

The Digital Magazine of the Fort Wayne Chapter

NOVEMBER 2023



Fort Wayne Chapter **News**

Izaak Walton League of America

the Fort Wayne Chapter

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A Letter From Our Chapter President



Izaak Walton League of America - Fort Wayne

17100 Griffin Rd
Huntertown, IN

Recently, at the Fall Membership meeting, your 2024 Chapter officers and some new Board Directors were installed. Some are “old salts” and others are new to the task. There is a wide spread of experience and ideas. All are eager to offer their service to the good of the Chapter.

As President, I intend to lead with the idea that *“if we are not increasing our membership year over year, if we are not continually adding value and scope to our membership, if we are not maintaining and improving our facilities, if we are not operating as good stewards of the resources available to us, we are dying”*. With the help of the other officers and board members, we will be looking to address all of those areas in the coming months. We will also be looking to assess how we can accomplish some of the needs, most economically, by using resources available within our membership, including skills, manpower, and equipment. There are some smaller things that can be done in the short term and others that will require more forward planning, looking at a three to five-year horizon. A bright future is ours to gain.

In 2023 we were working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to garner grant money to make some of the major improvements needed to the Chapter house. One of the requests was to enlarge the restrooms to ADA specifications (during the State convention we hosted this summer, we had to send some delegates outside to use the “ADA outhouse” because our restrooms would not accommodate their walker or wheelchair). We were also seeking funds to install new walkways for the skeet fields so that, in the winter and spring, the shooters wouldn’t have to wade through snow and water to shoot. There were others, but the plans fell through for three primary reasons. 1) One was that the state grant administrative department did not appear to be solid enough to partner with. 2) The Chapter would have had to contract and pay for the work upfront, then wait and hope the state would come through with their promised ninety-percent reimbursement. 3) Your board is committed to its fiscal responsibilities by maintaining a cash account balance equal to one year’s operating expenses. Funding the front costs of either of those projects would have violated that commitment and jeopardized our future. There are other sources available to solicit grants from and we are pleased to have a member who has experience in that field and has offered to help submit those requests.

Membership renewal notices were mailed out earlier this month and you will notice a slight increase in dues caused by the State organization raising their rates. The National and Chapter rates remain unchanged. After partially recovering from the major cash drawdown to remodel the rifle and pistol ranges, we have been able to achieve and maintain the desired level of financial stability but have not been able to generate the additional cash “boost” to aggressively attack even some of the smaller things we would like to do. Things like cleanup and restock the pond, improve the camping areas, or install playground equipment for family enjoyment. Growing our income from membership dues is critical to these efforts. Please review the information contained in the tri-fold pamphlet enclosed in your renewal packet. You will see that there are many good reasons for you to maintain your membership. Most of all, for all the reasons listed above, we need you to continue to support our local Chapter by renewing your membership. We will continuously strive to provide you with the best membership experience possible.

I also want to remind you that the Fort Wayne Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America is a non-profit 501(C3) corporation and is qualified to receive tax-free charitable donations. You can contribute directly to our discretionary funds or, by pre-arrangement, you can make your donation project or purpose-specific. When planning your charitable allocations please consider how your help, at any level, can be a significant benefit to our Chapter. A article on the advantages, appears on the next page of this issue of the FW Chapter NEWS IWLA.

Jay Butler

Jay L. Butler
President, FW Chapter IWLA

A MEMBER FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHAPTER DONATIONS

Our Izaak Walton League Chapter is located on beautifully wooded acreage with a pond, and plenty of groomed and picturesque trails to hike. In addition, our shooting ranges are among the finest in the area. One of the thoughts that recently occurred to the board of directors is that, although the shooting sports currently provide the main source of funding and the impetus for gaining membership, we may have become more identified as a “shooting range”, than that of a conservation-focused, family-friendly organization. It is only natural then, to try to expand the reserve in various ways to add to our eminent range activities. Some of those ways may be to sponsor days when families come to grill out, gather around a bonfire, maybe camp overnight, hike the trails, fish the pond. These types of memorable events would benefit families now, and impress the children who would eventually grow and join as adult members.

