

Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunters inc.

Website: www.pafoxhunters.com

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Fall Newsletter – September 2023



Marilyn Ross, daughter of Joe and Mercy Ross, took “Best in Show” with her Plott “Blue Boy”. This marks the second consecutive year that Marilyn has won first place with her family’s hounds at the Family Day Bench Show. Director Jim Rogers volunteered his services as Bench Show Judge. Congratulations, Marilyn!

From the President's Pen...

Since the last newsletter, your Association has resumed sponsorship of our traditional Family Day Picnic which was held on July 15th.

We are in the process of concluding arrangements for the Sporting Dog Owner's Meeting which will be held on at 12:30 pm, Tuesday, October 17th, at PGC Headquarters in Harrisburg.

Family Day Proves to be a great learning experience for the kids!

The closure of Molyneaux's Training Facility provided the opportunity to change our Family Day venue to programs which would provide "hands on" learning to the kids. Our day featured a highly informative bee keeping program by Sheehan's Bees, Joe Ross's black powder demo, a paint ball coyote shoot conducted by Officers Marty and Pat Carr.

VP Jack Sorber and Director Chip Sorber also ran a turkey calling contest, awarding prizes to different age groups. They also presented very informative seminars on Whitetail and Wild Turkey aging.

The final structured event was a kid's bench show, with Jim Rogers acting as Bench Judge.

2022 Scholarship Winners Selected by Random Drawing!

The drawing for our 2023 Scholarship Winners was conducted during Family Day proceedings. The following were the deserving winners:

Dick Ross Memorial Scholarship – Spencer Kishbaugh

Roy Rosenbaum Memorial Scholarship – Brianna C. Sears

Western Boy's Honorary Scholarship – Charlene Dugan

George Hobbs Memorial Scholarship – Austin Hartman

PAFCHA Scholarship – Allison Stuart

Spencer Kishbaugh is the son of Brad Kishbaugh and attends Coastal Carolina University

Brianna Sears is the granddaughter of Walter Vosefski and will study at Bloomsburg University.

Charlene Dugan is the daughter of Sally Jellison and John Dugan. She is a student at Edinburgh Napier.

Austin Hartman is the grandson of Carl and Linda Hartman. He will attend Sacred Heart University.

Allison Stuart is the granddaughter of James Allison. She is enrolled in the BSN Program at Ohio University.

We offer our congratulations to our winners and extend best wishes for their future endeavors.

Family Day Raffle Drawing Winners:

This year's Family Day Raffle Drawing won by Karlene Sorber, featured a replica flag with our logo, made by Ryan Thumann of "Grain to Glory" Flag Company. We also conducted a 50/50 drawing, won by Ron Cole, who donated his winnings back to the Association. Thanks to all who participated!

Baking Contest Winners

In addition to being a popular feature, the baking contest also provides the dessert highlight of our picnic lunch. This year's winners were Isabel Sorber – Apple Pie, Karlene Sorber – Crème Puffs and Sharyn Coole -Banana Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting. Thanks Ladies – you were a big help!

Our Thanks to Our Donors

We are beyond grateful to the following members whose generosity made Family Day possible; the Sorber brothers who welcomed us to their beautiful cabin grounds; Toni Cisowski – a \$500.00 donation in honor of Family Day Founder/Past President Roy Rosenbaum; Wade Gary and Ron Davis – Cargill Burgers; Mike Brown – ‘Down Home Rice Pudding’; Sheehan Family (Bee Keepers) - honey gift basket; Jerry Ross- 50 lbs. dogfood; Bill Doney, Thunder Valley Pet Pantry, two 50lb. bags of Sportmix Dog Food and eight bags of dog biscuits; Ron Cole – 15 jars of honey produced by Cole's Bees; and Cas and Donna Bonczewski – maple syrup and designer soap gift basket.

Welcome New Members!

Recruiting efforts for 2023 continues. YTD 18 hunters have joined the Association. Since our last newsletter, Brian Kiely, Hunter and Easton Gmter have come on board. Welcome hunters!

Editor's Note: The following section was featured in a past newsletters (September 2020 and 2022). Prompted by serious recommendations we bring it to the attention of our membership once again.

Notes about the hound retrieval exemption: Game Commission receiving pushback!

