



1922 2022

Century of Conservation Leaders

**Fort Wayne Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America**

News

April 2023 Issue



IWLA NATIONAL MID-WINTER BOARD MEETING

The Digital Magazine Of The Fort Wayne Chapter

the Fort Wayne Chapter

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Cover Photo and Lead Article

Cover photo courtesy of Crown Plaza, Ft. Myers FL

Apollo Article photos were furnished by Ev Baker, the author of OPOLLO MEMORIES

Our thanks to TaurusUSA for TX22 Compact photo

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL BOARD MEETING FEB. 17-18

The National Board of Directors met in Fort Myers, Florida in the first of two regular meetings scheduled for 2023 with approximately forty Directors and Headquarters staff in attendance.

IWLA PRESIDENT VICKI ARNOLD SPOKE OF 2ND CENTURY VISION

Vicki Arnold, League President, briefly covered the 2nd century vision of the League as:



- Expanding the efforts to keep clean water front and center across the country.
- Helping transform legislation that will assist farmers in agricultural practices that will improve soil health.
- Bringing Policy Advocacy back into full force with the League being leaders in addressing issues like Climate Warming.
- Bringing like-minded individuals together to work on conservation efforts across the country.
- Leveraging the Chapter Base to connect more Americans in fishing, hunting, shooting sports, and other outdoor recreation activities.

- Launch "Nitrate Watch," on the heels of the successful launch of "Salt Watch" as key focus of Clean Water monitoring.

IWLA VICE PRESIDENT JODI ARNDT LABS POSES A QUESTION



Jodi Arndt Labs, League Vice President, posed the following question: *What can each of us do to build upon the League's successes to ensure the League remains a strong and vibrant voice on conservation and outdoor recreation issues for the indefinite future?* She asked, *Or is it playing a more active role on conservation issues in our own back yards?* Maybe it's *"Mentoring others to become the future leaders of the League, whether at the local or national level?"* Maybe, she challenged it is *"AS SIMPLE AS INTRODUCING A YOUNG INDIVIDUAL TO THE OUTDOORS?"*

She challenged each one of us to answer one or more of the above questions, because the League must look at ways of doing things differently in order to improve the way we do business, rather than "simply accepting the ways we have always done it."

EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIR JIM PLATESKI COMMENTS ON FUTURE



Jim Piateski, League Executive Board Chair, commented on our past successes and our future, including:

The success of our Salt Watch program, with over 11,000 samplings recorded in our database, and this to be followed by "Nitrate Watch" with the ease of data gathering so that any of our League member can be involved.

He mentioned the threat of PFO's (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid), a sub-category of PFAS, the "Forever Chemicals" and their impact on our watersheds and wild game and fish populations and finally he reminded us of the responsibilities of being a National Director for the League.

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IWLA TREASURER SCOTT MEYERS GIVES UPDATE ON FINANCES

Scott Meyers, our Treasurer, explained that total League revenue is up significantly due to grants received and released in 2022, while expenses were up as expected, due to inflation and higher cost for accounting services for the League, while investment has been down since the first of this year as the nations market has pulled back,

negatively impacting our investments by almost 13%. He commented that investment income is expected to remain flat for the remainder of 2023 while our CDs are paying better and the Executive Board authorized investing more case reserves in fixed length CD's.

OPEN DISCUSSION: FUTURE OPTION TO MAKE MID-WINTER BOARD MEETINGS VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON?

The question put before the Board was **NOT** whether or not to hold a Mid-Winter meeting at all, as our Bylaws require one. The question **WAS Whether we hold the meetings in person or make a digital meeting a regularly considered option.**

something to be said for the importance of the intangible, but important sense of personal contact that is important when discussing

critical topics. The same could be said of person-to-person communication over a shared lunch, or during a meeting recess is important. On the other hand, in person meetings are more costly to both the League and to attending Board members that can be saved by making the meetings virtual.

An idea was floated that the bylaws being changed to allow virtual

meetings and letting the agenda drive the decision of virtual Vs. In-Person.

Finally it was decide that a non-binding straw vote of those board members in attendance, would serve as an indicator to lend some guidance. The vote was in favor of considering Virtual Meetings, depending on importance of key topics to be considered at Mid-Winter.



LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS RECENT/PAST AND NEW CONGRESS: JEROD MOTT CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Jerrod gave the Board his insights based on his legislative lobbying and the pulse of likely actions by the newly seated congress.

Pittman-Robertson Act: In 2023 there was Legislation introduced to kill the Pittman-Robertson Act that has been in effect for 86 years, a self-imposed sportsman tax designed to protect wildlife and provide funds to assist in establishing sports shooting activities to public. This legislation to kill the P-R Act was put forward by the 2nd Amendment protection advocates. Jerrod reported that while this proposal died in committee, it will likely be introduced again in 2023, but possibly with fewer co-signers, due to our active letter writing to our congressman.

2023 Farm Bill: From the outset, consider the term "Farm Bill" a misnomer. This is actually a "Clean Water, Public Health, and Climate" bill and represents the largest investment in private land conservation in America and will have a profound effect on the food we eat, the water we drink, flood prevention, and our wildlife habitat, as Ag continues to be the single largest source of runoff polluting our drinking water and the health of our lakes and streams!