One of the ways we need to think about our future is, “Where is the money going to come from to support these activities”? How are we going to stock the pond, build campsites and picnic areas? How are we going to maintain and improve the facilities that we already have? Who is going to step forward and support the present needs, plus fund the future vision?

Those of us who are over 72 years old and still working, or are retired, and own a retirement fund from which we can make charitable donations, have a unique opportunity to contribute tax-free dollars to our chosen 501(C3) organization, or make a tax-free qualified charitable distribution (QCD). All of us who are retired and have tax-deferred retirement accounts must take an annual required minimum distribution (RMD) from those funds. The amount of that distribution is based on the owner’s age and the total dollars in the account/s. Not everyone needs the total amount of the distribution to support their lifestyle, and they choose to donate the excess to charities that have identified worthwhile projects in need of funding. It’s a very simple process. The owner of the investment/s makes a request to the funds-holding organization to make a charitable contribution in the name of the owner, to the specified 501(C3) organization. The funds are sent directly to the recipient in tax-free dollars, without raising the donor’s taxable income, while helping to satisfy the required minimum distribution (RMD) amount. It’s a win for the donor if it helps keep him/her in a desirable tax bracket, and also allows him to convey the entire stated amount of the contribution without deducting or adding additional funds for tax purposes. The maximum a person can give away using this method is \$100,000.00 per year. That probably doesn’t impact many, if any, of us. However, much smaller amounts given by larger groups can easily accomplish the task.

As we grow closer to the end of the year there may be some of us who are still looking for a place for excess funds from our 2023 RMD obligations. The new year, 2024, will offer another opportunity to consider how we will allocate our RMD funds or other charitable donations. In both cases, I encourage you to carefully consider including our local Chapter in your charitable giving plans. The Fort Wayne Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America is a 501(C3) corporation and contributions are tax-deductible. As a member you can enjoy the benefits of your generosity while ensuring the same for your posterity.

Generally speaking, any charitable donations should be made in a philanthropic spirit and not for the sole purpose of gaining a tax advantage. Any wise decisions would best be made with the advice of a qualified financial professional.

Article contributed by: Michael Findley, President, Findley Financial Services

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Cover & Article Photos
By: Holly Heath Photography

Chapter Photos
By Karla Wyss

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Chapter.

LEST WE FORGET: We start each Chapter meeting with this pledge: "To strive for the purity of water, the clarity of air, and the wise stewardship of the land and its resources; to know the beauty and understanding of nature and the value of wildlife, woodlands, and open space; to the preservation of this heritage and to man's sharing in it. I pledge myself as a member of the Izaak Walton League of America."

FORT WAYNE CHAPTER INTRODUCES SECOND YOUTH AS SERIOUS NATIONAL COMPETITOR

We have been covering the shooting career of one of our Chapters youth members, Bre Butler, who shoots Small Bore Rifle and Air Rifle competitively. Today, we are interviewing another of our Chapter youth shooters, Xander New, who is also making a name for himself in the Sports Shooting world.

JLB: Hi Xander, I've been hearing a lot about you from John Kurtz, and it is a pleasure to sit down and chat with you about you as an athlete and one of Trap Shooting up-and-coming youth shooters.
XN: Thanks. I'm glad to be here.

JLB: What 1st sparked your interest in Shotgun Sports Shooting?

XN: My dad signed me up for shooting classes with 4-H about 8 years ago. I did Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun classes at different facilities. The shotgun class took me outside, and the targets were moving, and I liked that more than shooting at "paper".

JLB: Do you have any interest in other



types of Sports Shooting, such as Handgun, Small Bore Rifle, or Hunting?

XN: Not really. I go with my dad to shoot handguns occasionally, but that's about it.

"the FW CHAPTER NEWS" a Publication of the Fort Wayne Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America

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JLB: What is your interest, Trap or Skeet or maybe both?

XN: At this point, it is mostly Trap. I plan to attend college on a shooting team, bringing me into the skeet and sporting clay world a little more. I have shot all 3 disciplines but mostly focused on trap shooting.