As most members know, the recent Sunday Hunting Bill contains provisions which allow unarmed hunters to enter private property to retrieve their hounds without subjecting them to the enhanced trespass penalties. Pennsylvania is now one of a mere handful of states with a hound retrieval bill.

The Game Commission is now receiving considerable pushback regarding this feature. Some complaints concern hunters who may deliberately cast their hounds onto private land. Others complain that hunters may enter private properties to drive big game, under the pretense of looking for their hounds. Still others exercise poor judgement by flaunting the exemption with landowners who they have had an ongoing dispute.

Editor's note: We have a serious concern that such abuses may jeopardize the continuance of this exemption.

It will always be our recommendation that houndsmen make every attempt to secure permission to enter property for purposes of retrieving their dogs.

Although there is new language which allows doing so, if a landowner is surprised by your presence, it may only result in a confrontation. The exemption is new and untested. Any attempts to flaunt the language or abuse its provisions must be discouraged - if we wish to enjoy the privileges it provides.

Listed below are a few points clarified by the PA Game Commission, to the Beagler's John Gibble. John is an equal partner with us at the annual Sporting Dog Owner's Meeting and we thank him for taking the initiative on our behalf and sharing the information with us:

"1. I expect that if I'm found on posted property with a gun, and say I'm looking for my dog, the exemption would not apply. - **Correct.**"

"2. If the property owner could demonstrate that I willfully released my hounds on his property, the exemption would not apply (e.g. phone video or trail camera). **Correct-** the property owner would be able to prove the intent of the person releasing the dog."

"3. Also thinking that this retrieval language only pertains to the trespassing while hunting statute, and does not extend to other trespass statutes. So if the police are involved, the dog owner could be cited under those other statutes enforced by local authorities. I know there was another bill passed with the same exemption language, but I'm a little fuzzy on what statutes it applied to. - **Not true** about the language only applying while hunting, Title 18 3503 (HB 1772) includes similar language to your question. This was the other bill that you said you were a little fuzzy on. This is found in the crimes code under defiant trespasser 3503 (c.1) Applicability- This section shall not apply to an unarmed person who enters onto posted property for the sole purpose of retrieving a hunting dog."

"4. If while on private property my dogs cause damage, or if my entry into private property causes damage (e.g. I tear up a private road or run over a fence), I'm still civilly responsible for the damage- **Correct.** You can also be charged under the game code criminally too. Remember entry onto those properties is on foot."

PA State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn. To Meet with Game Commission

The date for the annual Sporting Dog Owners Meeting with the PA Game Commission has been set for Tuesday, October 17th, at the Harrisburg Headquarters. We plan to assemble in their lobby at 12.30 pm.

Once again, we will be chairing this meeting which has provided us with excellent opportunities to bring our unique issues before the Board of Commissioners and PGC Staff. These meetings have recently resulted in year-round training, the legalization of electronic recovery collars, provisions which make the unauthorized removal of collars a game law violation, the extension of rabbit season, the addition of coyotes and rabbits to the Mentored Youth Program, a Youth Rabbit Hunt, the reduction of "Mean Seeds" plantings, a split Bobcat Season (hunting and trapping are separate segments) and many other solutions to issues we have brought forward.

If available, members are requested to join us in Harrisburg.

Anyone residing in the Northeast Region, who may be interested in car-pooling from Scranton or Wyalusing, is invited to call Dick Bednarczyk (570) 586-9270 or Jerry Ross (570) 423-3389.

Aaron Montross appointed as Director

The Executive Committee welcomed longtime member Aaron Montross of Noxen to the position of Director. We are delighted to see Aaron volunteer to come on board and encourage any other members willing to do so, to come forward. Coyote Hunters are under assault like never before in our memory. Within the last year we have seen regional states like New York ban coyote tournaments and Vermont ban the hunting and training of coyote hounds. Maine also has recently enacted onerous restrictions on the use of hounds for bears, bobcats and coyotes.

Legislative Monitoring - Pennsylvania

Editors Note: While much of the legislation below was covered in our June Newsletter, we have added a few updates regarding their movement. Furthermore, their potential passage would present major difficulties for all hound hunters, as well as dog owners in general. Hence, we feel it appropriate to repeat portions of the information. Updates appear in bold print.