Jerrod noted that we get a new Farm Bill about every five years, so we have to educate our legislative

leaders continuously to counter industrial lobbyist influence. He told us of the latest thinking being to help legislators to keep focus on soil as the center of all key legislation as it impacts so many other things. For the farmer, it can increase his productivity at lower cost, as well as protect his farm from losses to soil erosion. Cover crops assist in fertilization with less fertilizer and at same time the roots act as a sponge to clean and hold water, which helps maintain the integrity of the watersheds, while reducing flooding. This ben-

efits wildlife game, birds, and insects.

EPA Restores Clean Water Protections: In the closing days of 2022 the EPA released a new rule that restores federal Clean Water protections for streams and wetlands that protect drinking water, improves overall water quality, and sustains fish and wildlife habitat. The League fully supports this new rule.



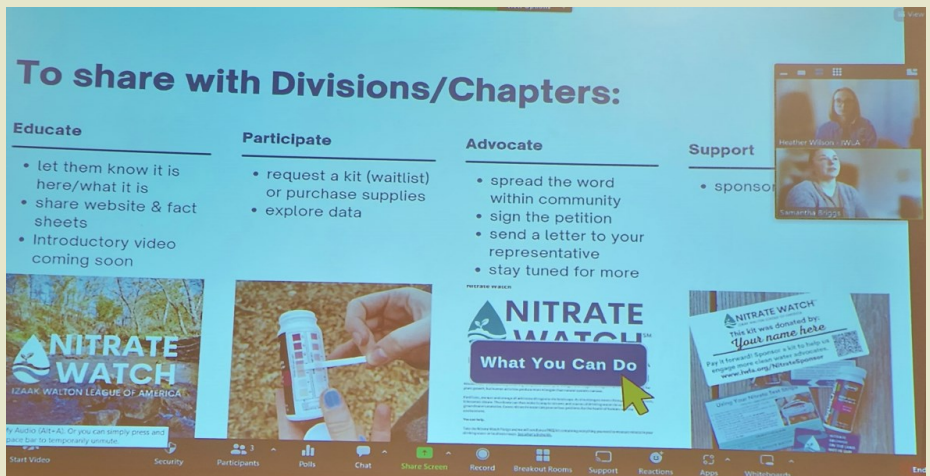
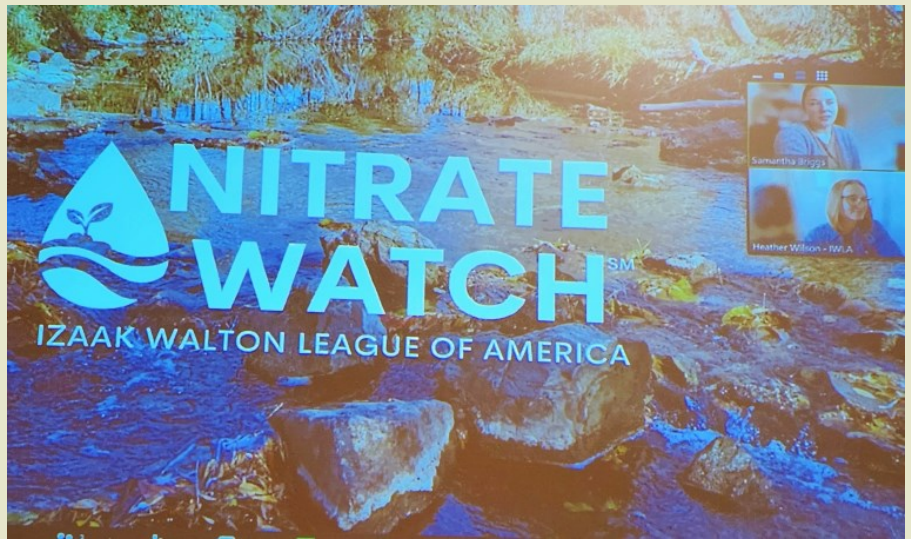
NITRATE WATCH VIRTUAL PRESENTATION: “SAM” BRIGGS & KIRA CARNEY.

This dynamic duo informed us that we are releasing a new Clean Water Initiative in the spring of this year, known as the Nitrate Watch. It will be modeled after the very successful “Salt Watch” that has already had over 11,000+ tests registered on our Clean Water Hub.

They explained that this is simple but Effective to use, based on test strips rather than a difficult chemical analysis. Kits will be available through National and data collected can be entered into our Clean Water Portal.

We learned that EPA set a drinking water standard for Nitrates in 1992 that mandates Nitrates no more than 10 milligrams per liter of water. This requirement is placed on community drinking water operations, but private water wells remain at high risk of Nitrate contamination from several sources. While the principal source of nitrates in our watersheds are from runoff from farm over fertilization, there are other factors, such as factory-farming that can house 10,000 hogs under one roof. Another is the waste coming from community wastewater treatment plants, and finally from us and our neighbors over fertilizing our lawns. There are other causes but these are the major ones.

