

TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S NEWS

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The Newsletter of The Texas Sportsman's Association

"Dedicated to educating the public about the need for protection, conservation and improvement of fish, game and other wildlife, grasslands, and forests and to safeguard the freedoms that enable these pursuits."

Business Meeting March 1 at Columbus KC Hall

The Texas Sportsman's Association annual business meeting will be held Sunday, March 1, 2009 in Columbus at the KC Hall on I-10.

The day begins at 11 a.m. The business meeting will be conducted after the meal, followed by the speaker.

The TSA is happy to have Larry Bozka as this year's guest speaker. Mr. Bozka is a professional outdoor writer and public speaker with over 30 years experience.

Buck Kollman and his crew of volunteer cooks will prepare a tasty stew for all to enjoy. Serving will begin at noon with tea, coffee and desserts available.

Items to be covered in the business meeting are amendments to the by-laws and the election of officers. The offices of vice president and treasurer are up for election.

The board of directors is also asking for approval to establish two \$500 scholarships to be awarded annually.

Please try to join us for this interesting, informative program and important business meeting.

Notice of Amendments to the By-Laws

The Board of Directors approved the following amendments to the By-Laws of the Texas Sportsman's Association on Jan. 13, 2009. These amendments will be voted on at the annual meeting, March 1, 2009. They must receive approval by two-thirds (2/3rds) majority of the membership present to be adopted.

ARTICLE IV – CHARTER PROVISIONS Current By-Law

Sec. 1. Upon dissolution, all of the association's remaining net assets after payment of debts and liabilities, shall be distributed to the Texas Ranger's Museum, Waco, Tex.

Amendment

Sec. 1. Upon dissolution, all of the association's

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TSA 'hooks' well-known outdoorsman as guest speaker at March 1 meeting

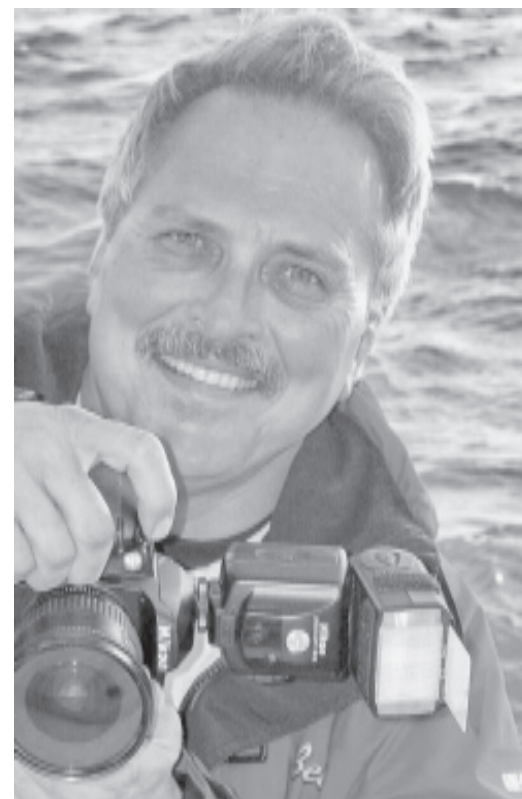
The TSA is honored to have acclaimed outdoors journalist Larry Bozka as guest speaker at this year's Spring Business Meeting.

A fifth-generation Texan, Bozka has been a professional outdoor writer, editor, photographer, broadcaster, video producer, marketing consultant and public speaker for more than 30 years. He graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism in August of 1979.

As the first full-time editor of the Coastal Conservation Association's TIDE magazine, Bozka was heavily involved in legislative efforts to protect Texas redfish and speckled trout in the late 70s.

He has well over 120 state and national awards to his credit and specializes in covering the Texas Coast, partly through his website and blog, CoastalAnglers.com.

Most recently, at the 50th annual conference of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association in College Station, Bozka was honored with the L.A. Wilke Lifetime Achievement award, TOWA's highest honor. He was presented the award by the previous recipient, longtime outdoor writer and broadcaster Doug Pike. Through the TOWA's



LARRY BOZKA, one of the nation's most honored outdoors journalists, will share his unique knowledge and love for the outdoors when he takes the podium at the TSA's annual Spring Business Meeting on March 1 at the KC Hall in Columbus.

most recent Excellence in Crafts competition, Bozka landed first-place honors in the website category for the second year in a row with CoastalAnglers.com. He also took first place in the Radio category with a segment that aired on Great

(Continued on Page 6)

**TEXAS
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Visit TSA On Line!

The TSA web site is up and running, and members are encouraged to visit:

<http://www.texassportsmansassociation.org>

The website is maintained by
TSA Director Leslie Heinsohn.