HB 529 – Would make it illegal to transport hounds in the exterior of vehicles, unless in an insulated dog box. (Our objection pertains to the insulation requirement which could be fatal in warmer weather). Sent to Judiciary March 17th.

HB 549 – “All Dogs Equal” – Requires the same ventilation, ambient temperature, heat index values and ammonia ranges monitored and maintained by large commercial kennels be applied to all private kennels. Sent to Agriculture March 20th.

HB 669 – Would provide for the revocation of a hunting license if merely accused of animal cruelty, prior to any hearing, trial or other defense afforded to the accused. **Sent to Game and Fisheries on March 23rd**

SB 795 – Provides for a reconstituted Dog Law Advisory Board.

Last year we were accorded one seat, we are requesting a second seat to represent large sporting dogs. **Sent to Agriculture and Rural Affairs on June 14th.**

HB 337 (Last year’s bill number) Commonly referred to as Libre’s Law, this suggested version would eliminate our exemption to the tethering bill, requiring that hounds/sled dogs be brought indoors if temperatures fall outside of 32 – 90 degrees.

HB 495 – While at first glance, this bill seems to address a clearly debatable issue – Monday vs. Saturday deer opener, it would set a dangerous precedent wherein the political body (Legislature) would make wildlife decisions instead of professional wildlife biologists and wildlife staff personnel. There is ample evidence in seven or eight other states wherein Wildlife Advisory Boards have been infiltrated and taken over by anti-hunting legislators.

This would be clearly against the North American Model of Wildlife Management. It would also jeopardize Pennsylvania’s share of Pittman-Robertson Act revenue (\$38,340,930 for 2022). The P-R Act prohibits allocation of such funds for anything other than wildlife habitat and wildlife management research. **Sent to Game and Fisheries on March 17th.**

Project Coyote – Would ban coyote tournaments. No bill introduced in Pennsylvania to this point, however proponents have vowed to do so. They have been successful in eight or nine states so far, **most recently New York.**

Legislative Monitoring – Pennsylvania

Effective in mid -September, New York enacted the requirement of a background check prior to the purchase of guns and all types of ammunition. The fee for gun purchase clearance is \$9.00, while the fee to purchase ammo is an additional \$2.50.

In somewhat similar fashion, Senator Haywood **(D) serving Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties, Introduced SB 908 on September 7th**. SB 908 is an extremely complicated, voluminous document. Imbedded are several references for the requirement for a ‘Ammunition Purchase Authorization Permit’ for a fee of \$3.00

Editor’s Note: Readers are encouraged to review this bill. For our consumption, the Legislature’s website includes a “highlighted copy” where some good soul has pointed out several references to this permit requirement which are embedded in the bill.

Legislative Monitoring – Pennsylvania

Editors Note: The following announcement is taken from the PA GAME COMMISSION website report on the results of their September Meeting:

HUNTING FURBEARERS WITH DOGS IN FIREARMS DEER AND BEAR SEASONS REVIEWED

In the past several years, the Game Commission has received an increasing number of complaints related to hunters using dogs to hunt coyotes during the regular deer and bear firearms seasons, resulting in both the intentional and unintentional pushing, driving or killing of deer and bears.

While it’s unlawful for any hunter to hunt deer or bear with dogs in Pennsylvania, and those doing so intentionally are in violation of the law, coyote dogs pushing deer or bears also pose potential problems for otherwise-lawful hunters in the same area, as well as interfere with lawful hunting by others.

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners today gave preliminary approval to a measure that would resolve those issues. The commissioners voted to prohibit the hunting of any furbearer through use of a dog during the overlap of any regular deer season or regular bear season. The measure is scheduled to be brought back to the January meeting for final consideration.

This proposal would not impact the in-season nighttime hunting of furbearers with dogs in weeks when the regular deer and bear firearms seasons are open. Because deer and bear hunting closes one-half hour after sunset, there is not a season overlap from one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise the following day, when deer and bear hunting resumes on open days.

Outdoor Writer Covers Family Day Events

We wish to thank Rick Hynick, Outdoor Writer for the **Citizen’s Voice** for his full-length article which was published on July 30th. Rick depicted the variety of events which we held and provided a great overview of our focus on youth involvement.

Great Job, Rick!