

## UMMER-FALL 2006 WVRPC NEWSLETTER

### ELECTION OF 2007 OFFICERS

The annual election of officers will be held at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 8, 2006. The membership is urged to turn out for this important vote. Bylaws call for this meeting to be held for purposes of the election only, and also require that a 10% quorum of the membership be available for vote. This is the night right after local, state, and national elections are held, and folks may be tired from being up Tuesday night. However, your attendance is needed to assure a quorum and an informed vote on the candidates.

### .50 BMG ROUND RESTRICTED BY CLUB VOTE

After a unanimous recommendation issued by the twenty-one member Safety Subcommittee on October 4, 2006, the following Operating Rule was also introduced by the Subcommittee for Club consideration October 4, and for final vote November 1, 2006.

**“NO .50BMG cartridges, .50BMG cartridge variants, nor any other high energy round of 8000 foot pounds muzzle energy or greater, shall be fired on the WVRPC property.”**

The Subcommittee had met numerous times during the spring and summer months, and performed firing tests September 21 under controlled conditions on Range 8 before analyzing the results and making the recommendation. The full test report is part of the club records under control of the Club Recording Secretary.

The vote to approve the Operating Rule was passed November 1, 2006 by unanimous show of hands.

### Short History of WVRPC

**In 1961, a group of shooters who frequented a gun shop at SR25/US52 intersection northeast of Lafayette signed up in William Ledman’s gun shop to organize a club, and to find a place to shoot. The idea had been generated by Fred Justice, his cousin Larry Dean Ogden (a Purdue student renting a room in Justice’s house), and Steve Livingston, another Purdue student renting a room from Justice.**

**Through Bill Brewer, a member who was a distant Ward relative, they learned of 40 acres owned by Ward farms of Brookston that were not in cultivation that might be available to rent. They rented the property in 1961 for \$100 per year, and began to shoot on it. They contacted the NRA for help in organizing a club. When the information—standardized by-laws, membership forms, suggested officers, etc. arrived, a group of fourteen original members constituted themselves as “The Wildcat Valley Rifle and Pistol Club” on February 20, 1962. By the end of 1962, there were 28 total members on the roster submitted to the NRA.**

**In addition to being a 100% NRA club, they also became a DCM (Department of Civilian Marksmanship—forerunner of the present CMP) club, which entitled the Club to the loan of U.S. Military rifles—M-1 and some .22, and free military**

ammunition. Also, Club members could purchase 1903 Springfields, .45 Colt M1911A1, and M-1 Garand rifles at reduced prices.

Dues were modest--\$15 per year—and members were required to perform at least one day's work per year on the club property or match events. In 1967, the club became a non-profit corporation with the State of Indiana. Life was good.

Late in 1969, the Ward family attorney told the club that the property being rented would be sold, and asked if the club wanted to buy it. The club had no reserve funds, and the asking price for 36 and one half acres was \$13,000. Three and one half acres of the 40 acre tract had title problems, so they were not part of the offering.

The 100-member club stood to lose improvements they had made with their labor—a club house with running spring water, indoor plumbing and septic system, as well as the shooting ranges. The club, led by President Quentin Comas, voted to purchase the land, taking out loans to finance the buy. The land was owned jointly by the Widow Ward, and one of her sons. The son and his wife wanted their money at closing. The Widow wanted to sell her part on a ten year note with interest paid twice annually, and repayment of principal could not exceed \$1000 in any calendar year, in order not to affect her social security income. The money needed at closing was obtained by a ten year loan from a Brookston bank with payments to be made monthly, a smaller loan from Purdue National Bank, and from personal loans to the club by three members. Purchase took effect February 1970.

To meet the debt payments, dues were increased, and many fund raising activities—gun raffles, outboard engine raffles, and various matches, particularly trap shooting, were vigorously promoted. Industrial Trap leagues were formed and income from their operations greatly helped finances.

The loans from both banks were retired-early- in 1976, and the final payment on the Widow Ward's note was made on time January 1980. So the club owned free and clear 36-1/2 acres of the 40-acre tract.

At Club direction (John L. Sands was President), Quint Comas presented a handwritten offer dated June 26, 1980, to buy the remaining 3-1/2 acres (the northern wooded hill portion next to CR300) on a ten year note for \$10,000. The Widow Ward accepted it and the \$500 down payment. A formal contract prepared by her attorney was never executed because of title problems, but the down payment was never returned nor was the original contract repudiated by Mrs. Ward. There were several old liens against three acres, and the one half acre parcel had been deeded for a never constructed school. Things remained at stalemate.

