



WILL COUNTY GRASSROOTS DIVISION OF THE ILLINOIS STATE RIFLE ASSOCIATION

NEXT MEETING - February 15th, 2006 - 7:00 PM

**Sara's Place Restaurant
Joliet, IL (815)741-3076**

Pete Kiefert has been collecting American made civil war rifles, carbines, muskets and pistols for more than twenty years. Along with collecting he appraises, buys and sells civil war arms. Pete is going to talk about the progression and development of civil war rifles. If any one has a civil war area rifle and wants it identified or appraised, bring it along. Pete is from the Joliet area and will bring numerous rifles to show. Please bring your friends and family for an enjoyable evening.

Hunting for Pheasants

One of my favorite diversions in life is to hunt for one of the most sought after game birds in this country, the Ring Necked Pheasant. I have hunted pheasant for a number of years and I just wanted to share some thoughts with you about what this magnificent bird is all about.

Judge Owen Nickerson Denny, the U.S. Consul to China, sent them here from China in 1881. This wasn't the first time pheasants were sent over to the U.S. There had been previous attempts to get pheasants to survive here but Judge Denny's 26 birds did manage to thrive in the state of Oregon. Eleven years later 50,000 pheasants were bagged by Oregon hunters in 75 days.



From that point in time things started to look good for pheasants. They were introduced into many other parts of this country and though these birds could survive almost anywhere, their populations increased mostly in the Midwest and Plains States.

Problems began in the early 1930's, though, and it wasn't the pheasant's fault. Farming back then was very basic. There were new implements and tools for the farmer to use and that created a situation for the soil to be overworked. That led to the "Dust Bowl of the 1930's". It was a tough time for all, including wildlife.

Somehow the country worked through those times and so did the pheasant. In the 1950's the USDA wanted to insure that cropland was protected from erosion. Overproduction of farmland is destructive and the damage to the soil from this practice needed to be controlled. The "Soil Bank Act of 1956" was established and it began a long-term conservation contract with farmers and landowners to set aside cropland and convert them to protective cover. This worked out well for the farmers and for wildlife too. Pheasant's benefit greatly in having their nesting areas undisturbed,

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and if this nesting area is adjacent to cropland, all the better. I remember back in the early 1960's when it seemed like pheasants were everywhere. The "Soil Bank Act" program only lasted for 10 years. Today the "Conservation Reserve Program" of 1985 replaces the "Soil Bank Program" and pheasants have prospered from this program too.

The range of these birds extend from New York State westward through Pennsylvania in a narrow band along I-90, then in Ohio their territory extends a little further North and South expanding more in Indiana and Illinois. Once past the Mississippi River, pheasants really flex their wings pushing their boundaries into Canada, the Panhandle of Texas, all of the Southwest, the Plains States and finally along the majority of the Western coastline. The birds thrive in farmland with grassy cover. The more crops the better, and as long as the cover is undisturbed, the pheasant will do well.

These birds have a life span of about a year. The mortality rate for the chicks runs about 50%. The hunting season claims around 50% of the roosters, and in the past few years' hunters have bagged well over 6 million birds each year. Amazing!

For additional articles and information, visit willcounty.isra.org

Hunting for pheasant isn't too difficult. Depending on where you are going to hunt, a little preparation will go a long way. My first recommendation is to get a recommendation. Find out from others on where to go. Who to see. What to bring. Dogs are important for a successful hunting trip, and if you don't have a hunting dog, find a friend that does. Much of this information can be obtained through your local chapter of "Pheasants Forever". If you find that pheasant hunting is to your liking then you really need to join this organization.

My favorite place to go is South Dakota. I won't tell you exactly where, that is my secret. But I can tell you this much. South Dakota is the "Pheasant Capitol of the U.S." That's what they advertise and I can't disprove that claim. About 2 million pheasant were taken last year. Second place goes to Iowa with around 750,000 birds taken.

