

# **WISCONSIN BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION®**

## **President's Message**

### **Spring 2015**

We just wrapped up our 74<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Oshkosh and it looked like everyone was having a great time. Our seminars were very popular and it looked like many members were taking advantage of the wealth of knowledge shared in each of them. As one ended the next began, and a lot of folks were just moving from one to the next. Some of them said the seminars alone were well worth spending the day there on Saturday.

This year we had some great ones from bowhunting turkeys by true pioneers of the sport Clarence and John Koch, to Jim Schoenike's instructions on how to take trail camera photography to a whole new level, to Kevin Wallenfang's always informative discussion on what's happening in the DNR. Our featured speaker and renowned bowhunter Tom Hoffman then offered entertaining and informative insights on bowhunting around the world. Finally, Kurt Heid, a professional butcher, brought in an industrial grinder, stuffer, sausage spices and casing – and an assistant with a George Forman grill. In less than an hour, with some fresh venison, he demonstrated the process of turning deer into delicious sausage. As the samples at the end confirmed, it was superb.

A new event at this year's convention was a National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) archery tournament. 88 young and talented archers competed with other teams and schools in the area. It was really encouraging just watching all these young people shooting archery. Along with their coaches, parents and fans, they brought a lot of enthusiasm to the convention. We plan an even bigger and better tournament at next year's convention.

Which will bring us to our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention in 2016 will be at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. We've been planning it for a couple years and intend to make it an event to remember. The fact that WBH was founded 75 years ago and is still thriving and continuing the mission set forth by some of the earliest pioneers of bowhunting is amazing, and a testament to their foresight, wisdom and dedication. Besides being a great venue for our convention, Chula Vista is a great family destination, so bring the family and/or grandkids. Free passes to their huge indoor waterpark are included with every room.

This is a busy time of year for us bowhunters. Many have already sent in applications for western permits, many more are preparing for turkey hunting, and I think we're all anxious to get out and shoot our bows. I believe that one reason Wisconsin is such a great bowhunting state is because every bowhunter in this state has almost unlimited opportunity to shoot, practice and compete. I don't care where you live in this state, a quick review of the Where To Shoot section in this magazine will list places close to you where you can go to shoot on every weekend from now until the season opens. If you've always just shot in your backyard, take in a nearby shoot, I'm certain you won't be disappointed.

Well, the first Wisconsin crossbow season is in the books. From the numbers it appears that about 2/3 of the crossbow shooters came from the archery ranks and about 1/3 from the gun hunting ranks. The other take-away is that a lot of folks hunted with crossbows, and they were very effective, especially on bucks. Please check elsewhere in this issue for more details.

There is also an article later in this issue that discusses the fight to maintain wolf hunting in Wisconsin. Some might ask why are we so concerned about wolf hunting when many bowhunters don't even intend to hunt wolves and there aren't wolves causing problems where many bowhunters hunt? And the answer is because wolves are just the opening battle in a war over the future of hunting. If wolves, which have clearly overextended their range and have decimated other wildlife populations, not to mention their depredation of livestock, hunting dogs and pets, can be prohibited from being hunted just because some people think they are "special"; then the hunting of any species just becomes a subjective discussion of how people feel about that species. That's a slippery slope we don't want to start down.

Make no mistake, the attack on the future of what we do is underway. And bowhunters are on the front lines. The animal rights groups have identified their first targets: Trapping, hunting with dogs and bowhunting, which they are constantly portraying to the general public as inhumane methods. Before you dismiss this, just consider recent news accounts of people being fined and even jailed for inhumane treatment of wildlife or pets - just based on a subjective opinion that the treatment was inhumane. It's not a great leap from there to determining that shooting an animal with an arrow is also inhumane – if that's what the public comes to believe. Another slippery slope.

As you know, WBH is involved in these issues every day. And with your help and support, we prevail most of the time. But it's a constant struggle and we can't do it without a strong membership. Thank you for supporting WBH and what we do. And if you know other bowhunters that aren't members of WBH, you might point out to them that we are fighting for them too, and if they want to protect bowhunting for the future, this might be a good time to support those fighting for it.

When introducing WBH to groups or individuals that are unfamiliar with us, I take great pride in noting that WBH is the oldest and largest state bowhunting organization in the country. That's something that we all can be proud of, because WBH isn't just a few people – it's all of us.

Shoot straight.

- Mike Brust

