmingly chosen by American society for that lawful purpose.” Semi-automatic pistols, which are the most popular handguns today, are designed to be easily reloadable, and the magazines “overwhelmingly chosen” by Americans for self-defense are those that hold more than 10 rounds. Additionally, Feinstein’s list of nearly 1,000 firearms exempted by name (see next paragraph) contains not a single handgun. Sen. Feinstein advocated banning handguns before being elected to the Senate, though she called a handgun for her own personal protection.
- Contains a larger piece of window dressing than the 1994 ban. Whereas the 1994 ban included a list of approximately 600 rifles and shotguns exempted from the ban by name, the new bill’s list is increased to nearly 1,000 rifles and shotguns. Other than for the 11 detachable-magazine semi-automatic rifles and one other semi-automatic rifle included in the list, the list appears to be pointless, because a separate provision of the bill exempts “any firearm that is manually operated by bolt, pump, lever, or slide action.”

Book Review:
“Waiting for the Morning Train”
By Bruce Catton
1972
Wayne State University Press
Detroit, Michigan

Here’s a thoughtful book by the late author and noted Civil War authority Bruce Catton who lovers of northern Michigan and those troubled by the ever-growing influence of modern technology will want to read. It is simultaneously a boyhood sigh for century and a symphony on the “progress” of man—a story centered in Benzie County and the adjacent region along Lake Michigan’s eastern shore.

Catton grew up in Benzie, a community built around a tiny, unpolluted college, which later became an academy from which the author graduated in 1916.

The progress that mattered in those days was more moral and spiritual than material, and the lessons learned there shaped Catton’s values and perspective throughout life.

Like many of us, Catton was worried about such things as environmental decay, toxic pollution and nuclear holocaust. But what troubled him most was that people had apparently placed their faith in advancing technology, relinquishing control over it and mortgaging their future to it with the same trust that earlier generations had placed in God.

“The trouble with that kind of advance is that there is no end to it,” he wrote. “Development becomes compulsive. It is never possible to call a halt. Once you have taken the first step, you have committed yourself to take the last—some day—even if the last step goes straight off the edge of a precipice.”

“The age of applied technology has one terrible aspect—each new technique has to be exploited to its absolute limit, until man becomes the victim of his own death.”

Viewpoint: NRA says Sen. Feinstein overreaches with new anti-gun bill

Hunting Milestones
A couple of Michigan hunters bagged their first white-tailed deer this past fall. It was a milestone for each. Ten-year-old Brien Kees of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan (above), got an 8-point buck on September 22 during the Michigan Youth Hunt—his first hunting experience. Brien is the son of Rick Kees and the grandson of Carole and Charles Kees, also of Mt. Pleasant. Meanwhile, Shirley Schneider of Bliss, Michigan (below), harvested her first deer on the opening day of the 2012 firearm season—just four days shy of her 70th birthday—at the family hunting camp near her home. Shirley’s brother—who was considered the “camp counselor”—and his wife both passed away recently, and the buck was shot from an apple orchard on their property. Shirley figures her brother sent the deer to her and who can argue with that? Although Shirley has hunted for many years, it was the first time she had actually fired at a deer. Her husband, Norm, was hunting with his son in Vestaburg that day and did not see his wife’s triumph. At a consolation prize, however, he bagged his own deer that day.

* * *

Press your opinion on gun ban proposal. You can also write or e-mail your opinion. Hear from you if we are going to defeat this bill. Our elected representatives in Congress must reduce her bill on January 3rd. President Obama’s 2013 gun and magazine ban. Our elected representatives in Congress must hear from you if we are going to defeat this gun ban proposal. You can also write or e-mail your senators and representatives to express your opinion.

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The National Rifle Association
Guy Kistler: An insistent voice for better water quality

Michigan water quality may be much better today than in years past, but it has taken considerable vigilance by generations of conservationists to make that happen. And there’s still more to be done.

For more than a half-century, Battle Creek native Guy Kistler was at the forefront of efforts to clean up southwest Michigan’s Kalamazoo River and bring about stricter water pollution control laws in the state.

Year after year, Kistler studied and lectured about the river and the growing problem of water pollution across the state. He faced off with the so-called Lansing bureaucracy and lobbiests and hard-edged to get “more teeth” in Michigan’s anti-pollution laws.

Along the way, he was named 1969 “Water Conservationist of the Year” by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs and “National Water Conservationist of the year” by the National Wildlife Federation.

