



# Midwest Decoy Collectors Association NEWSLETTER

## Winter 2013

2014 will feature  
New Jersey decoys,  
including this Shourds  
black duck



## Details Coming Together For Our 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Show

### Contemporary Carver's Corner

About 6 years ago we started a separate focus area at the show for Contemporary carver members. It has quickly grown into a major part of the show. Thanks to Phil Jones and Pat Gregory for their enthusiastic support for this effort. Many attendees leave orders with the carvers that they meet at the show.

For 2014, Cameron McIntyre has graciously volunteered to assemble a sampling of both his decoys and paintings to share how his work has evolved over time. We know you will enjoy this wonderful opportunity. Make sure to plan the time to learn from this special exhibit. In 2015 we will feature Marty Hanson.

These special activities are in addition to carving/painting demonstrations and displays by more than two dozen member carvers who participate in the contemporary carver's corner at the show.



### Vintage Fishing Decoys

This year we are starting a new addition to the show that will feature vintage fishing decoys. Many volunteers are already excited to share their treasures and knowledge. This first display will bring a wide sample of regions to start the activity and we expect that it will take a path similar to the vintage duck decoy display. In the future we will focus on different regions and start seminars.

We are working the logistics to highlight some fish carving activities during the show to broaden our education and create an opportunity to meet these talented members. Help us spread the word about this important addition to our 2014 event.



Cameron McIntyre  
Roothead Brandt

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# MIDWEST DECOY COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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Rick Sandstrom	President
Jim Wierzba	Vice-President
Bill Dodge	Treasurer
Steve Handevidt	Secretary

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Midwest Decoy Collectors Association is to foster the hobby of decoy collecting by attracting new collectors, by seeking out and preserving old decoys, gathering information about old carvers and their methods of historical records, and holding an annual show for decoy collectors and carvers for the exchange of information.

The Midwest Decoy Collectors Association is a nonprofit, educational organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois. It invites membership to all persons who have an interest of any kind in collecting decoys and sporting collectibles.

## DUES

Dues are \$25.00 a year, or \$70.00 for three years, payable on January 1. This entitles members and a guest free admission to the April show, newsletters and an annual directory listing all members. The mailing address label indicates what year's dues have been paid. Please mail your dues with checks payable to M.D.C.A. to the following address:

Rick Sandstrom · (319) 364-8556  
112 Goldleaf Court  
Marion, Iowa 52302

## WEBSITE

[www.midwestdecoy.org](http://www.midwestdecoy.org)

Jan1  
Dues!

Holiday Greetings  
from Rick and Liz



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fall is a very busy time for our association. We have to review last year's activity, collect the outstanding dues, finish the resort plans for next year's event, update all the database information, produce and distribute 8 or 9 press releases, create the ads and placement plan, work on 2015 items, etc., etc. In addition, this year we are moving forward with a system update and web refresh to build better support for our cause and ease the administrative burden to support all the activity.