TSA County Officers

Austin County

President — L.J. Rinn
Vice President — David Wade
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Increased Daylight Hours ... Really?

(Editor's Note: The following column was written by CJ Garriott. She's the editor and publisher of *Livin' on the Bay*, which is printed "around the first of each month" in *Seadrift*.)

What with the economy, the elections, and other preoccupations in these pre-holiday weeks, I had fully intended to write something solemn and timely. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as it may be) I pulled up my email before starting, and there it was. A news article with the blazing headline: "Daylight Saving Time: Why Did We Do It?" I had to read it.

You may want to go online and find the full article. It'll have you rolling around like those Holy Rollers Diane Wilson talks about in her new book.

Dated Friday, Oct. 31, it is written by Andrea Thompson, Senior Writer, LiveSci-ence.com.

With the annoyance of resetting all the clocks and struggling to reset our inner body time-pieces, she muses about "why we bother with this rigmarole in the first place."

She then proceeds to confound every thinking person in the country with this statement: "... some of the original reasons for resetting our clocks twice a year include ... having more daylight hours for retailers, sporting events and other activities that benefit from a longer day."

Oh please. It doesn't make a longer day—the number of daylight hours are exactly the same, we've just made our clocks show a different time when it's daylight. Right?

After the fall time change, for a week or so, my cats think I'm getting home an hour late, up to who knows what. When I turn the corner to my house (in the dark), there they are, sitting in the middle of the street, anx-

iously peering into the gloom with suspicions I've lost it.

Here's another paragraph from the aforementioned article that starts out, at least, with some merit:

"... Arizona likewise has not observed daylight saving time since 1967 because the extra daylight in the summer would just mean more energy consumption to keep the desert state's residents cool."

The above quote falls to pieces with the reference to "extra daylight in the summer"—let me say it again: THERE IS NO EXTRA DAYLIGHT! The amount of daylight is exactly the same! It just occurs at different times on the clock, because we have changed the clocks.

As to energy savings, let's face it—we southern states have the AC on when it's hot, whether the clock says 8 or 9.

If they are going to continue extolling the virtues of the time change, at least they could do so in some fashion that doesn't insult our intelligence. Say it this way: there are more daylight hours after work or school, and you could indulge in some activities requiring an extra hour of daylight in the evening. This, of course, would only apply if you worked 9 to 5.

OK, so I have golfing friends who explained to me one time that in the summertime, after work, with the time change, they could complete 9 holes before it got too dark to see. But did they do it? No, by the end of the day, with all that late sunshine, it was too hot to play!

I rest my case. Let's campaign to stop the whole thing.

Whitetail antler restrictions: Are they working?

Editor's Note: The following article comes from the Oak Prairie District of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

Antler restrictions were first imposed in six experimental counties in 2002.

The counties of Austin, Lee, Fayette, Washington, Lavaca and Colorado were selected because they were heavily hunted and very fragmented.

Approximately 75-80 percent of the harvested bucks were 2-1/2 years old or younger.

Something was needed to help provide a better age structure, so antler restrictions were introduced.

The restrictions basically defined a legal buck as either having an inside spread greater than 13 inches or having at least one unbranched antler (such as a spike).

The results were so successful that after three years, in 2005, the regulation spread to 21 counties.

The following year it increased again by 40 for a current total of 61 counties.

The criteria that was initially used for candidate counties were: the county had to be a one-

buck county with 60 percent of the buck harvest consisting of bucks less than 3-1/2 years of age, and the county had to have a contiguous border with another county in which antler restriction regulations were implemented.

With the expansion of the regulation in 2005 also came a second buck to the bag limit.

The second buck must have at least one branched antler.

'I had not killed a buck in years and now I look forward to hunting again.'

So now a hunter can kill a trophy and a spike or two spikes.

This was done to increase hunter harvest opportunity while helping to minimize any risk of high-grading.

After the first two years of the regulation, the spike harvest dropped considerably in 2004 since most hunters did not want to use their one buck tag on a spike.