Why should we worry about nitrates? Good question. There are two primary reasons. The more obvious one is the huge algae blooms that we’ve seen on lakes and ponds. In particular, these algae blooms are signifi-



cantly impacting our Great Lakes. This, beyond being unsightly, Nitrates raise the cost of drinking water treatment, result in fish kills and contribute to an estimated annual cost of over \$210 Billion dollars per year according to Samantha.

Kira made us aware of the health risks associated with Nitrates, as well. Nitrates impact the ability of the blood

stream to carry oxygen and particularly can be attributable to babies incurring “blue baby syndrome,” but this impacts all of us regardless of age.

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INDIANA DIVISION INTRODUCES 3RD GENERATION MEMBER TO NATIONAL BOARD

National Board Member Jay Butler introduced one of our Division's young members in attendance that we are very proud of. He began by saying that she was six years old when she began tagging along with her older brother and her Dad and Papaw to the Fort Wayne IWLA shooting range and wanted to shoot with them.

Fast Forward twelve years! Today this member is an accomplished Sports Shooter, holding six State of Indiana Shooting Records and is one of the nation's top high school shooting athletes.

In addition to the great local and state shooting competitions, there are approximately four top shooting venues in the United States.

- The Camp Perry Civilian Marksmanship Competition, where she has won all of the top shooting competitions for highschoolers, plus scoring a grand slam win in the open category over all age's competition.
- The Jr. Olympics, held at the Olympic Training Grounds in Colorado Springs, where she won two Silver Medals.
- The USA National Future Teams selected from the top Jr. Olympians and this person was chosen as part of Team USA shooting in International Competition in Lima, Peru.
- **The U.S. Army Invitational held at Fort Benning GA, made up of the top 100 U.S. high school shooters, and she won the U S Army National Air Rifle competition and placed second in the two member team competitions.**

The Fort Wayne Chapter recently hosted her signing party where she signed her NCAA agreement to shoot for Georgia Southern University, one of a number of tier 1 NCAA shooting universities.

He concluded with: "Please welcome IN-Div. and Fort Wayne Chapter member, Bremen Butler."

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

SCOTT KOVAROVICS

IWLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EDITOR NOTE: While not billed as KEYNOTE, in your editor's opinion it qualifies as one. His comments on past, present, and future accomplishments and the challenges of the League as we move forward were inspirational as well as informing.

Summary of Accomplishments Since July 2022 Convention: The League played a pivotal role in securing \$19.5 Billion to expand conservation, reduce water pollution and combat climate change across tens of millions of acres of U.S. farm and ranch lands.

- League launched Nitrate Watch, a national crowd-sourced community science program that mobilizes volunteers to monitor dangerous nitrate levels in drinking and surface water.
- League hosted a regional Ag Conservation Summits to share with stakeholders and partners our priorities and advocacy ideas for the 2023 Farm Bill.
- Thanked over 450 donors who together contributed over \$165,000 since kicking off the 2nd Century Campaign in July 2021.
- League pushed Congress to approve \$25.2 million for habitat recovery on the Missouri River, as compared to \$8 million provided in the previous year's budget.
- League published a visual history book documenting the League's first 100 years.
- Received two pages of positive national media coverage in the NRA National Hunter magazine

highlighting the League's success in last century in securing conservation goals.

- Delivered and made available to our Chapters: centennial logos, yard signs, banners conservation signs to help in media communication.

Our Vision For the Future: It is Aspirational: A future Where....

- Every Community enjoys clear air and water.
- People of all ages rediscover their love of the outdoors.
- Tradition of hunting, fishing, and shooting sports endure.
- Clean energy, healthy soil, and abundant natural landscapes help combat climate change.
- The conservation movement reflects the diversity of America.

2023 National Convention: Relative to our July Convention, Scott reminded us of a very noteworthy change in schedule: the Convention will run



Thursday thru Saturday and NOT the traditional Wednesday thru Saturday and the Convention hotel rate is \$109.00/night including taxes, which is significantly lower than normal.

Communication: Scott mentioned that the staff wrapped up more than a year of planning, preparation, and presentation of contents of 100th Anniversary events and beginning in December 2022, we began a pivot to priorities including highlighting League's Vision for future that will include: our new member approved logo placed in production, and the 2023 launch of local/national **media**

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release on our policy recommendations for Ag, clean water, and other conservation issues.

Website Technology: The news here is that we are getting a new and more vibrant website. We are vetting website firms and plan to select a firm with the goal of launching a completely revamped website to improve navigation and visual appeal of our website in 2024.

Missouri River Initiative: Recent MRRP budget cuts dramatically reduced the Corps habitat recovery efforts. The League authored a letter and garnered support of over 80 organizations urging full funding and sent it to House and Senate Appropriations Committees. In December, Congress approved the budget, including \$25.2 million for the MRRP, and while not the \$31.6 million that we had recommended, it was a great improvement. As a result, the Corps is authorized to acquire 100,000 more acres from willing sellers within the historic Missouri Flood plain, offsetting over 520,000 acres of wildlife habitat, thus enhancing habitat, restoring wetlands, and reducing flood risks.

Partnering for Success: In addition, we have partnered with the National Wildlife Federation to hold our first regional Ag Summit, to be held in Danville, IL. We plan a 2nd in Mason City, IA, and a 3rd in Sioux Falls S.D.