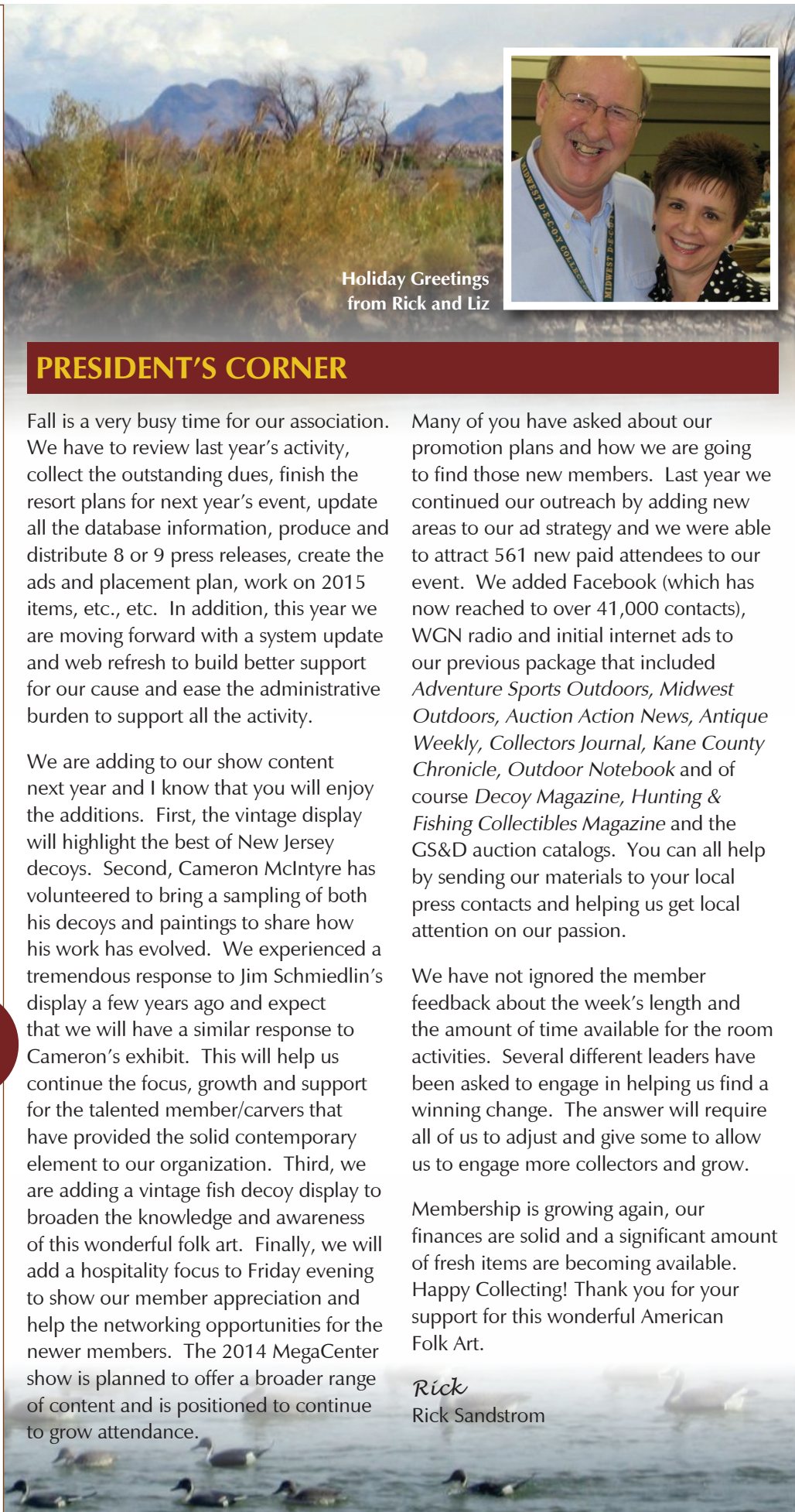
We are adding to our show content next year and I know that you will enjoy the additions. First, the vintage display will highlight the best of New Jersey decoys. Second, Cameron McIntyre has volunteered to bring a sampling of both his decoys and paintings to share how his work has evolved. We experienced a tremendous response to Jim Schmiedlin's display a few years ago and expect that we will have a similar response to Cameron's exhibit. This will help us continue the focus, growth and support for the talented member/carvers that have provided the solid contemporary element to our organization. Third, we are adding a vintage fish decoy display to broaden the knowledge and awareness of this wonderful folk art. Finally, we will add a hospitality focus to Friday evening to show our member appreciation and help the networking opportunities for the newer members. The 2014 MegaCenter show is planned to offer a broader range of content and is positioned to continue to grow attendance.

Many of you have asked about our promotion plans and how we are going to find those new members. Last year we continued our outreach by adding new areas to our ad strategy and we were able to attract 561 new paid attendees to our event. We added Facebook (which has now reached to over 41,000 contacts), WGN radio and initial internet ads to our previous package that included *Adventure Sports Outdoors*, *Midwest Outdoors*, *Auction Action News*, *Antique Weekly*, *Collectors Journal*, *Kane County Chronicle*, *Outdoor Notebook* and of course *Decoy Magazine*, *Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Magazine* and the GS&D auction catalogs. You can all help by sending our materials to your local press contacts and helping us get local attention on our passion.