Hunting pressure on buck deer in these counties was excessive for many years.

In 1991, the bag limit in most counties in the eastern third of the state was reduced from

two bucks to one in an effort to mitigate excessive hunting pressure.

Despite the reduction, the data continued to indicate excessive harvest of bucks, which resulted in very poor age structure.

Research indicates that poor buck age structure within a herd creates a longer breeding season, which in turn leads to a longer fawning season and a reduction in fawn survival.

Poor age structure also contributes to adverse hunter satisfaction, since you can't raise trophy deer at a young age and not many bucks were getting to the older age classes.

This has all turned around now.

In the six counties that initiated the antler regulation, the average harvest from 1991 to 2001 was 52 percent 1-1/2 year olds, 28 percent 2-1/2 year olds, 16 percent 3-1/2 year olds, 4 percent 4-1/2 year olds or over.

During the 2006-07 deer season the numbers were reversed: 24 percent 1-1/2 year olds (re-

member the addition of the extra unbranched antler tag), 6 percent 2-1/2 year olds, 31 percent 3-1/2 year olds and 39 percent 4-1/2 plus.

Notice the swing into the upper age classes after the regulation was in effect for a few years?

Prior to the regulation, only 20 percent of the bucks harvested were mature and now the mature buck segment of the harvest is 70 percent.


When the regulation was proposed there was some concern that the hunters would be losing hunter opportunity because there were few deer that would meet the criteria to be legal.

Now that several years have gone by to allow the population to respond, there is a renewed vigor among the hunters.

There are more bucks in their herd and thus more hunter opportunity.

As one 60-year-old man told a biologist in one of the original six counties, "I had not killed a buck in years and now I look forward to hunting again."

Those who would like to contact their local biologist, see the TP&W website at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wildlifebiologist.

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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>Texas Sportsman's Association</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION</p> </div> <div>  </div> <div> <p>DUES: Annual \$ 5.00</p> <p>Life (Onetime) \$200.00</p> <p>DONATION TO:</p> <p>TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S ASSN. \$ _____</p> <p>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____</p> <p>DUES PAYABLE TO:</p> <p>TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION</p> <p>P.O. BOX 26</p> <p>COLUMBUS, TEXAS 78934</p> </div> </div>		

2 new biologists now on the job

Two new Texas Parks & Wildlife biologists are on the job in southeast Texas, and they have big shoes to fill.

Ryan Schoeneberg is the new biologist for Colorado and Austin Counties.

The other newcomer is Stephanie McKenzie, who is taking over in Washington and Waller counties.

They replace Royce Jurries and Robert Lehmann, recent retirees who total about 73 years of experience.

Schoeneberg has been with TPWD for about four years and was well respected in his former counties of DeWitt and Goliad counties.

McKenzie has an M.S. in Wildlife Science from Texas Tech University. She has extensive experience, including working with turkey, deer and Golden Creek Warblers.



RETIREMENT GIFT — Royce Jurries (right) retired last August as wildlife biologist after 39 years of service. Terrell Maertz, TSA treasurer, presented Royce with a TSA seal. Robert Lehmann, biologist for Washington and Waller counties, also retired last August after logging some 30 years of service.

Jury sentences killer to death penalty in '07 slaying of Hurst

A Wharton County jury took only 2-1/2 hours the afternoon of Monday, Nov. 3 to find 27-year-old James Garrett Freeman of Lissie guilty of capital murder in the shooting death of Texas Game Warden Justin Hurst on March 17, 2007.

Then, on Nov. 7 after two days of deliberation, the jury sentenced Freeman to death by lethal injection.

Freeman was suspected of poaching and opening fire on Hurst and other law enforcement officers following a high-speed police chase on the eve of the game warden's 34th birthday.

Hurst died early the next morning at Hermann Memorial Hospital in Houston, leaving behind a wife and infant son.

Seventeen game wardens have died in the line of duty since 1919.

Hurst began his TPWD career as a wildlife biologist and spent six years at the 15,612-acre wildlife management area formerly known as Peach Point WMA. The wildlife management area was renamed in his honor Oct. 12, 2007.

Hurst graduated from the 48th Texas Game Warden Academy in August 2002 and after a year in Brazos County transferred to Wharton County.

Editorials published in the TSA newsletter may contain opinions of the author and are not to be taken as a position of the Texas Sportsman's Association. Members of TSA may submit stories, a photo or editorials for possible inclusion in future newsletters.