North America Grasslands Conservation: We are working with the National Wildlife Federation, Pheasants Forever and other conservation groups to lobby for introduction and passing the North America Grasslands Conservation legislation that would create the grassland equivalent to the North American Wetlands Conservations Act. This would provide \$290 million a year to help landowners conserve and protect disappearing native prairies and other grasslands that benefit clean water and our wildlife, as well as the climate.

Chapter Relations: The League will continue to offer mini grants to our chapters hosting National Sports Shooting Month (NSSM) focused specifically on engaging families with little or no firearm experience and not already involved in target shooting.

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We are releasing new marketing signage with new logo: Support of chapters marketing efforts via making available customized road signs, pop-up displays, flags, banners, table covers, and officer name tags.

Member recognition awards: We urge chapters to submit nominations for the many venues that recognize member support and achievement in Conservation and Sports Shooting.

I TRIED IT

RUGER AMERICAN .22

By Patrick J. White

Like most avid shooters, I like to accessorize both my pistols and rifles after I purchase them. I've done it with my Ruger 10/22 Takedown and my Anderson AR. Whether it's internal or external, I've done it. My most recent acquisition, a Ruger American Precision .22 LR brought a new challenge: How to alter its appearance without affecting its unique visual image. Fortunately, I found a family-owned company to make a great rifle, a stunning showpiece.



The Ruger American .22LR was purchased from AAA Sporting Goods and Guns in La receiver. It

Otto with a stainless steel 18" barrel and was threaded 1/2x28 for a compensator or suppressor if I wished to add either. I chose the Pro Compensator from Tandemkross. However, the chassis was the weak point in an otherwise beautiful rimfire rifle. My goal was to remedy that minor design issue, as the synthetic PIM stock (Plastic Injection Molding) was apparently aimed at reducing its overall suggested retail price.

Thus, the stock became the focal-point as I wanted to build a "show piece" for days at the range shooting at 50 and 100-yards for precision. My quest became more confusing when I realized that the aftermarket for the Ruger American offered several options from some well-known companies. I finally decided on a traditional wood laminate stock over the AR metal style available from other high profile suppliers.

My search ended when I discovered Boyd Gunstocks in Mitchel, South Dakota where I learned they manufactured wood laminate gunstocks for numerous brands and calibers. Ruger was in their inventory. My quest became more complicated when I realized that they had so many different styles and options from which to choose. It was then I discovered the "Spike Camp" line of custom stocks and was sold on one style. Simple, plain, and compact, the Spike Camp version was my final design selection. Then came the variety of color schemes offered, and it was varied. I finally settled on the Nutmeg color with a thumbhole and raised cheek design.

Ordering can be accomplished on-line, but wanting to be accurate with my order, I called their customer service department, and spoke with a very knowledgeable customer service lady who guided me through the ordering process quickly and easily because she knew exactly what questions to ask. After my order was complete, she said the turnaround time would be 7-10 business days. My new stock arrived exactly 10-days later.

Mounting was a cinch and took less than 10-minutes from opening the sturdy cardboard shipping container to admiring my finished masterpiece. However, I wasn't quite finished with my build. I purchased a Vortex 4x16 FFP side-focus scope from Midway USA and a Timney 1.4 to 4lb trigger on eBay to complete my project.

My custom build is now complete and I'm proud to bring it to the range to both shoot and show off to my fellow marksmen. And who knows, maybe some day they too will discover Boyd's Gunstocks. It doesn't matter the brand or caliber; they probably have it in stock. I Tried it and I Like it, a lot.

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3D ARCHERY SHOOT

21 - TARGET COURSE

COME JOIN US FOR FUN, PRACTICE, AND FRIENDLY CAMARADERIE

* ADMISSION \$10 - CHILDREN 12 & UNDER FREE

EVERY MONTH * 3RD SATURDAY * 10AM - 4PM

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Join Us At The
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19th at

7:00PM For Euchre!

If you would like more information please contact Carl Ehinger at: crehinger@gmail.com Or call 260-619-3242.

CHAPTER SCOUT TROOP MEETS



ATA TRAP SHOOTS

MARCH 26TH

APRIL 30TH

MAY 28TH

JUNE 25TH

They got up early Saturday morning and braved the cold temps (20 deg) and came down to the range to get some .22LR shooting in on the steel targets. After a couple of hours down at the range, the boys went back up to the Chapter House to work on Scout Merit badges.

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FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

PATRICK J. WHITE, Major USAF Retired

I've been told that back in 2015-2016, the R&P Range at our Chapter was a far cry from what it is today. I've heard stories and have been shown pictures to prove it. It was less than pristine in its appearance and downrange targets were sometimes unconventional, to be kind. I'm told that there was even an old piano that was hauled in to be used for target practice. A true Wild West to be sure.

But then an unfortunate incident occurred. A resident approximately a ½ mile directly behind our Rifle & Pistol Range, accused those using our then antiquated range of firing their firearms in the direction of his chicken coup where projectiles were found. Although it was never definitely proved that the projectiles emanated from our range, the R&P range was shut down for a massive safety upgrade which cost the Chapter nearly \$83,000. Safety had become paramount.