But he collected more notoriety than honors. “A lot of people imagine, the paper mills didn’t like me a bit,” Kistler told North Woods Call Editor Mike VanBuren during a mid-1980s interview for the Kalamazoo Gazette.

One paper mill executive threatened to take his company and leave town if the firm was forced to clean up its pollution, he said. “My answer to him was: ‘Why don’t you go ahead?’ He didn’t have any answers to that.”

Kistler was 89 at the time of the Gazette interview, but some of the old fire returned to his eyes when the riverfront was named in his honor. “It was a tough campaigner for a clean river,” he said. “People could dredged it out, where would they put it?”

Through the years, he became a tough campaigner for a clean environment.

“After a while, you get hard-edged,” Kistler said. “You aren’t afraid of anybody or anything. I didn’t care who I talked to, or how big they were. Anybody who tried to be dignified and nice on a deal like this was making a big mistake, because there’s nothing nice about pollution.”

Kistler lamented that it was sometimes frustrating that other individuals and organizations did not offer more help. “Frankly, I fought the battle all alone (much of the time),” he said. “It was awfully hard to get anyone into this at all.”

But Kistler said he was satisfied with the results of his efforts. “There are laws in Michigan now that will take care of any situation—if you can get anybody to enforce them.”

Kistler finally passed the torch to a new generation of water conservationists during the mid-1990s.

Even then, he didn’t believe that one of his most passionate concerns—the Kalamazoo River—would ever be fully restored.

“I can’t see where it will ever be cleaned up to its natural state,” Kistler said prior to his death in 1990. His reason: the toxic, sticky sludge that covered the river bottom in some places several feet deep.

“That’s why I say, with that mess, pollution, it will never wash out,” he said. “The only way to ever clean it is to dredge it out, but it would cost millions of dollars to do that. There are tons and tons of it. Even if they dredged it out, where would they put it? People are not going to want to spend millions of dollars in taxes to do that.”

Nevertheless, Kistler continued to encourage others to carry on the fight.

“What a wonderful thing it would be if the river were a clean river,” he said. “People could build homes along it, swim and fish like they used to. But as long as there are individuals who want to destroy something, decent things can never happen.”

What happened to the CO field reports?

When this issue of The North Woods Call was being compiled, a fresh collection of bi-monthly conservation officer field reports was not readily available from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. To keep to our production schedule, we decided to not include them in this issue. The CO briefs will return next time. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but hope you enjoy a couple of the other things on this page.

Classified Ads

COMING SOON—From Nebraska ranchers to Nashville Rebels: The Story of the Glazer Brothers: A 99-minute “oral history” about one of the more influential country music groups in Nashville history. For more information, visit the Newshound Productions page at mynorthwoodscall.com.

VIDEO & BOOK—Buck Lake Ranch: Nashville of the North. A 78-minute documentary and 133-page softcover book about historic music park near Angola, Indiana, $19.95 each; $35 for both, plus shipping & handling. For more information, see the Newshound Productions page at mynorthwoodscall.com.

King Copper

This 9,392-pound piece of copper are on display in the Historic Upper Peninsula community of Calumet, Michigan, is a reminder of the days when mining was king and entire communities grew up around the industry. Today, there is much more concern about the environmental impact of mining than there was during the early days when Calumet was a thriving center of commerce—complete with an ornate theater that drew some of the day’s biggest stars. Calumet has bounced back in recent years with a wide range of community development activities and Keweenaw National Historic Park managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The local theater is once again drawing major performers and the Upper Peninsula is attracting renewed interest into the mining industry.

Some are happy about this, while others fear that the ongoing battle to protect the landscape, forests and water quality of the Great Lakes State is becoming more difficult to wage. The North Woods Call notes those who hope that common sense prevails as residents look for more ways to strengthen the economy and create new job opportunities.
The call of migrating tundra swans is unmistakable and always makes me look up. It’s kind of a haunting ow-oh-oh-oh that I hear—very distinct from the Canada goose and sandhill cranes that are also in the area at that time.

Tundra swans are vocal birds, too, seeming to call as much during their autumn migration as Canada geese do during spring.

I have observed significant swan migrations as early as November 4 and as late as the Thanksgiving weekend.

I have come to think of tundra swans as the bringers of winter. They migrate overhead just before things turn very cold and snow starts to appear. Sure enough, on the morning of November 13, the top and windshield of the car were snow-covered. Soon the ponds would be covered with ice.