Annual Fundraiser Silent Auction Results

The TSA Board of Directors and Officers would like to thank everyone who supported the fundraiser by donating items and bidding on them. Congratulations to the winning bidders.

ITEM	DONATED BY	WINNER	AMOUNT
Handmade Clock	Irene & Leland Schramm	Doris Rinn	\$25.00
Purring Cat	Irene & Leland Schramm	Debbie Dudensing	\$20.00
Welcome Door Hanger	Robin & Terrel Maertz	Jeanette Jackson	\$19.00
Chocolate Chip Cookies	JoAnn & Raymond Foerster	Irene Schramm	\$12.00
4 Place Mats	Marcella & R.W. Maertz	Mary Lou Henneke	\$30.00
Ice Bucket	Doris & L.J. Rinn	Joyce Loessin	\$24.00
Chocolate Chip Cookies	Debra & Dale Kollman	Irene Schramm	\$25.00
Oatmeal Cookies	Robin & Terrel Maertz	Ruby Belle Henneke	\$12.00
Chocolate Chip Cookies	JoAnn & Raymond Foerster	Verna Nell Dittmar	\$11.00
Wall Hangings	Doris & L.J. Rinn	Dorothy Brune	\$25.00
TSA Sign	Trafo	David Wade	\$55.00
Deer Horn Pen	Bob Bullard	Jane McKnight	\$24.00
Lap Throw	Marcella & R.W. Maertz	Jane McKnight	\$26.00
Pumpkin Candle Holder	Jeanette & William Jackson	Jane McKnight	\$25.00
Horseshoe Cross	W.D. Kollman	E.J. & C.J. Machala	\$75.00
Candle	Robin & Terrel Maertz	E.J. & C.J. Machala	\$25.00
Teapot, Sugar & Creamer	Neil & Deanna Ling	Alice Woehst	\$10.00

Thanks to the following businesses and individuals for donating door prizes:

Dorothy & Simon Borak	Sealy Concrete	Doris & L.J. Rinn	E.J. & C.J. Machala
Black Creek Drilling	Gulf Coast Mud Loggings	Tornado Trucking	Frankie & Jeanie Peters
Columbus Cycle Shop	Tommy & Dorothy Brune	Leland & Irene Schramm	Anita & Earl Wolchik
R.H. Priesmeyer			

Looking Down from the Saddle

By
HERMAN W. BRUNE

Time distorts reality. It provides buffers for humanity from the hard knocks that could cripple our ability to be productive and forgiving.

It allows society a grace period to format historical events and people into portraits that are forever praised or scorned. Our memories showcase the frailty of the human mind. Time makes us all liars.



Then enter the realm of the outdoor writer. He is a fisherman, hunter, trapper, woodsman, wordsmith, and a paid manipulator of ... something resembling the truth. You would think that this breed should be cussed as vehemently as politicians and lawyers, but they aren't. They sit at their keyboards pecking out stories and planning their next escape to some watery or woodsy Shangri-La. And they shouldn't be cussed because these gay caballeros of the pen and camo fraternity provide dreams of big fish and huge bucks to the beleaguered souls chained to an urbanized Texas. Let them lie.

Kendal called and laid out the plan.

"We're going to drive to Monterrey, Mexico," he said. "A bunch of us firefighters go every year and float the Matacanes River. I'd like to invite some of my writing buddies to come along. It's no trip for women. We'll be rappelling off cliffs and riding the wild river through underground caverns. It's a heck of a lot of fun."

The thought thrilled me. This would be a real He-Man adventure and for once I wouldn't be the person guiding. I'd be with a crew of All-American firefighters that could tend to their own needs, and the writers who are the sharpest wits and finest minds in the state. And unlike a hunt, there was no pressure to whack a trophy. This would be a relaxed journey into Old Mexico with good common folks and cold beer.

But prior obligations and bad timing fouled my wants. Kendal had to make the trip without me and I was rendered to looking at pictures when he returned. The next year was skipped and almost two years passed until the invitation came again. This time I wasn't going to miss the opportunity.

"Yeah, a group of us are going again," Kendal said. "Would you like to come along?"

"Yes!"

"Would you mind if we take your truck?"

That query sounded odd. Most folks have nicer vehicles than me because my truck gets used for building fence, hauling hay, and dragging a cattle trailer through the brush. But, I didn't mind.