Most hunters use shotguns for pheasant, with a few using bows. The best advice I can give here is to practice. Find out where the nearest gun club is at and practice. Sporting Clays courses are around for hunters to practice. Skeet and Trap is a great way to practice. The operative word here is "practice". Pheasants have a knack to get the hunter to miss. I know that sounds improbable but even the most experienced pheasant hunter has been known to miss a bird once or twice.

When I am hunting for pheasant I am always reminding myself that these birds live in a tough environment. For the few days I coexist with these birds in the plains of South Dakota, I know that I will have to pursue them in and through some of the toughest grasslands, dried creek beds, cattail marshes, and shelterbelts that a hunter could ever love. Happy Hunting!

Al Tiscareno

LOBBY DAY 2006

The ISRA's 2006 Annual "Lobby Day" will be held in Springfield, IL on March 15th this year. Our monthly Will County Grassroots meeting, which was scheduled for the same date, will be postponed and we will be attending the Lobby Day as a group. The event will begin at 1:00PM in Springfield and will continue until 7:30PM. Last years event was well attended with over 200 ISRA members meeting face to face with their representatives and discussing their views on upcoming gun legislation. Last year we were very successful in fighting off much of the anti-gun legislation that was brought before the congress, and this was due in no small part to your participation. We hope to increase the attendance dramatically this year and to send a very loud message to the Blago/Daley anti-gun crowd.

For those who can attend, but may need help with transportation, we will help to coordinate car pools to leave from Sara's Restaurant at approximately 10:30AM on the 15th. Those who are interested in sharing a ride should contact us at willcounty@isra.org or call Doug Mayhall at (708) 479-2506. Please join us in presenting a strong message to our congressional representatives. Let's show our elected officials that we do care about our rights and we will be watching to see how they are being protected. We will see you there.

We will update the Will County website (<http://willcounty.isra.org>) as more information becomes available. Please call or email with any questions you may have.

Don't forget to check out the ISRA website
www.isra.org
for information on what's happening statewide.

For information about the ISRA Political Victory Fund, visit
www.isra-pvf.com

For information on a national level, visit
www.nra.org

Three Rivers Friends of the NRA Dinner

The Three Rivers Friends of the NRA will be hosting their 10th annual fundraising banquet on Sunday, March 19th, 2006. The event will be held at the beautiful Renaissance Center located in downtown Joliet. Doors open at 3:30pm.

The evening will commence at 5:00pm with a steak dinner, followed by a live auction. Silent auctions, special games, drawings and numerous raffles will be held throughout the event. Dinner tickets are only \$35.00. Tickets can be purchased either online at www.threeriversfnra.com or by phone at (708) 636-4486. Raffle tickets are now being sold for various items, including a Weatherby .270cal Vanguard Rifle that comes with a 3x9 Simmons scope, leather sling and case included; a rifle/handgun combo of a Savage 17hmr rifle in stainless steel with a black/gray laminated stock and a Ruger single six 17hmr revolver in stainless steel; a ladies "Circle of Love" 14kt white gold "O" Pendant with 26 full cut diamonds, .31ctw, on a 14kt white gold link chain. There is also a raffle for the FNRA Hunters Combo, which is an Escort Turkey & Waterfowl 12 gauge combo, the winner of this raffle qualifies for entry in a drawing for a Yamaha Bruin 350 4x4 ATV.

All net proceeds benefit The NRA Foundation, with half allocated to fund projects within the state. The NRA Foundation has funded more than 3,400 state fund grants including but not limited to: youth firearms safety and education programs; hunter education; range development and improvement; support materials for training classes; women's safety classes; and wildlife conservation efforts.

Come help preserve your shooting sports, while enjoying a delicious dinner and an exciting evening!

JOIN US AT
ISRA LOBBY DAY 2006
MARCH 15th - SPRINGFIELD, IL

Political Disclaimer

The ISRA and the Will County Division of the ISRA **CAN NOT** and **WILL NOT** endorse any candidate or party. We feature speakers to allow us to learn about the positions a candidate holds about the Second Amendment, and welcome all candidates to speak to us. Only the ISRA Political Victory Fund can endorse candidates or donate to political campaigns.