JLB: What are the three disciplines in your area of Sports Shooting:

XN: Trap, Skeet, and Sporting Clays. I'm focusing on Trap.

JLB: Does anyone else in your family shoot Clays?

XN: Only my dad. He shoots with me occasionally, but he mostly coaches and encourages me. He was shooting on the squad with me a few years ago when I shot my first 100 straight, so that was pretty cool...and it was at Izaak Walton!

JLB: How long have you been shooting Clays?

XN: I started about 6 years ago at age 11. I didn't compete much during the first 3 years, but then we started to branch out a little and began traveling to other states for shoots. This past year I shot ATA state shoots or Grands in 7 different states.

JLB: How often do you shoot each week, and how many rounds do you typically shoot each time out?

XN: During the practice season, I shoot once or twice weekly. Each practice is typically 50-100 targets. I may shoot 5 days a week during the competition season with up to 1500-2000 targets. Last year, I shot 17,800 registered targets plus practice and shoot-offs at competitions. We've estimated that I shot 25,000 rounds last year.

JLB: What was the first shotgun that you shot in Clays? Was it a raised rib trap gun or a bird gun? What Brand?

XN: My first gun was a Benelli Ultra Lite 20g that my grandfather gave me. I shot that for a year and then moved to a Browning Cynergy 12g. I shot that for one year, and then I grew 7 inches in the off-season, so we traded the Cynergy for a Browning 725 Trap Combo.

JLB: How old were you when you first began to shoot Clays?

XN: I was 11 when I shot my first Clay.

JLB: Tell us a bit about your current Trap gun. Brand, Model, Gauge, etc.

XN: My current gun is a 12 g Browning 725 Trap Combo with a 34" Unsingle and 32" O/U double barrel. We added the Gracoil system, with a Kick-eez pad, to the stock. The rib and comb are adjustable, and we continue to tweak it as I grow. I use Briley Chokes in all 3 barrels.

JLB: Do you have a goal in shooting competitively?

XN: My current goal is to make the All-American Team again this season and earn the Junior Captain title on the Indiana All-State Team for the third year. I also plan to attend college on a shooting team and would like to win a National Championship there.



JLB: What is your ATA yardage handicap?

XN: I earned my 27-yard pin this September with a 99/100 from the 26 in Michigan. I had been stuck at the 26 for 14 months and had been close many times, so I was super happy to get that last punch finally.

JLB: How did you become aware of the FW Izaak Walton Trap shooting opportunity?

XN: My dad took me to an ATA shoot on a weekend about 4 years ago.

JLB: Were you shooting for another Range or Club before coming to Izaak Walton?

XN: I was shooting with another team, and last year, my dad and I decided to leave that team because I had outgrown their program. My dad worked with John Kurtz to bring me over to Izaak Walton. Unfortunately, due to past issues, I was the only kid in their program at the time. After John and Izaak Walton's support during my

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All-American run, I have made it a goal to help raise money and rebuild this team at IW.

JLB: What school do you attend?

XN: I am a Senior at Carroll High School.

JLB: Does your school have a club affiliation with Trap Shooting?

XN: No. We have discussed trying to start one, but with the current political environment, we haven't been successful.

JLB: I Know what you mean. My Granddaughter Bremen went to Carroll and hit the same brick wall with her Rifle competition. They were, however, pretty lenient about her missing school days for Competition as long as her grades didn't suffer.

JLB: Do you have any experience in digital trap shooting training, or have you ever heard of it?

XU: I have heard that there are some amazing systems out there, but I have not used them. I'm unsure if this would be considered "digital," but John had me work with a ShotKam that we mounted to my gun to film each shot. This amazing tool allowed me to make some changes to my Trap Doubles game and improved my average by nearly 10 shots. I give a lot of credit to this system because, without those high Doubles scores, I wouldn't have won as much and probably wouldn't have made the All-American Team...Thanks, John!!

JLB: Do you have an ATA ranking as a shooter, and is it in a particular age group?