"Sure we can take my truck. It'll carry at least four people."

"That's great! We may be in three or four vehicles. We'll meet in Laredo and caravan down to Monterrey — it's safer to go in a big group."

The date was set and my excitement began to build. I'd guided hunters for so long that the Montana wilderness, South Texas Muy Grande, and Old Mexico buster bucks camps were like

That's my story and I'm stickin' to it

home. This excursion to the interior of Mexico was going to be plain old fashioned fun, and I looked forward to being with a robust crowd my own age.

Laredo was bustling the day we met at Texas outdoor writer Marty Malin's office. The older gentleman clapped us on the shoulders and bid us well.

"I wish I could go with you boys, but I think y'all are going to have a grand adventure," Marty said.

"Where is everybody?" I asked Kendal.

"Well, most of the bunch that normally goes couldn't make it this year. But I want you to meet McCullough County Judge Randy Young, and this is my cousin Gary Doyle."

"So there are only four of us?"

"Yeah, but it'll be fine."

The other two men grinned at me. Randy was with us to fulfill a bargain. Several years past Randy hosted Kendal to a sissy little charity bicycle ride and the boy had been whining ever since. Randy had been gracious enough to take Kendal to a worthwhile social event. In return Kendal had written several articles about what an awful time he'd had, what a great charity it benefited, and how the bicycle seat inflicted permanent damage raising his voice several octaves. Now, it was Kendal's turn to host Randy on a trip.

The drive to Monterrey was a successful exercise in making new friends. We wound around the city and followed Kendal's directions onto a blacktop road past the Cola de Caballo waterfalls. Then we began to gain altitude climbing into the mountains of Central Mexico. By dark we were parked on the bank of the Matacanes River where we situated our sleeping bags on ground tarps.

At first light, a couple of Barney Fife-looking characters began rousting other campers.

"Who are those guys?" I asked Kendal.

"They ain't nobody," he replied. "They're just trying to shake down tourists for guide services on the river. Let's get up the mountain before they bother us."

In two shakes the four of us were in the truck. In two more shakes I realized that this was the worst road I'd ever driven. For the next 90 minutes my two-wheel-drive ranch truck went straight up a track made for pack mules. Several switchbacks were too sharp to navigate without backing up and pulling forward several times. And in short order we were in a constant position where an errant maneuver behind the steering wheel could plummet us 1,000 feet off the edge. Finally, we reached a small village where the locals raised chickens and sold t-shirts. Immediately behind us, a 4x4 taxi pickup load of college kids, boys and girls, arrived to float the river.

I frowned at Kendal.

"You mean we could have hired taxi service but now I have to pay one of these villagers to drive my truck back down the mountain?"

"It'll be fine, that's what these guys do for a living. Let's get

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Bozka to speak at Business Meeting

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American Outdoor Trails Radio Magazine. The winning podcast covered a 2007 expedition through Alaska's Northwest Passage and featured a total of 77 photos.

He authored "Larry Bozka's Saltwater Strategies: How, When & Where to Fish the Western Gulf Coast" in summer of 1998. The book is now sold out, and Bozka is currently in the process of writing a brand-new title ... "Larry Bozka's Texas Saltwater Fishing Guide: Coastal Angling Strategies & Techniques." He is a past host of the SportsRadio 610 Outdoor Show and continues to occasionally contribute to the program. Bozka is past editor of, among other publications, Texas Fish & Game and Texas Fisherman magazines.

He produced and hosted the Texas Fisherman television show on Home Sports Entertainment in the early 1990s, and is now working on a comprehensive series of instructional saltwater fishing videos. The CAST ("Coastal Angling Strategies & Techniques") videotape series will profile a wide variety of saltwater-related topics, from bank-fishing the surf for autumn-run "bull" redfish to wade fishing and kayaking the shallow flats of bay systems from Sabine Lake to South Padre Island.

Bozka is Contributing Writer/Saltwater for Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine and also serves as Saltwater Editor for Texas Sporting Journal. He is a regular contributor to the CCA TIDE, its sister "youth publication," Rising Tide, Salt Water Sportsman magazine and others.