It took over six months to rebuild and alter the range structure under member/engineer Jim Gerencser, (SP?) plus countless volunteer hours and money to create the structure that now exists; a modern, clean, and safe facility of which we are all proud. But the new design wasn't complete until safety procedures were installed, and members were trained. Some 350 members attended safety classes held every Saturday over six months and approximately fifty members were trained as Range Safety Officers (RSO's) by NRA instructors Jay Butler and Larry Rusher.

After training and certification, a cadre of newly minted RSO's descended on the greatly improved facility to ensure safety was the #1 priority. That mind-set continues even today. But as of late, a problem has arisen. **We're losing RSO's, and we need your help.** Increased age and medical issues have taken its toll on our volunteer RSO Squadron. Each month we face the loss of another volunteer or two through no fault of their own. Mother Nature and Father Time can sometimes be cruel.

Since becoming an IWLA member in 2020, I've served as an RSO because of a sense of purpose when it comes to keeping our facility safe for everyone. I serve with over forty (40) members who feel the same way about being a volunteer and serving the Chapter as an RSO. I'm proud of these men and women who devote a few hours, one or two days a month, to ensure the range and all shooters are safe. It's called devotion and our RSO's demonstrate it with enthusiasm.

I say this because we need your help. We need you to volunteer to undergo NRA training and to be willing to serve for a few hours once or twice a month. Training is 100% free for members and is conducted by Chief Range Safety Officer James Ramsey at our Chapter clubhouse during a weekend day. Once your training is completed, a Certified Field Training officer (FTO) will be assigned to assist you when you begin serving as a member of our NRA trained and certified volunteers.

Class dates are posted in our monthly Digital News Magazine or by simply contacting Mr. Ramsey via Email at www.jrsr7@aol.com. He will be happy to get you enrolled into an upcoming class so you, man or woman, can become an NRA Certified Range Safety Officer and become part of a unique group of Chapter members who keep our range open and safe the year round.

**WE'RE ASKING YOU TO VOLUNTEER TO SERVE AS NRA
CERTIFIED RANGE SAFETY OFFICERS.**

WILL YOU?



President—Fort Wayne Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America

the Fort Wayne Chapter

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Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday - April 8, 2023

Starts at 11:00 AM



- Games
- Prizes
- Crafts

Children aged 12 and under

*Don't be a "Dumb Bunny"
come out join the fun!!!*

Fort Wayne Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America
17100 Griffin Rd., Huntertown, IN 46748



RANGE SAFETY OFFICERS NEEDED

Additional RSO's are needed to maintain the current schedule of open hours and days of our rifle and pistol ranges. If you can commit to at least 1, or preferably 2, four-hour shifts per month contact our Range Manager, Karla Wyss (marw4@frontier.com), or our Chief Range Safety Officer, James Ramsey (jrsr7@frontier.com) to sign up

BASIC FIRE ARMS TRAINING CLASS



Are you a new firearms owner and want to learn about your new purchase, how to safely store, operate and maintain it?

Are you an experienced firearms owner and want to refresh your knowledge about gun safety and proper shooting techniques?

Well then the **NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting** course would be a great course for you!

SATURDAY APRIL 15th



Spend the day with fellow firearms enthusiasts and NRA Certified Instructors James Ramsey and Rebecca McCann and learn in a friendly environment, firearms safety, proper operation of revolvers and semi-automatic pistols, shooting fundamentals, proper maintenance and much more.

Additionally, students will complete live fire training and a nationally standardized shooting qualification while on the range with their NRA Certified Instructors.

- Students will receive the NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook, take a Basics of Pistol shooting student examination and shooting qualification and receive a course completion certificate.
- The course will be held **Saturday April 15th—IWLA** — **Fort Wayne Chapter (17100 Griffin Rd, Huntertown, IN 46748) starting at 9a and run approximately to 5p (lunch will be provided)**
- Cost for this course will be \$40 for members of Izaak Walton League – Fort Wayne Chapter, and \$100, for non-members.

So whether you're new to firearms ownership or are a long time veteran, we'd love to have you participate in our class!

If interested, contact James Ramsey at jrsr7@aol.com or register directly at

<http://www.nrainstructors.org> (select find an NRA Training Course Near You)

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THE FORT WAYNE CHAPTER WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED IN MARCH

- ◇ Blake Sievers
- ◇ Bruce Driver
- ◇ James & Jamie Prater
- ◇ Austin & Samantha Bartels
- ◇ Mark Smith

WELCOME!

SOUND OFF!



Jay Butler
Managing Editor

Tell us your thoughts about our **"FW Chapter NEWS"** or any other Chapter related topic.

Email: jaybutler1940@gmail.com

I liked your article talking about the increased security at the range.

Lots of good stuff to consider!

J.B.—Florida

I've been reviewing your NEWS magazine and I really like what the March issue. I think the front page photo is GREAT!!

I also like how you integrated stories outside of the firearms side of things. The information written about the "political" climate was informative and smart. The Chapter and the newsletter shouldn't encompass one side over another, but it should be about the common goal members have in being apart of IWLA. I think that was showcased well!

C.W.—Indianapolis

I think this is our 3rd year of membership, and we have yet to make it out there. We are just down the road, just off of Gump Rd.

