



WILL COUNTY GRASSROOTS DIVISION OF THE ILLINOIS STATE RIFLE ASSOCIATION

NEXT MEETING - October 19th - 7:00 PM

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

Chris McNeil, Republican candidate for the 81st IL Representative District, will be our guest for the October meeting of the Will County Grassroots. Chris will speak to us about reforming the Illinois Republican Party and his views on the issues of the day.

Also speaking this month will be ISRA Director and Will County Grassroots member, **Terry Kreimeier**. Terry has been hunting prairie dogs for over 10 years. He recently went on another prairie dog hunt and will be speaking about his trip and the equipment used to hunt prairie dogs. As always, we hope to see you there, and be sure to bring a friend or two.

Ain't Life...Garand!

Jeff Carsten's knowledge of the M1 Garand, especially the post WWII models, is almost encyclopedic. Expecting to speak to our group for only twenty minutes or so, Jeff found himself having to fill the hour due to the cancellation of our other scheduled speaker. For Jeff, this proved to be no problem at all.



Jeff earned his law degree at an early age, but chose to spend his time doing something that he enjoyed and went to work at a body shop. He became interested in the Garand and began specializing in the Winchester models after winning an MID from the Civilian

Marksmanship Program (CMP) lottery. "I opened the box and found a brand new Winchester M1D - I almost fell over and that was the spark." His love of this particular rifle led to the in-depth study of its history. He is known today as one of the foremost historians on the M1Garand. Jeff brought with him that night a dozen or so of his Garands to illustrate the differences in production models.

Springfield Armory (SA) was the leading producer of the M1 Garand and they considered themselves the premier gun makers of the world. However, during the war, many other companies began producing the Garand using Springfield Armory's plans at bequest of the U.S. government. SA was never happy about this arrangement and occasionally made life difficult on other contractors that were producing the weapon. Many times SA would send incorrect plans to the "competition" to make it difficult for them to produce parts that would function properly. Thus, these "competitors" found it very difficult to meet their quotas. SA was also known to make changes to the Garand on almost a monthly basis, expecting companies like International Harvester, Harrington Richardson and Winchester to re-tool at a moment's notice. For example, SA would make as many as forty-three

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revisions of one part. As a result of these actions, Winchester nearly went bankrupt after the war and some of companies became known for producing inferior Garands. Many, though, were of fairly high quality and are valued in the collector's market today.

Winchester, however, took a different approach. they contracted to build a specific weapon based on the original plans given to them and refused to make the "updates" that SA insisted on. As it turns out, Winchester produced over half a million Garands during WW II. This included the original "gas trap" models, which were about the first 46,000 produced as well as the "spline" or "gas port" system version. Since the rifles built by SA and Winchester were very similar at one time, identifying marks or stamps were imprinted upon various parts of the rifles. Springfield Armory stocks were stamped with "SA" and Winchester stocks with "WRA" (Winchester Repeating Arms). Other manufacturers had their identifying cartouches as well.

In years to come, social uprisings such as Kent State (May 1970), contributed to the on-going production and distribution of Garands. Thus, in 1969, there were a multitude of sniper rifles built. It seemed that the "powers that be" wanted to be certain they had enough

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firepower readily available for any given situation.

Jeff also spoke about his membership of the Garand Collectors' Association and encouraged those interested to join GCA. More information about GCA can be found at www.garandcollector.org. Jeff also mentioned that Garand enthusiasts would enjoy reading a book by Billy Pyle entitled, Gas Trap Garand.

After speaking for about 40 minutes, Jeff opened the floor to questions. There were several other collectors and Garand aficionados in the audience and Jeff found himself surrounded and barraged by questions for more than an hour after the meeting adjourned. Thank you, Jeff, for showing us some of your collectibles and for making it an interesting and educational evening

National Hunting And Fishing Days

Celebrating the Conservation of Our Natural Resources

Albert J. Tiscareno

It wasn't too many years ago that this country saw its resources disappearing. Wildlife management was unheard of and conservation wasn't a common household word. Many sportsmen began to call upon our government to help rebuild much of what had been lost to mismanagement and over harvesting. In 1937 the Pittman-Robertson Act was signed into law and established funds for each state, through a excise tax on sporting arms ,ammunition, and license fees, to be used for wildlife and resource conservation. The hunters and anglers that called for this legislation were now directly funding the state agencies responsible for this new conservation movement. This effort to reestablish what was lost paid off in a big way. Today our natural and wildlife resources are stronger than they have been in 100 years.

The efforts of sportsmen and how the funding came about were largely unrecognized by the average citizen. In the 1960s the focus on environmental awareness started. As this movement continued, the sportsmen role was not acknowledged and many of them wanted to enlighten the public to the many efforts that were made by them.

In 1970 a movement began in the state of Pennsylvania to promote a day to thank the men and women that contributed to wildlife conservation. Mr. Ira Joffe led this undertaking and Gov. Raymond Shafer proclaimed "Outdoor Sportsman Day" in that state. Within a year the U.S. Senate and the House passed resolutions asking

President Richard M. Nixon to declare the fourth Saturday in September as National Hunting and Fishing Day. Congress passed both bills and President Nixon signed the proclamation on May 2, 1972. By the end of the year all state governments and over 600 cities and towns declared their own proclamations of the National Hunting and Fishing Day.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources celebrates this event at two locations. The Southern Illinois National Hunting and Fishing Days is held at John A. Logan College in Carterville. This two-day event is the largest of its kind and more than 30,000 attend annually. The Northern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days is showcased at the Silver Springs State Park just west of Yorkville Illinois. Both locations have hunting and fishing seminars, wildlife displays, and many exhibitors.