Bozka is also Saltwater Advisor to TexasFishingForum.com, a prominent and well-respected online forum regularly visited by tens of thousands of avid Texas anglers. He has, since 1990, also been a member of the Wrangler Pro Gear Advisory Group, through which he advises the company on the development of its highly popular Pro Gear line of outdoor apparel. On the national radio front, Bozka works as

Gulf Coast contributing editor for Great American Outdoor Trails Radio Magazine, hosted by award-winning broadcaster Jim Ferguson.

Larry is an active member and past president and board member of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association, and is also an active member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, Southeastern Outdoor Press Association and Florida Outdoor Writers Association.

Bozka is also director of marketing and public relations for I.F. Anderson Farms, producer of the pond-raised Black Salty baitfish (www.blacksalty.com). The eco-friendly Black Salty is available at many bait camps and marinas throughout the Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard, and has been successfully field-tested on a vast assortment of gamefish species in waters fresh and salt, both inshore and offshore.

He also spends as many days as possible out on the water, carrying both rods and reels and a complete array of Nikon bodies and lenses and air-quality Canon video equipment. Gear stowed aboard his specially-rigged 21-foot Kenner Vision (complete with the Texas flag emblazoned from stem to stern), or running offshore aboard the 33-foot Donzi Deadline, co-captained by Bozka with fishing buddy and video producer Dave Aitken of Katy-based Aitken Productions, Larry works hard to document and pass on the experiences and adventures he regularly enjoys as part of his job.

He spends a good deal of his time conducting public speaking engagements throughout the state, entertaining audiences with a unique mix of knowledge based on better than three decades of experience and an ever-present sense of humor.

Larry Bozka lives near the shoreline of Galveston Bay in Seabrook with his wife, Liz, a Marketing Education instructor and DECA Advisor at Pasadena High School.

E-mail Larry at larry@coastalanglers.com or larry@blacksalty.com.

State-Fish Art Contest seeks student entries

Deadline for entering the Texas State-Fish Art Contest is March 31, and students and teachers should take time now to review the contest rules and regulations.

Texas students who enter the contest can win prizes of up to \$1,000. Entries are judged in three grade-level divisions: 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Thanks to funding from the Toyota Texas Bass Classic, the three first-place winners from Texas receive financial assistance for travel to Minneapolis, Minn. to compete in the national competition.

"It's important that entries be prepared in the format specified in the rules," said Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Zoe Ann Stinchcomb, Texas coordinator for the contest. "For example, artwork must be the proper size and have the entry form glued to the back. The complete set of rules is posted on our web site, www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishart."

Stinchcomb noted that a poster teachers can use to promote the contest to students can be found on the contest page as well. "However, home-schooled students are also eligible to enter the contest," she said.

The State-Fish Art Contest is a program of Wildlife Forever, a multi-species non-profit conservation organization that works to preserve America's wildlife heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat and scientific management of fish and wildlife species.

Working at the grassroots level, Wildlife Forever has funded more than 800 conservation projects.

Business Meeting March 1

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remaining net assets after payment of debts and liabilities shall be disbursed at the discretion of the Board of Directors by two-thirds majority vote.

ARTICLE VIII - DIRECTORS

Current By-Law

Sec. 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers, the Founders' Committee and the Officers' Committee from each county.

Amendment

Sec. 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers, the Founders' Committee, the Officers' Committee from each county and each past president of the Texas Sportsman's Assn.

One they'll never forget ... that first deer



ANDREW TROSTLE, 10, of Brenham, grandson of Jo Ann and Johnny Canik of Lone Oak, bagged his first deer, an eight pointer, on Nov. 29 while hunting with his grandfather, Johnny Canik, on family property at Cummins Creek.



WILL WOODS, 8, shot his first year, a four-point buck, on youth weekend. He was hunting a management buck at Triple A&J Ranch in Columbus. The hunt was a donation purchased at Faith Academy's fundraiser earlier in the year. Will is the son of Yvonne and Bill Woods.



EMMA WINKELMANN harvested her first buck, a 7 pointer, on Nov. 9 while hunting with her dad at their deer lease just outside of Harper, Tex. The mounted antlers now hang proudly in Emma's room.

Annual TSA Spring Business Meeting March 1, 2009

KC Hall - Columbus
Guest Speaker: Larry Bozka

Herman Brune

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our backpacks and hit the trail. It's no more than a two-hour walk from here."

The trail started out plain enough, but then forked in the forest. Six hours of hiking later it occurred to me that Kendal didn't know how to find the river, but then he found it.