We have intended to register for your hand gun training courses but I think we only offer them in April, and that is it seems we always have something else we have to do. Maybe this year, Although it seems we have vacation again in April.

I love the sportsman, safe habitat culture that conserves and attempts to maintain the balance.

There is so much you do well that I want to be a part of but we are like fish out of water and have yet to make it a couple of miles up the road to even stop in. We will continue supporting our chapter with dues, sorry they were late this year.

K.K.—Fort Wayne Chapter

March was a great issue. It is full of information, and I might say the most in depth into the topics.

Really great articles which were a pleasure to read. Great job as always.

A.R.—Indiana

Could I have the young lady shooter's name please?

- Ohio

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE OUR NEWS MAGAZINE, SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO

crehinger@gmail.com

(Public Welcome)

the Fort Wayne Chapter

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APOLLO RECOLLECTIONS BY E.E. BAKER, MEMBER OF FORT WAYNE CHAPTER-IWLA

Ev Baker, one of our members was an integral part of the Apollo Space Program and has agreed to share some of his reminiscences with us. We jumped at this unique opportunity to share a 1st person history of one of the defining moments in history.

Ev's story will be carried as a serial, over several issues of the FW Chapter NEWS.

These reminiscences are sometimes connected, and at other times stand alone as a memory. They are told, just as Ev remembered them and jotted them down for this article. As such, they give insight to a time that most of us remember based on TV coverage. Ev remembers because he lived them.

These memoirs are the exclusive intellectual property of E. E. Baker, and may not be reprinted or copied without the exclusive permission of E. E. Baker.

Permission has been granted exclusively to the Fort Wayne Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America – Fort Wayne Chapter to print this memoir in its entirety as a serial article in several consecutive issues of the Fort Wayne Chapter NEWS.

E. E. Baker

INSTALLMENT 3 : APOLLO RECOLLECTIONS By E.E. Baker

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“Venting The Bomb”

The 6000 psi bomb is the source for the 1000 psi nitrogen that is used to open and close the gate valves in the water pit. It is also regulated down to 150 PSI and is used to maintain pressure in the two large water tanks. It has a ¼ inch stainless steel line coming off of it that goes to a pressure gauge. This line was leaking, not a lot, but enough to get written up. The rules say not to tighten a fitting with pressure on it. So, the 3 inch valve on the far side of the tank was opened to vent the vessel to near atmospheric pressure. It took a half hour or better as I remember. The vent pipe was pointed straight down. There were several red and blue v shaped shock waves. The noise was very loud. It was reported that it could be heard over two miles away. High pressure gasses can be very dangerous. Even the 1000 psi is very dangerous. Nitrogen is inert so it will not explode. But things like high pressure hydrogen can make the problem much-much worse. A fact of life that I have accepted is that if hydrogen is vented to the atmosphere, sooner or later, there will be a fire.

“CCLH and the “fire”

Surely one of the highest paid launch panel operators is CCLH. He loads liquid hydrogen into the second and third stage of the rocket. It's all done remotely. No one is allowed within 3 miles during the loading process. Liquid hydrogen is very cold. It can cause steel to fracture and crack if not chilled properly. The atoms are very small. It takes a special stainless steel because Hydrogen can just ooze through steel that is more porous. There are loading skids on several levels of the LUT. All the valves and fuel handling devices are located on these skids. The liquid changes to a gas as it warms up. This gas is piped to the burn pond. The burn pond makes a lot of noise – until the astronauts arrive, there is no one there to hear the noise! The system has multiple paths to flow hydrogen. If one springs a leak, CCLH can close and open valves remotely to bypass the problem. During launch prep, or it could have been CDDT (Count Down Demonstration Test), I can't remember which, the following occurred: CCLH was loading hydrogen. Another firing room worker comments on channel 161 (the Boeing TC channel) that there is a hydrogen sniffer at a certain location that has detected hydrogen. As time passes, more and more sniffers detect the gas. C1TC asked CCLH if there was a leak. CCLH said he was watching it. I was interested because there was an outside chance that they could request swing arm water. Usually that is to be avoided because water flow on the cryogenic skids will create lots of ice and compromise their operation. About 15 minutes later a second operator blurted out (with much excitement) that he has a temperature sensor reading in excess of 1500 degrees. In fact, very quickly, he had several sensors reading high temperature. CCLH reported to C1TC that he believes there is a fire, he gave the location, and appropriate steps were being taken. Within a few minutes, the crisis was over and normal fuel loading was continued. Just another day at the office for CCLH.

“Friday Water Pit Fish Fry”

Florida is a fisherman's paradise. Several technicians set out crab traps and trout lines around the pad area. I suppose these were not what you might consider legal. But they would tend to the traps before and after work. On Fridays they would set up a couple Coleman stove with buckets of hot water to cook the crabs. Located behind the bigger water tank (T2) in the water pit. The trout was prepared at home and brought in to heat up in the microwave. The Friday “fish fry's” were truly memorable. There were TV monitoring cameras everywhere. We tried to conceal the event but it kept attracting more and more people. We invited some of the big shots from the VAB and that helped for a while. Alas, all good things must come to an end and so went the fish fries.