XN: I finished last season ranked #21 in the country as a Junior (ages 15-18). Everyone says this is the toughest category due to the number of great shooters nationwide. My dad calls it the "Snake Pit" because you can have a great day, and anyone can sneak in and beat you by a single bird.



JLB: Have you ever shot in ATA Grand Nationals? If so, how often?

XN: Yes. I shot at the AIM Youth Grand for 3 years. I shot the entire Preliminary week and most of the Grand week this past year. I had to cut it short to come home for school. I won my first Grand Trophy this year with a 98/100 in Doubles, and I'm already looking forward to next year!

JLB: Is it any problem working in the time to practice trap shooting and schoolwork?

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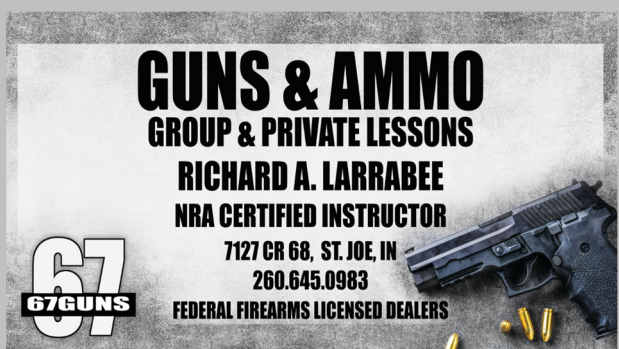
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XN: *Not really. I am able to get most of my work done in study hall at school. I also work part-time at our family's retail store.*

JLB: **What are your aspirations? Any thought of shooting competitively as a college athlete, and if so, do you have a university in mind?**

XN: *I am planning to shoot in college and study Sports Management. I have visited a few schools and am waiting to hear back from them with offers, so nothing is official or public yet.*

JLB: **Who is your shooting coach?**

XN: *My primary coach/mentor has been my dad. I have had a few people work with me over the years, but he is the one who has guided and pushed me the most. Officially, Allie Kurtz and John Kurtz are my coaches through IW.*

JLB: **Are you shooting on a regular squad, as an individual, or both?**

XN: *I have shot on a team for a few years but went solo last year. My primary goal was to make the All-American Team, which is an individual honor. My dad asked me what I wanted to do, and I chose to go solo for at least a year. That said, I built a team of Junior shooters I knew at the Indiana State shoot in July. We won the State Championship by over 200 birds out of 1000. I believe at least 3 of these athletes are planning to join me at IW this year, so we should have a pretty solid squad.*

JLB: **Where do you see yourself five years from now in this shooting sport?**

XN: *In 5 years, I should be graduating from college. I plan to study Sports Management, so I'm unsure how that will impact my shooting over the 5 years. I don't think I will stop, but my career will change it a little.*

JLB: **As we bring this interview to a close, is there anything you might want to leave with our readers that I may not have asked?**

XN: Yes, this is a very expensive sport!! I mentioned earlier that I have made a goal of rebuilding the Izaak Walton team and have set my goal at \$50,000 for this year. The cost of shells has more than doubled over the past 3 years, and the amount of shells it takes for a team of 5 will cost us over \$25,000. Target fees and travel expenses for our athletes have also increased. We ask businesses and Individuals to consider sponsoring the team and/or purchasing raffle tickets throughout the year to help offset these costs.

JLB: **Thanks, Xander. Our IWLA Chapter is proud to have you shooting with us. We wish you good luck and great shooting. We'll be watching you and cheering you on.**

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A HELPING HAND FROM REMC!

After many false starts over the past two years, the Fort Wayne Chapter has made significant progress in creating a bat habitat near our chapter house. In 2021, we received a grant from the IWLA Indiana Endowment to build our habitat, and the Covid pandemic stopped all preparation. Since then, the project has languished due to lack of Board focus and more importantly, lack of volunteer labor from our members. Also, during that extended period, the price of a special rubber used, tripled. This is a sheet of rubber that mimics a dead tree with loose bark, creating a habitat favored by the endangered Indiana Brown Bat. We ended up returning the endowment.

