

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Start Your Engines

It's hard to believe that another year has flown by. But it's true. So it's time to snap out of that holiday cheer, shake off those cabin fever blues and start your engines, because we're about to embark on another jam-packed season of decoy shows and auctions - some of the most important on the annual decoy collecting circuit - and the first on the schedule is just weeks away.

We start the year in late January at the Susquehanna Flats Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show in Havre de Grace, Maryland. This one day show, due to its location in the Mid-Atlantic region, draws an enthusiastic crowd from Maryland and the surrounding states.

We fly to Minneapolis the first weekend in February to attend the Minnesota Decoy Collectors Association's annual decoy show. This is one of our favorite shows of the year and it literally draws participants from coast to coast

despite the possibility of frigid cold weather.

Just a few days after returning from the Midwest, we head to Charleston, South Carolina for the annual Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, which is the largest decoy show in the southeast and is destined to become one of the top shows in the country. Both Copley Fine Art Auctions and Guyette & Deeter now hold one day auctions during the festivities. And although the region experienced an ice and snow storm last year, it's not unusual to see 70 degree weather in February. We're already looking forward to a thaw.

We'll be in the Eastern Shore of Virginia the last weekend of the month to attend Zeb Barfield's annual Sportsman's Auction. Although the majority of the lots are low on the pay scale, you never know what might show up on the shelves. In addition to decoys, they offer firearms, artwork and oyster collectibles, and they always turn out a crowd.

There are three club shows on the circuit in March, beginning with the Long Island Decoy Collectors one-day get together. The collectors arrive early, the traffic is busy throughout the morning, and you can begin to prepare for your exit by early afternoon. The show committee always presents a quality exhibit and this year's will be "When Broadbill

was King on Great South Bay."

The annual Great Lakes Decoy Association Show takes place the middle of the month in Westlake, Ohio. This show has achieved national status; even though most attendees are from the Midwest, collectors arrive from all parts of North America for a few days of room to room trading, the best Vintage Decoy Competition in the country, numerous collector exhibitions and a club-sponsored auction, all followed by an all you can eat buffet with open bar and entertainment.

We close out March at the Holiday Inn in Manahawkin, New Jersey, the new location for the New Jersey Decoy Collectors Association's one-day show. This venue will accommodate more exhibitors than the old location and the hotel will offer special rates for those attending the show. To fill out the weekend, Frank & Frank Sporting Collectibles will have a one-day decoy auction the following day about an hour north at the Shark River Yacht Club in Neptune.

In mid-April, collectors set up in about 70-80 rooms at the Best Western Motel in St. Michaels, Maryland for the East Coast Decoy Collectors Association's annual Buy, Sell and Swap Meet, and, weather permitting, addi-

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NORTH AMERICAN

Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show

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Pheasant Run Resort,
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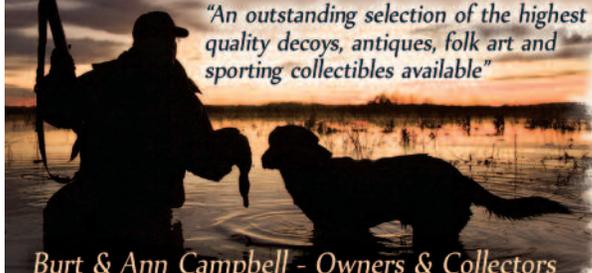
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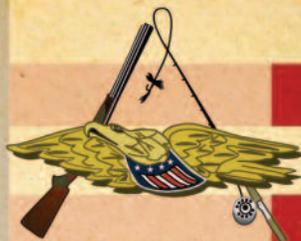
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tional dealers tailgate in the parking lot. There are many quality restaurants nearby and collectors take advantage of these socializing opportunities. The cookout on Saturday afternoon, which includes entertainment by a local band, is legendary.

Then late in the month we take a two-day journey to attend the North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show held at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois. This is the largest decoy show of the year, with more than 300 dealers and over 1000 collectors in attendance. It offers a few days of room to room trading, a two-day Guyette & Deeter auction and a two-day Mega Center show, which this year will feature an exhibit of Ohio decoys and a display of over 50 decoys and decorative carvings by Marty Hanson of Prior Lake, Minnesota.

And we wrap it all up the first weekend in May back in Maryland at the Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Show, where Decoy Magazine's publisher Joe Engers will serve as the Honorary Chairman. The Old Decoy Contest on Saturday morning has grown into one of the favorite facets of this show.

In addition, there are excellent shows scheduled in Henry, Illinois; Edgerton, Wisconsin; Oshkosh, Wisconsin; Santa Rosa, California; and Bellevue, Washington, among others. Check out our calendar for all the listings. So it's time to put it in gear and make your plans now. And how about a New Year's Resolution to make it even better: bring a collecting friend along for the journey.

We'd like to take this opportunity to announce that Gene & Linda Kangas and Chad Tragakis have been "promoted" as the newest Contributing Editors for Decoy Magazine. This is largely a symbolic promotion, but it acknowledges the valuable editorial contributions they have made to Decoy Magazine over the last several years. And it's only through efforts such as theirs that we have been able to provide an ongoing stream of well-researched and written articles documenting the history and collecting of American bird decoys.

And we sadly announce that Dick Cowan, who has been a Contributing Writer to Decoy Magazine for over the past decade, and Henry Fleckenstein Jr., a longtime Contributing Photographer, have recently passed away (see page 32). In both cases we not only lost a valuable associate, we also lost a good friend.