“To Catch A Seagull”

These guys concealed a string noose in the dirt in an attempt to snare a seagull (to eat!). Never did work. Another time a KSC pickup truck was used to chase a wild hog across the sand bogs so the guy in the bed of the truck could spear it. That didn't work either.

“First Lady Visit”

The valve on the 32-inch main is in a pit because the pipe is going underground. This pit also has equipment for remote control, a sump pump, etc. Coming into work one day I saw a couple mechanical techs catching frogs that had fallen into the pit. They were being pitched up to the second tech and sent on their way. I asked what in the world are you doing? Has there been a new procedure or directive relating to frogs? They said that Lady Bird Johnson was scheduled to visit the pad area and they heard she was a bit of an animal lover and might become distressed if she saw all the trapped frogs.

“Liquid Oxygen Spill And The 32-inch Main Pit”

In the old days at Peenemunde the oxidizer and propellants were loaded onto the rocket “close up.” There was a large free standing panel with valve handles sticking out. The operator would twist the handles and perform the loading. First step is to flow gaseous nitrogen and then liquid nitrogen to get the pipes and valves to cryogenic temperature before liquid oxygen or liquid hydrogen is introduced. Metal shrinks at these ultra-cold temperatures. It was common for leaks to occur particularly at pipe flanges. A technician, in protective clothing, would walk around with a bucket of water. When he spotted a leak of

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cryogenic liquid he would dip a Kotex into the water and slap it onto the leak. New technology and better materials and procedures were in place for the Saturn V program. In addition, there was no one “walking around.” Everyone was 3 miles away. On one occasion there was a major leak when oxidizer was trying to be loaded from the big cryotank. This is the large spherical storage tank on the inland side of the pad. Most valves are remotely controllable. The only way to shut off flow was to manually turn off the big valve at the bottom of the tank. Personnel were quickly sent to the pad. By the time they got there the LOX spill was so large that they could not get to the valve. It was decided to let the big cryotank empty itself. Eventually the LOX (Liquid oxygen) would GOX (Gaseous oxygen) off. Attention was first focused on the tank itself. They had remotely sealed it in an attempt to slow the flow. Now they were concerned that a partial vacuum would cause the inside of the tank to collapse. It was vented to let nitrogen or air in. At some point they started worrying that the pit that has the 32-inch main water system was filling with liquid oxygen. The fate of the remaining frogs was not of their concern. If the pipe freezes and bursts, that would be bad. The first concern was with regard to relay contacts in the pit that could cause a spark to set anything off. When asphalt is saturated with oxygen it can form a substance similar to dynamite. This is what they were saying! So, everyone was on edge. It was decided to flow some water on the pad to keep water flowing through the big valve to prevent freezing. The tank drained without further incident. It had to be repaired and refilled. It takes many, many truckloads of liquid oxygen to get it refilled. I was “in the loop” during the whole episode. That evening I went home and switched on the news. They had the facts kind of right but their whole focus was an aspect of the event that was entirely irrelevant. This was an early example to me of what you hear on the news may or may not have anything to do with what really happened.

“Evaluating The Abort Slide Wire”

During launch preparations, the RP1 fuel is loaded first. The pad area is then cleared of all personnel for a radius of three miles. Then the liquid oxygen is loaded. The call sign for the oxygen panel operator is CCLO. The pad is laid out in a north-south orientation. All the fuels are east – toward the ocean. The oxidizers storage containers are all to the west. The rocket skin is very thin. Liquid oxygen is at -297 deg F. It continually boils off and must be replenished using pipes that go through the swing arms. If you see the dense gas coming from the rocket before launch, it is gaseous oxygen - GOX. Several swing arms are “in flight” arms and do not disconnect until after holding down arm release and upward movement is detected. After the oxidizers are loaded and a stable replenish has been established the launch director (CLTC) will instruct CCLH to load liquid hydrogen. - 423 degrees F. This stuff is a lot colder and a lot less forgiving than oxygen. It cannot be vented into the atmosphere. There is a swimming pool sized water feature called the burn pond. The gaseous hydrogen (that boils off from the rocket) is piped down to it. The gas is released under water and igniters light it up when it leaves the surface. After the hydrogen is loaded and a stable condition is established, the three astronauts and three closeout techs return to the pad. They take the elevator to the 320-foot level. The elevator doors are locked open during this procedure. At this point they go across swing arm 9 to enter the Apollo module. After they get situated, the three closeout team members “egress” and swing arm 9 is retracted. If something goes wrong during this process there are several options.

Just before you get into the elevator there is an opening in the wall to a slide. The slide goes down a couple of stories to what is called the rubber room. This room can be sealed and is shock proof. There is enough food, water, and air for six people to stay for a couple weeks. This is how long they think it might take for all the fuel and oxidizer to boil off if nothing else can be done.