ISRA Annual Meeting

The ISRA will hold their next Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 1, 2006 at Hotel Pere Marquette in Peoria, IL. There will be a "Meet & Greet" Reception on Friday, March 31st. On Saturday, there will be various workshops including: Legislative, Personal Protection, Competitive Shooting, Communications, Gun Collecting and Clubs & Associations throughout the morning. The Annual Meeting will be held in the afternoon, followed by the banquet on Saturday night.

This year's keynote speaker will be Texas State Representative Suzanna Gratia Hupp. She is recognized worldwide as one of the leading advocates for an individual's right to carry a concealed weapon. Many of you will remember her as being one of the victims of a violent crime committed in 1991 when she was forced to watch helplessly as her parents, along with 21 others, were gunned down at a local restaurant. This tragedy inspired her to become an advocate of the Second Amendment and the right of citizens to self-defense.

Dinner tickets are \$35 and can be purchased through the ISRA office or visit their website at www.isra.org Raffle tickets are also being sold for a Browning BLR Model 81, .308 caliber lever-action rifle as well as a ladies "Circle of Love" 14kt white gold "O" pendant with 35 full cut diamonds, 1.16ctw, on an 18" 14kt white gold chain.

Mark your calendars and order your tickets today!

Calendar of Events

- February 12** Kane County Gun Show - Kane County Fairgrounds (815) 758-2773
February 25&26 Bloomington Gun Show - Bloomington Sale Barn - Bob Leckrone (618) 495-2572
March 5 Wheaton Gun Show - Dupage County Fairgrounds (773) 237-8844
March 11&12 Kankakee Gun Show - Kankakee County Fairgrounds (815) 939-7572
March 15 ISRA Lobby Day - Springfield - ISRA (815)635-3198 www.isra.org
March 19 Three Rivers FNRA Dinner - Renaissance Center, Joliet www.threeriversfnra.com
April 1 ISRA Annual Meeting - Pere Marquette, Peoria - ISRA (815) 635-3198 www.isra.org

Please use the above contact information to confirm events as dates may change without notice

Please contact Secretary, Doug Mayhall, or the ISRA office if you would like to help out at any of the ISRA events.

E-mail willcounty@isra.org if you have any events you would like included in next month's newsletter.

In response to the article in the Monday 12/19 Herald News entitled,

"Residents: hunter too close for comfort."

A woman in Frankfort asserts that "...because hunters have accidents all the time" someone shouldn't be able to hunt on his own property, despite the fact that it's legal.

Hunting is a sport enjoyed by millions of Americans, and in fact is safer than activities such as baseball or bicycling, according to the National Safety Council.

As for deaths, approximately 100 hunters may die annually in hunting accidents, whereas nearly 2000 Americans accidentally die each year due to drowning in a swimming pool or natural body of water. And in 2002, over 350 people died in bathtubs!

Recently, the Lexington (KY) Herald-Leader reported that in Kentucky in 2004, of the 11 hunting incidents reported, there were 3 fatalities, including 2 heart attacks and one accidental self-inflicted wound.

While all of these deaths are tragic, hunting does not deserve to be specified as an unsafe activity just because some find it "disturbing." Pellets from a shotgun would typically lose more than half the energy and 40% velocity at just 60 yards. Though the article didn't indicate the distances involved, it seems that the current housing is well out of range for any possibly injury.

Hunters that I know are extremely concerned about good natural habitat for animals, and donate to organizations that promote responsible usage. Through taxes, American hunters provide over a billion dollars of funding for conservation programs that benefit ALL Americans.

Though the concern of those to protect children is quite understandable, unjustified fear because of ignorance does a disservice to this proud, legal, and safe tradition.

Paul Rak

Joliet, IL

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