We have not ignored the member feedback about the week's length and the amount of time available for the room activities. Several different leaders have been asked to engage in helping us find a winning change. The answer will require all of us to adjust and give some to allow us to engage more collectors and grow.

Membership is growing again, our finances are solid and a significant amount of fresh items are becoming available. Happy Collecting! Thank you for your support for this wonderful American Folk Art.

Rick  
Rick Sandstrom





# Club Website Redesign Under Way

## New online tools will add value for members

We've begun work on a brand new website that will be more user friendly, more interactive and give members easy access to Club benefits. This project includes migration and stabilization of the Club database which includes all current and past member records. Long overdue, this work will more adequately safeguard the Club's critical data as well as give us a web presence that will be much more interesting and engaging for current and prospective members.

## Database Enhancement

In addition to providing for a more secure hosting environment, the project will incorporate a number of tools that will make interaction between the Club and its members much easier and more efficient. Specifically, it will:

- Let new members join and current members pay dues on line
- Provide password protected, on line access to the Club Directory
- Allow members to update their own information in the database (contact information, collecting interests, etc.) on a real time basis so that this information is never out of date
- Make Club communications – newsletters, dues reminders, and other ongoing Club announcements – faster and more cost effective.

## Website Redesign

The new website will bring a completely new, more dynamic look to our Club and be much easier to navigate for all users. Through a more graphic and cleaner design it will be much more engaging, and make it much easier to find the information that visitors want. And it will be updated more frequently with new content to give users a reason to come back time and again.

Key features will include:

- Greater focus on the objects of our passion – featuring the best and most interesting decoys and sporting collectibles through frequently updated, high quality pictures
- Reorganizing current content such as the photo gallery, clothing shop, newsletters, links, etc. to be much more accessible
- Easier click through to information that users want such as Show dates and daily Show activity information
- Faster process for new members to join the Club on line, which is particularly important for younger prospects who prefer interacting in a digital environment
- A "Members Only" area which will house a digital Club Directory that can be searched from anywhere by name, city, or collecting interest, and allow members to keep their information up-to-date.

Our goal here is to add more value to the membership experience while our reducing costs. And this is just the beginning. Over time we will add new features to ensure that the site continues to meet the needs of the membership and works hard to attract new members. We hope to be able to show a prototype of the site at the members' meeting at St. Charles this April. We'll keep you updated on our progress through future newsletters.

**In the meantime, it's important that we start with the most complete and current member information possible.** A recent review indicates that we only have email addresses for about 60% of the current membership. So we ask that you check your current Directory to make sure that your mailing and email addresses are current and accurate. If you need to make a change, please send the information to Club Director Jeff Seregny at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com).