This year The National Hunting and Fishing Days at Silver Springs State Park was held on September 24 and 25, 2005. In past years the weather had been excellent, but this year the weather dampened the ground but not the spirit of the many people that were part of the event and those that attended. The activities and exhibits were many. For the anglers the products ranged from boats, tackle, and techniques to hook into a big one. Hunters had an opportunity to see some of the newest equipment, check out dogs retrieving, or even watch the proper way to field dress a deer. There were many other areas of interest. The reenactment area had a small village with tipi's , Indians, and many dressed up to depict the way it was many years ago. There were kayak demonstrations, voyager canoes and deer fawns for the kids, young and old, to pet or have their pictures taken. As always there was something for everyone.

Many organizations were in attendance also. The Illinois Federation for Outdoor Resources, Boy Scouts of America, Safari Club International, American Legion and many others.

The Illinois State Rifle Association has been a presence at Silver Springs for a number of years. In the last three years I have had the pleasure of assisting at the ISRA table and talking with many of those that stop by just to find out about us, or those that are well acquainted with the efforts of our organization. I can tell you firsthand that the ISRA is well spoken of and that our efforts in Springfield are appreciated. So, if you are looking for something not too "out of the ordinary" to do next September, I hope to see you at Silver Springs State Park for the 2006 Northern Illinois Hunting and Fishing Days.

Calendar of Events

- Oct. 22** USO Illinois Fundraiser at Navy Pier - Lisa Moeller - (312) 923-7070 www.uso.org/Illinois
Oct. 30 CMP National Match Clinic - Aurora Sportsmen's Club - Sugar Grove, IL - (630) 466-9711
Nov. 5-6 Peoria Gun Show - Exposition Gardens - Peoria, IL - William Fritz - (309) 274-2977
Nov. 6 Wheaton Gun Show - DuPage County Fairgrounds - (773) 237-8844
Nov. 12-13 Kankakee Gun Show - Kankakee County Fairgrounds - (815) 939-7572

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.

A Flight to Remember

In 1943, during World War II, former President George Bush was a young pilot, in fact the youngest, in the Navy. He was stationed on an aircraft carrier flying torpedo bombers, specifically, the TBM Avenger.



I was recently invited to go for a ride in a 1943 TBM Avenger torpedo bomber. What a thrilling experience for anyone who is interested in flying, especially a WW II airplane (warbird) lover, like me. It was like taking a journey back in time. This specific plane is painted to

replicate the one that George Bush actually flew during the war, right down to the detail of having his name written on the side of the cockpit. It's a real beauty!

Local pilot, Tom Buck, is an active warbird enthusiast and the proud owner of two very rare airplanes, the TBM Avenger and an AT6 WW II trainer. In fact, only 42 of the 9,839 Avengers built during the war are airworthy. Tom is a member of Warbird Squadron 4, a local club that is interested in historic military airplanes and is affiliated with the Experimental Aircraft Association www.eaa.org. I

have gotten to know Tom over the years by speaking with him at various meetings, fly-ins and dinners. He is very friendly and loves to share his knowledge of flying to anyone who is interested. He is always willing, actually eager, to give rides to anyone who appreciates these types of historical aircraft.



As for his Avenger, it originally had a crew of three, including the pilot, navigator and a turret gunner. It had the capability of carrying two thousand pounds worth of bombs or one torpedo. Throughout the years, Tom has made some modifications to this

11,000-pound airplane. He had the old radio stack removed from behind the cockpit and has added a co-pilot seat and control stick so the plane can now hold four people.

Invited along for the Sunday afternoon ride were my cousin, Lee, and my friend, Joe, both of who are fellow warbird enthusiasts. Joe served in WW II as a German Flak gun operator, shooting at allied aircraft flying over Germany.

We pulled the aircraft out of the hanger with literally less than two inches of room to spare. Given that the Avenger was once aboard aircraft carriers, its wings were designed to fold up for storage. Its engine was a 2000hp radial 14 cylinder, allowing it to take off from the



very short runway on the carrier. After start up that day, the wings were hydraulically unfolded into flying position and we were ready to go.

We circled around my house and went on a simulated "bombing run" over the house of Tom's friend before flying over the entire Joliet area. This plane cruises at

160 knots (about 190 mph) and its top speed is 276 mph so you can travel pretty far in a short amount of time going that fast. It seemed as if we were traveling very slow during the simulated bombing run although we were really going quite fast. During an actual bombing run over an enemy ship, every gun in the fleet would be aimed and shooting at you and you couldn't veer off course until the torpedo was dropped, thus the "run" would seem to last forever. Pilots in the war had to be very courageous to do those types of nearly "suicidal" maneuvers. Although there were many shot down, their courage and determination is what helped win the war.

After a while, we headed back to the Joliet airfield, doing a fast, low pass over the field before landing on the grassy runway. We helped Tom wipe down the plane to get rid of all the oil that leaks out those old engines and onto the airframe. The Avenger's oil tank holds thirty-five gallons to help compensate for the large oil losses.

Once the plane was put away, Joe told us stories of his WW II experiences, explained from his German soldier point of view. He was only fifteen when he was drafted and tried his best to answer all of our questions. All in all, it was quite an interesting day traveling back into history. Thank you, Tom, for the experience of a lifetime.

Doug Mayhall

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.

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