In 1983, one of Mrs. Ward's daughters and her husband began digging a basement for a home on this parcel. This was a major threat to the club's shooting activities, and besides, the club had a handwritten contract from Mrs. Ward to sell. President

**Bob Santini was authorized to engage an attorney to quiet the title so that WVRPC could buy the land. A court hearing dismissed the liens and the school's interest in the half acre, and entered judgment providing clear title to Mrs. Ward. She was no longer interested in a ten year contract, and was willing to sell for cash. A price was negotiated, Bob delivered the check early in 1987, and WVRPC owned all 40 acres!**

**Club membership had been growing, and with it came range safety problems. When the highpower range was in use, many other ranges could not be used, as there were no protective side berms. Using a club calendar to schedule matches minimized the problem on match days, but for members wanting to practice, or plink, it was a constant problem and a source of irritation. At one point, a limit of 100 members was voted by the club in order to keep conflict down.**

**In 1991, President Wayne McIntosh emphasized the need for range improvements—bullet impact berms, isolation berms between the various ranges, and a protected target pit for the highpower range. At that time the highpower range consisted of three telephone poles with cables supporting the target frames on unimproved ground with a ravine running diagonally through it. When matches were held, shooters and scorers drove their vehicles downrange to score the targets.**

**In 1992 (Bill Bell was President), the Range Improvement Committee recommended the Club construct impact berms for all ranges, side berms between ranges, and a protected target pit for highpower range. The membership approved. The club's finances were better than in 1970, but the projected \$65,000, was more than the Club had available. Fund raising efforts were begun. Members agreed to be assessed a \$100 building contribution, and gun raffles were held every meeting. In 1993, all plans were in place, engineering drawings completed for the pits, and we let a contract with a firm, paying them \$7000 up front. After working a few days, they declared bankruptcy. President Bill Bell stepped in and directed the subcontractors himself, spending virtually every day at the club. Finally we were finished, and the ranges met NRA Range minimums. Suit filed against the bankrupt firm was unsuccessful.**

**By 1999 (Jack Hawkins was President), erosion and settling of the berms made things less safe. The hillside was dug out to provide dirt for the upgrades, and this created space for a 100-yard sight-in range. At the same time, a higher road was cut to the club house, and the lower road abandoned for regular use (shot from trap ranges impacted there). Cost of all this was \$59,926, with another \$14,036 spent to improve drainage on the new road, and to stop erosion on the bare hillside.**

**In 2001, a few members asked about increasing the size of the club house. Much work was done to estimate the job and when the projected cost was presented to the club, most were opposed to spending money on a building. Some suggested we would be better off setting up a Land Acquisition Fund to acquire surrounding land to keep future residential development from affecting our activities. The club voted to increase the annual dues by \$50 for that purpose.**

In 2006, with land suitable for firing ranges becoming scarce, shooters continue to join WVRPC for its many types of organized shooting, its Junior Club training, and individual practice available on the various ranges. We current members owe a debt to those members whose hard work and wise decisions over the years secured and improved our range.

### CAMP PERRY 2006

A number of club members participated in the National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Carbine—479 competitors.

Lou Famiano 178<sup>th</sup> with 325-2X (possible 400)

Springfield Rifle—837 competitors

Brian Decker 283-6X 14<sup>th</sup> (Gold Medal)

Rick Bartley 259-0 283rd

John Smith 250-0, 418<sup>th</sup>

Lou Famiano 239-2X 527<sup>th</sup>

Garand: 1291 competitors

Dave Schnelle 280-5X 26<sup>th</sup> (Gold Medal)

Randy Vonderheide 276-4X 65<sup>th</sup> (Silver Medal)

Rick Bartley 263-1X (Bronze Medal)

Brian Decker 261-3X (Bronze Medal)

John Smith 261-2X (Bronze Medal)

Lou Famiano 257-4X

ED Davis 257-0X

Bill Mayor 216-3X

### CMP WEEK

GREG BURGET fired in the CMP matches, ranking 39<sup>th</sup> with a 354-4X in the M16-EIC competition. He also fired in the President's 100, Daniel Boone Match, and posted a 712-8X in the Nathan Hale Match.

### RUMBOLD MATCHES

Wildcat Valley fielded two teams for the NRA Rumbold matches. One team, Wildcat Blue, Captain Matt Schnelle, took first place honors in the Sharpshooter-Local Club category with a 1777-19X. Individual scores: Robert Long—413-1X, Eric Becker—447-5X, Matthew Schnelle—470-9X, and Richard Zellers—447-4X. The second team, Wildcat Gold, Captain David Schnelle competed in the Master-Local Club category with 1848-33X. Individual scores: William Mayor—443-4X, Greg Burget—455-5X, Randall Vonderheide—466-12X, and David Schnelle—484-12X.

Vic Victory won the Leach Cup Grand Senior Category award in the 1000-yard Long Range Highpower Metallic Sight competition at Camp Perry.

## **LOCAL RIFLEMAN EARNS DISTINGUISHED AWARD AT CAMP PERRY**

Since 1907 the National Matches have been a shooting sport tradition at Camp Perry, located near Port Clinton, Ohio. The National Matches consist of five weeks of rifle and hand gun competition which includes the nation's finest civilian and military marksmen and women.

Lafayette area marksmen who participated in the 2006 National Matches include Dave Schnelle of Lafayette, Indiana who was awarded his Distinguished Rifleman's badge at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's award ceremony held August 4, 2006. The Distinguished Rifleman badge is awarded to members of the armed forces or civilians in recognition of a "pre-eminent degree of achievement in target practice with the service rifle or pistol". The award was authorized by Congress in 1884 and as of February 6, 2006, Distinguished Rifleman badges have been awarded to 3220 military marksmen. Less than 1800 badges have been awarded to civilian marksmen since 1925 as indicated by Dave Schnelle's badge which is numbered 1793.  
by Randy Vonderheide