"Here it is! You know I thought it was right here but it's been a couple of years since I've been here, and I've only been here once."

I was glad we'd gotten an early start. Now, we donned wet suits and put our clothes back on over them. Then we strapped on spelunker helmets with headlamps, put on life vests, replaced the repelling gear into the backpacks, and jumped off a ledge 10 feet above the water. The current flushed us to an 80-foot waterfall where we clambered back out of the water and Kendal began preparing us for the first rappel.

Judge Randy stiffened and locked up.

"Aw Hell No, I can't do this! I'm deathly afraid of heights!"

"Well, there's no going back!" said Kendal. "And you made me ride that bicycle 350 miles, so, get over here and let me show you what to do."

Thirty minutes later we coaxed Randy over the side and he descended the cliff and settled into a deep blue pool at the bottom. From there the river bounced us through rapids and short falls. Then every few hundred yards would be a taller waterfall requiring us to jump from 10 to 20 feet into the pools below. The view from the bottom alternated from mountainous valleys with masses of ferns hanging into the stream to sheer walls of stone holding us within the blasting hydrologic chutes. The frigidity of the river necessitated the wet suits and the never-ending swimming helped maintain body temperature.

Suddenly there was an immense hole and we came to the second 80-foot waterfall, this one hurling itself into the bowels of Mother Earth. Half-way down the cliff was a ledge where we unhooked our harnesses and leaped for the pool in the darkened cavern chambers. The next mile was a head-lamped cave tour with short falls and jumps. Stalactites grew from the ceiling and some of them were broken half-off with water pouring out like high-pressure hoses. A mile further we came back into the sunlight and the velocity of the downhill surge increased. We washed through the canyons cackling and screeching like school kids. Then we crawled out for various jumps and hesitated, standing, appreciating and gawking in awe at this special world.

Eight hours from our first plunge the river flattened out and we walked back to the truck on the round boulders in the riverbed. That night we were exhausted and rented a cabin from a local proprietor that kicked in a hearty bottle of sweet homemade wine.

The next morning it was time to drift north and home to Texas.

Time passed, years passed, and the story of our adventure swirled into its own reality. Then I met Kendal at a Texas Outdoor Writers Conference.

"Hey, I'm taking some Boy Scouts to Alaska," he said. "Would you like to donate \$20 for expenses?"

"Here's \$50 — hire those kids a guide!" And I smiled inside, wondering when we'd make our next trip.

Game Warden Field Notes

The following are excerpts from recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement reports:

Poachers, poachers and more poachers

Last Nov. 29, a game warden responded to a trespassing complaint in northern Titus County. A gentleman was sitting in his deer stand waiting for a large deer he had seen when he heard a gunshot from another section of his property. The gentleman investigated and found a 19-year-old male trespassing and standing over the big deer he had been hunting. The 19-year-old had snuck into the ranch from an adjacent property and had already been warned about trespassing. While the gentleman was dealing with the poacher, three more trespassers drove up on an ATV to see what their poacher friend had shot. Just as the game warden arrived, he caught two more hunters coming off the edge of the property. One large 8-point buck was seized, three subjects were cited, and numerous trespassing citations were issued.

Decoy works, but not as planned

Two Nueces County game wardens and a San Patricio County game warden ran a decoy operation that paid off, but not in the way they had planned. As the wardens were setting up, a vehicle approached that caused the wardens to take cover, leaving the gate open. The occupants of the vehicle noticed the gate open and were nice enough to stop and close the gate. The wardens set up their decoy, and the hours went by with no takers. As the wardens were taking down the set, the same vehicle came by, stopped at the gate and an occupant made the comment: Oh good, the gate is locked now, they must be gone. The vehicle moved a short distance down the road and shot a live doe in front of the wardens. Cases filed.

Poaching in the presence of a game warden?

Not a good idea

A Menard County game warden, along with a Menard County sheriff's deputy, apprehended three subjects last fall hunting deer from the roadway.

The game warden and his wife went to visit a deputy and his wife. The game warden had been at the deputy's house for about 15 minutes when the subjects drove by and shot at a group of deer in front of the deputy's house.

Both officers were standing in the front yard when the subjects drove by and began firing.

A pair of homemade brass knuckles and a .22 rifle were taken from the subjects. Citations were issued for hunting in closed season and discharge of a firearm from a public roadway.



Forget to renew your membership? Well, it's not too late! See page 3.