But the swans will return again in March. At some point—shortly after the ice-out—several thousand will stop over at Saginaw Bay on their way back northwest.

You might want to make a visit to the east side of the bay about then to see and hear a true natural spectacle.

A Stormy Legend

Frigid winter winds bring warm thoughts of the legendary Stormy Kromer cap—a gargantuan replica of which can be found on the outskirts of Ironwood in Michigan’s western Upper Peninsula. The venerable headwear was introduced in 1903, and has been a staple among outdoorsmen and railroad workers for generations. The “windproof” caps were the brainchild of George “Stormy” Kromer, a semi-pro baseball player and one-time engineer on the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. Kromer reportedly made many long, cold trips across the Great Plains and often had to stick his head out the window of a steam locomotive to see where he was going. After the prairie winds stole his cap numerous times, Kromer asked his wife, Ida—an excellent seamstress—to modify an old baseball cap to better keep it on his head. Ida obliged, the story goes, making a six-panel cap with flaps that could be pulled over the ears. Soon other railroad workers wanted the cap, too, and when Ida could no longer keep up with the demand, George hired a few employees and a business was born. The caps were first mass-produced at factories in Milwaukee and Kaukauna, Wisconsin, but the company was purchased by Jacquart Fabric Products in 2001 and the operation was moved to Ironwood. Today, residents of the Gogebic Iron Range sew new Stormy Kromer Caps in a factory near this display.

The “bringers of winter”

Migration Day: The majesty of the tundra swan

By Doug Reeves
Assistant Chief
Wildlife Division
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

November 12 was Veteran’s Day, but it was also a spectacular migration day.

A strong cold front came across mid-Michigan during the early morning hours, accompanied by rain. The rain ended about noon and the temperature dropped from the low 50’s to the upper 30’s. There was a strong westerly wind—sometimes with significant shifts to the north or northwest—conditions just right for tundra swans to migrate.

And migrate they did.

I wish I knew how many flew overhead within earshot of me that afternoon. I was outside much of the day and I saw the first flock at about 11:30 a.m. From then on nearly dark, there were only a few minutes when I could not hear or see tundra swans. Flocks varying in size from about a dozen to nearly 80 flew all afternoon. It was truly spectacular.

One of the most substantial breeding areas for tundra swans is in western Alaska. Many of those birds migrate southeast all the way to the Atlantic coast, where they spend the winter. That route takes them directly over central Michigan, with a stopover on Saginaw Bay.

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Winter advice

Keeping safe in the outdoors

Being outdoors in the winter requires more attention to safety than at other times of the year.

Simply getting wet—or getting lost in the woods—is much more significant when the temperature plunges into the single digits.

The best advice, according to Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) officials, is make sure someone knows where you’re going, what you’re doing and when you’ll be back.

“Tell them your planned travel route and expected time of arrival or return,” said the MDNR’s Corporate John Morey. “Then, if someone is overdue, whoever has the travel plan can contact 911 and give responders a chance to get out and look for you right away.”

Ice should always be checked out carefully, according to Morey. Always avoid areas where the ice is discolored, or there is vegetation and other objects sticking up through it. Use a spud to punch the ice ahead of you as you walk, he said, and carry a rope in case someone breaks through.

It is also recommended that anglers carry spikes—ideally enclosed in wood or plastic cylinders for handles—so they can grasp the ice with them if they break through.

Breaking through the ice into freezing water is extremely serious, Morey said. Anyone immersed in icy water must get his or her head above the surface immediately, get breathing under control, attempt to breathe normally and work on getting out.

Get to good ice (generally in the direction from which you came) and place your arms up on the ice. Use your arms to pull your upper body onto the ice while you kick your legs in a swimming motion.

If you succeed in getting out, initially roll or crawl along the ice. Do not get back on your feet right away until you are sure you are on safe ice. Then immediately walk toward heated shelter.

“If you see someone falls through the ice, make sure you do not put yourself at risk when attempting to assist them,” said Morey. “Call 911 immediately.”

When attempting to reach someone who has fallen through the ice, distribute your body weight by laying on the ice. Toss a rope, or reach for them with a pole, stick, or ladder. Don’t compound the problem by breaking through the ice yourself.

“Outdoor recreation can be enjoyable, invigorating and fun,” Morey said, “but, for it to be any of those things, it must also be—first and foremost—safe.”

—MDNR Report