One spot of good news was one of our Scout Troop 55 boys built 4 houses as part of his Eagle Scout project. Then just recently, we had an opportunity to purchase a single section of Brandenbark, from our sister chapter, Porter County. And then we learned that REMC, our electricity provider might be willing to help us. A call to them quickly secured their agreement to set our poles as part of their community relations program. A yellow REMC truck and five men, plus Christy Phend their Community Relations Manager arrived promptly at 8:30 am this past Friday. Ron Hessert was on hand and had begun dragging the poles from the edge of our parking lot to each pole destination to assist them.

I drove one of the crew around back and looked at John Kurtz's marked locations, and then we all gathered to eat a donut or three as we chatted about the work to be done. The REMC crew backed their rig to the 1st hole location, and promptly stuck the drilling rig in the soft ground. They called for another rig with a winch, and in the meantime, took some measurements and concluded that with the soft ground, they would not be able to do the job, but if we could live with slightly different hole locations, they could set 3 of 4 Bat house poles. We quickly approved and they drilled and set the first pole.

By that time, the second crew arrived, hooked onto the front of the stuck vehicle, and soon had it back in business. As they now had two drilling rigs and seven men on the job,



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they moved one truck up to the skeet range and set the two poles that John wanted there while the other crew set the 4 bat poles.

Two trucks and seven REMC guys, plus their community specialist were there for about 3 hours. They did a great job and were professional all the way.



A wonderful day, ending with REMC having set our four Bat poles. Many thanks to REMC for their outstanding help in assisting in saving several species of endangered Bats.

Fort Wayne Assisted Living Facility Creates Certified Wildlife Habitat

Georgetown Place, an Assisted Living Facility located in Fort Wayne has been awarded certification as a Wildlife Habitat on 3.5 acres of their land. In order to receive this designation, the area must be capable of sustained propagation of natural sources of food, water, and cover to support the full cycle of wildlife.

This section of their property had been mowed regularly as part of their lawn and is now being left to mature as sanctuary to species, of butterfly's, such as the endangered Monarch, with plantings of milkweed essential to their survival. In addition, it already has begun to gather frogs, bees, and birds.

According to their spokesman Fredrick Pentecost, a resident and spokesman for the facility,

keeping it mowed as a lawn keeping it looking pristine, but did not support the insects necessary for the myriad of birds now calling this home.

Pentecost said it wasn't an easy chore to convince management to let this area change from lawn to habitat, due to the normal inclination of management to keep everything as a well tended lawn. He said that it took a couple of years of talking about the advantages of this area to hold soil in place and retain water.

Now, management is fully on board with the program, and the corporate management is looking into converting some dedicated space at each of their facilities. And local management sees the benefit to residents, as well as wildlife.

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He went on to say that Municipal management, with a program of mowing grass looking unkept, followed by a fine for any overgrown areas was a potential area of concern, but said that this was quickly addressed as City management was informed of the project.

This program is a perfect example of this writers attendance at the National Izaak Walton League's annual convention, where one of our guest speakers was Dr. Doug Tallamy, Entomologist, University of Delaware, who spoke of the same benefits as Fredrick.

Our congratulations to both Mr. Pentecost and local and corporate management of Georgetown Manor for their enlightened commitment to protecting insects, wildlife, and being stewards of soil. water and wildlife.



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Tell us your thoughts about our “FW Chapter NEWS” or any other Chapter related topic.

Email: jaybutler1940@gmail.com

Jay Butler

Managing
Editor

Sir:

The top priorities for the chapter, from my point of view as along-time member) is: 1. Restroom with handicapped access and 2. Youth Conservation Camp

K. G.—FW Chapter

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CHAPTER NAMES 2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Jay Butler was named Board President, John Kurtz as Vice President, Carl Ehinger as Secretary and Melissa Doepke as Treasurer.

They will be listed as the Chapters Corporate Officers by the office of the Indiana Secretary of State and will manage the business of the Chapter on any important matters that might require handling between Chapter Board Meetings.

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