# Chauncey Wheeler Cans Draw Member's Fancy



*Byron Bates bufflehead*



*Roy Conklin black duck*



*Roy Conklin goldeneye*



*Moses Semmel canvasback*



*Frank Coombs goldeneye hen*



*Sam Denny black duck*



*James Stanley goldeneye*



*Frank Clark bluebill hen*



*Sam Denny redhead*



*Ed Dingman American merganser*



*Fairman Davis goldeneye hen*



*Ken Harris mallard hen*



*Gus Rogers bluebill hen*



*James Barnhardt ruddy duck*



# in New York State Exhibit



*Frank Louis redhead*



*George Oliver bluebill*



*Frank Coombs bluebill hen*



*Rosh Douglas red breasted merganser*



*Chauncey Patterson preening redhead*



*Gus Rogers high head goldeneye hen*



*Frank Capron canvasback*



*Sam Denny goldeneye*



*Maurice "Bunt" Dowd preening black duck*



*George Stevens goldeneye in eclipse plumage*



*Unknown goldeneye*



*Chauncey Wheeler canvasback pair*



*Chauncey Wheeler bluebill hen*



*Julius Mittlesteadt white-winged scoter*



# Holly Goose Highlights



*R. Madison Mitchell sleeping canvasback hen*



*Sam Barnes redhead*



*Will Heverin bluebill*



*Leonard Pryor canvasback hen*



*John Graham canvasback*



*Ward Brothers goldeneye*



*Henry Lockard canvasback*



*Ed Parsons bufflehead pair*



*Jim Holly miniature canvasback pair*



*John Graham miniature canvasback pair*



*John Smith sleeping black duck*



*Lloyd Tyler bufflehead pair*



*John "Daddy" Holly canvasback*



*Jim Holly blue-winged teal*



# 2013 Maryland Member Exhibit



*Ben Dye canvasback pair*



*Charles Nelson Barnard highhead canvasback*



*Jim Holly canada goose*



*Ben Dye ruddy duck*



*John Graham hollow redhead hen*



*Taylor Boyd highhead canvasback pair*



*John Glen wigeon*



*Branded "T. Dow" canvasback*



*Lloyd Sterling standing black duck*



*Noah Sterling goldeneye*



*"Gunner" Will Sterling canvasback*



*Hoopers Island merganser*



*Leonard Pryor hollow sleeping mallard*



*Scott Jackson canvasback pair*





## First-Ever Member Survey Provides Good Input for the Future

Shortly before this year's National Antique Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show, we conducted an online survey among those members for whom we have a good email address to get feedback on a variety of issues related to the overall membership experience and the Show itself. Specifically, the survey queried members about the benefits of Club membership, their likes and dislikes related to the Show, and solicited reactions to, and suggestions for, improvement for the future.

All told, we received 225 completed survey responses, which represents nearly 50% of the total members receiving the online survey and almost 25% of the Club's active membership. This high response rate demonstrates what we all know to be true, that our members have a real passion for our hobby and are actively engaged in wanting to make the experience as fulfilling as possible.

The survey findings were both interesting and, in some cases, surprising, and provided good and reliable input that will be invaluable in helping us find ways to reverse the trend of declining membership and Show attendance by providing greater value to our members.

### Key Findings:

While there were a variety of specific membership and Show related topics explored in the survey, key findings can be summarized as follows:

**1 It's all about Networking and Socializing:** In general, the membership is quite positive about the benefits that the Club provides. Members cite the ability to network and connect with other collectors to both socialize and buy/sell/trade decoys as most important. This is the primary reason they join the Club and attend the Show.

**2 All Key Show Elements Have Large Followings:** Relative to the annual Show, large segments of the respondents rated each of the three main elements of the Show as "very important" or "important." Specifically:

- Room-to-Room Trading: **90%**
- MegaCenter Show: **72%**
- GS&D Auction: **60%**

**3 However, Some Tweaking to the Show Format is Needed:** The survey showed a strong sentiment for reducing the overlap of the Show components and shortening the length of the Show week to help reduce the time and expense commitment. In particular, there was a significant call to eliminate the overlap between the Auction and the Room-to-Room trading; and the Auction and the Mega Center Show.

**4 There's A Call For New, Younger Members:** Lastly, the survey showed that the members clearly recognize the need to attract new, younger members to keep the Club and hobby vital. To this end, there was a significant call for expanding the Club's collecting focus beyond decoys by reaching out to collectors of other related collectibles such as calls, fish decoys, shell boxes, and the like.

Also related to this mandate for growth, a surprising number of respondents suggested that we needed to improve how "welcoming" and open we are to new members/collectors at all levels. Some felt that too many of our members are, perhaps unintentionally, signaling that there is an "in crowd" and that we are not very accepting of collectors of lower end sporting collectibles. We did receive a number of good suggestions to help overcome this which we will be developing as we move forward.