Another egress route is from the 320-foot level, after the elevator ride. It is a slide wire. Yep, kind of like a zip line but it goes way down, way fast. At the end is an APC (Armored Personnel Carrier) that the six can use to drive away. The last is the LES (Launch Escape System). This is a small rocket at the very top of the stack that can be fired and it is intended to separate the CM (Command Module) from the rest of the rocket. A parachute will be deployed to safely splash the CM into the Atlantic Ocean. The three choppers, already in the air, will go into action. This last operation is not without danger. During a normal splashdown, the spacecraft RCS (Reaction Control System) fuel tanks would be empty. At time of launch they were all full. The fuel is hypergolic. When the fuel and oxidizer come together they spontaneously combust. There are little RCS rockets, 5 in a group, located around the spacecraft. This is the little spittt-spittt-spittt sound you sometimes hear when the spacecraft is maneuvering. Just the names of some of the propellants will give you an idea of how nasty they are. UDMH (uni di methyl hydrazine). Hot fuming nitric acid. In WWII, the German Me163 rocket plane used similar fuels. It did not have landing gear. It had a landing skid. Some landings were rough and the fuel lines broke. By the time they got the cockpit opened, the pilot had already melted. I am not aware of any Apollo mission that has used the LES.

In order to be ready for the first manned Saturn V launch, the slide wire had to be successfully tested. Man Rated. The wire was put into place from the 320-foot level to ground. There was a lump in the wire part way down that was supposed to trigger a break. They would release a dummy and away it would go down the wire. We would take our sack lunches out and lay in the grass and watch the show. One time the break did nothing--- the dummy smashed into the pylon at the end with dummy parts going everywhere. Another time the break really took hold and the dummy flipped up and was cut in two by the cable.

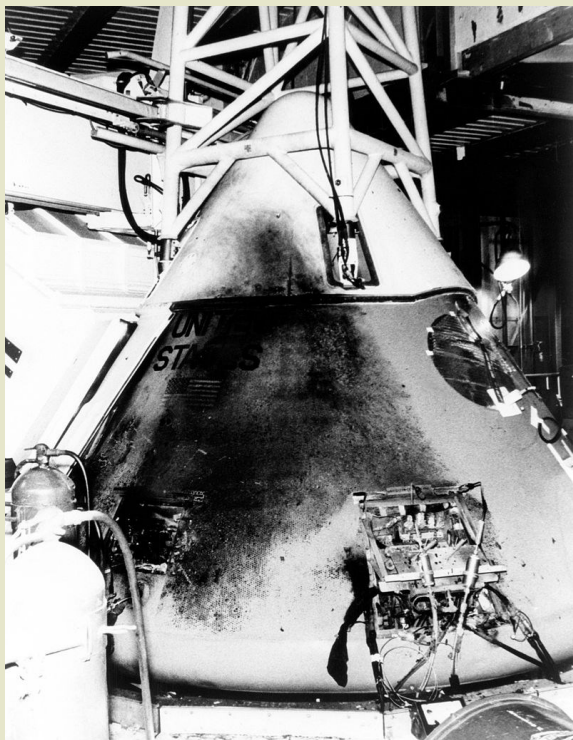
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If the break worked perfectly, the next dummy had no breaking and slammed into the first dummy. The system had to allow the safe egress of six people. The problem got so dire that an astronaut was assigned to the project and testing was moved to a window/door at about the 200 foot level of the VAB. With an astronaut assigned, the importance of the project was greatly increased. After a couple successful “drops” the astronaut said, “Hell hook me up - let’s get this SOB man rated.” The engineer in charge declined and the next drop cut the test dummy in half. The problem was finally resolved by making a harness that all six team members attached to before making the drop.

My wife, Eve on bus

We had a good number of friends and relatives visit while we were living in Coco Beach. One thing they all wanted to do was go on the bus tour of the Saturn complex. I only went once or twice because I was at work most of the time. Eve got to hear the tour guides comments many times. It was how fast the crawler moves, why is a man always walking alongside the crawler? How large the VAB – clouds inside, how tall the rocket is, etc. One time we had several relatives staying with us. They took the usual bus tour but for some reason the guide was rather quiet. After passing a couple of important attractions without commenting, my wife got up and turned to face her relatives. She started telling them about the attractions as they passed. She had memorized the routine. She finally looked around and discovered that most of the people in the buss were straining to hear what she was saying.



TRAGEDY ON PAD 37

It always took time to get from the entrance guard gate to pad 39. It was not unusual for roads to be closed because of some test that was in progress. On this one particular day, things were especially hectic. Lots of emergency vehicle sirens are going off. As I drove near the pad 37 launch area I could see smoke in the distance. When I finally got to work at pad 39, I learned of the tragic fire on pad 37. It was the Apollo 1 fire. This was intended to be an earth orbital mission to man rate/qualify the spacecraft. I was not involved in this mission in any way.

We lost Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee at 6:31pm on the evening of Friday, 27 January 1967.

Gus Grissom was the 2nd American to “Fly” in Space.

Ed White was the first American to “Walk” in Space.

Note on photo of Capsule: Photo is in the [public domain](#) in the United States because it was solely created by [NASA](#). NASA copyright policy states that "NASA material is not protected by copyright unless noted".

THIS COMPLETES THE ABRIDGED COPY OF EV BAKERS NASA RECOLLECTIONS.

Our thanks to Ev for this personal insight with a “behind the scenes)” look at the NASA Space program, with an accounting to things that few would ever have imagined had happened.

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“We Are Not Just A Sports Shooting Chapter!”

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