## SO WHAT'S NEXT?

**Your Board has begun exploring a number of ideas in response to this important member input. Key among these are:**

- ▶ **First**, we will continue to work at improving the Show experience by adding new networking and socializing opportunities. We've gotten very favorable reaction to last year's afternoon "sliders" get together, and we'll look to do more of this kind of thing at future Shows.
- ▶ **Second**, we are looking at a variety of ideas – from layout of the Mega Center and Room-to-Room trading times to new member mentoring – to help make the experience for new members and guests at the Show more positive and welcoming.
- ▶ **Third**, we are developing a number of options for re-structuring the Show week to reduce event overlap and the overall time commitment. Since this potentially represents some significant changes, we will field another survey shortly to get your reactions to these ideas before attempting to implement any of them.

And to ensure that whatever we do is meeting the needs of the largest number of current and past members as possible, we'll expand our survey sample to include current active members who were not included in the initial survey because we didn't have a usable email address for them, as well as past members who have not renewed their memberships in several years.

We look forward to implementing a number of new ideas every year that add value to your membership and attract new members to our Club.



### Help us improve our communication with you...

As we move forward it's important that we continue to use available technology to help keep our costs down. One way to do this is by increasing the accuracy and the percentage of email addresses we have for our members, which will allow much more frequent and cost effective communications. So please check your directory to make sure we have a current email address for you. If not, please send your current email address to me at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com) and I'll make sure to update our records.

Thanks and happy collecting, *Jeff Seregny*



Like us on Facebook:

**North American Vintage Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show**



# Contemporary Corner Showcases



Marv Meyer demonstrates carving techniques to Roxanna Walters during one of the multiple hands-on sessions at the show.



*Dennis Entwistle, Morris, IL*



*Woodson Roddy, Clinton, MO*



*Ben Heinemann, Durham, NC*



*Kurt Buggs, Janesville, WI*



*Bob Lewis, East Pointe, MI*



*Marty Hanson, Prior Lake, MN*



*Bill Thumm, Rockford, IL*



*Gary Lane Meister*



*Gerald Cranwill*



*Mike Valley*



*Dennis Hays*

*Jim Schmiedlin*



*Ben Heinemann*



# Our Member Carver Talent



*Pat Meneely, Minneapolis, MN*



*Geoff Benes, Naperville, IL*



*Preston Lowe, Clayton, NY*



*Gregg Guthrie, Lac du Flambeau, WI*



*Bill Koelpin, Jr., Oconomowoc, WI*



Lou Schifferl is a special talent. For over 65 years he has been creating some wonderful carvings and art. We have been fortunate that Lou has created the art that we use for the cover of our directory and show pins. Take a few minutes and read some more about this talented member and his daughter at [Schifferl.net](http://Schifferl.net).



*Marty Hanson*



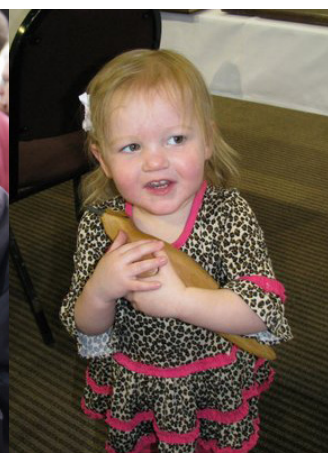
*Cameron McIntyre*



*Geoff Vines*



*Artie (Behmetuik) Bennett*



*Jenna - daughter of Matt & Jaci Spielman, granddaughter of Bill Spielman*



MIDWEST  
D•E•C•O•Y  
COLLECTORS



6 E. Scott Street, #3  
Chicago, IL 60610



## Call Enthusiasts Gather Each Year for Busy Agenda

Each year at St. Charles, call collectors and makers hold a series of activities including a call carving contest and judging, special call auction and table displays at the show.



*Discover • Preserve • Celebrate*

**Midwest Decoy Collectors Association**

[www.midwestdecoy.org](http://www.midwestdecoy.org) • [mdc@midwestdecoy.org](mailto:mdc@midwestdecoy.org) • 312.337.7957 • 319.364.8556 fax