



# 53<sup>rd</sup> North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show

April 24-28, 2018

The 2018 Show is right around the corner and, for the 33rd year in a row, will be held at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL.

There will be nearly 300 dealers on site during the week offering over 30,000 sporting collectible items in their rooms and then in the Resort's Mega Center exhibit hall. In between, Guyette & Deeter will conduct their largest sale of the year featuring a broad range of exceptional decoys and other sporting collectibles.

The Midwest Decoy Collectors Association Board is excited about this year's show and hopes that current members, and anyone else with a passion for this uniquely American folk art, will come to celebrate with us in St. Charles. To learn more about the show or to join the MDCA, visit our website at [midwestdecoy.org](http://midwestdecoy.org) or call Jeff Seregny at 586-530-6586.

This year's show will feature many exciting displays and exhibits:

- Vintage Stoughton, Wisconsin area decoys
- Vintage Lake Chautauqua fish decoys
- Exhibit by contemporary decoy maker Pat Gregory
- Shotgun shell box display
- Lake Poygan gunning box display
- Contemporary decoy displays and carving workshops
- Annual gathering of the Callmakers & Collectors Association of America
- Members Only "Early Bird" session – Friday Morning
- Continuous Silent Auction – Friday & Saturday
- "Bring Your Favorite Canvasback" Contest



*Discover • Preserve • Celebrate*

# MIDWEST DECOY COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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## WHO WE ARE

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

## OUR HISTORY

The **Midwest Decoy Collectors Association** was started in 1966 by a small group of dedicated decoy collectors as a gathering in Ottawa, Illinois to reconnect, share stories and trade decoys. Since then, the Club has grown to nearly 800 enthusiasts from all over North America and from all walks of life. They write books on collecting, manage auction companies, publish collector magazines, carve world class decoys, calls and collectibles, provide appraisal services, and form a core network of knowledge on sporting collectibles and their history. That humble gathering of collectors in 1966 has grown to become the **North American Vintage Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show** – the largest show of its kind. The annual show features room-to-room trading, a tabled show and a major decoy auction in addition to a variety of networking events and educational activities including seminars, displays and carving demonstrations.

**DISPLAY ADVERTISING** is now being accepted in select issues of the MDCA newsletter. Contact Jeff Seregny at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com) or 586-530-6586 for rates and availability.

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



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I hope this finds you and your families well and enjoying the anticipation of the new year! Liz and I are anticipating a great one and we both look forward to seeing everyone in St. Charles. Our local vintage collectibles market recently reported growing traffic and the 2nd best sales month in the last 20 years. It is because of quality inventory, current prices and a buying attitude that we haven't seen in years. All those trends are headed to St. Charles. Don't miss 2018 as it promises great fun!

**2018 will mean opportunities for collectors.** While our show in April is a "must attend" show for most, we are excited to see that so many long-time collectors are returning after missing for a number of years. Many are looking to downsize their collections and bringing items that have not been available to purchase for years. The show should provide wonderful opportunities for all attendees to add a piece or two to their collections.

**There's something for everyone.** This year's member decoy display will feature decoys made in the Stoughton, Wisconsin area. These beautifully carved and painted birds are impressive in their life-like detail. For the first time, our fish decoy display will go east to New York state to explore the rare fish of Lake Chautauqua. Shotgun shell boxes and Lake Poygan gunning boxes will return with new items on display.

Our featured contemporary carver will be Illinois native Pat Gregory, who will bring examples from a number of his rigs including those he has hunted over on the Delta Marsh. His Ducharme-style decoys are a sight to behold. Be sure not to miss the Contemporary Corner where some of today's masters demonstrate their carving and painting skills.

We'll introduce a new vintage decoy contest this year. Dealers should bring

their favorite canvasback decoy to display in their rooms and on their tables in the Mega Center. Judges will select a "Best of Show" on Saturday.

**Changes in the Mega Center are back by popular demand.** Last year we made some significant changes to the Mega Center event that proved to be very popular. We will again open the exhibit hall for set-up early on Friday morning followed by a members' only "Early Bird" event. Auction progress will be shared on screen in the show room so that all can participate as desired.

**We need your support.** If you haven't done so yet, pay your dues before the show to help us create a successful event. You can pay online via the website or mail your payment to our Member Chair Matt Bryant.

**Make your plans now.** Early activity thus far suggests that we will be at capacity this year. Be sure to send the enclosed Table Registration Form in right away. Call Pheasant Run now at (630) 584-6300 and make your reservation. Call your friends to plan your rendezvous either in St. Charles or along the way.

**A special thanks to our advertisers.** I would remiss if I didn't recognize and thank our newsletter advertisers who make this mailing to so many collectors possible. Our partners include Guyette & Deeter, Copley Fine Art Auctions, James D. Julia Auctioneers, Auctioneers, Inc., Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Magazine, Russ Goldberger and Alan Haid, Wes Douglass and many of our dealer members. Be sure to support these folks at the show and beyond.

Happy Collecting, and we'll see you in St. Charles!

*Rick*  
Rick Sandstrom

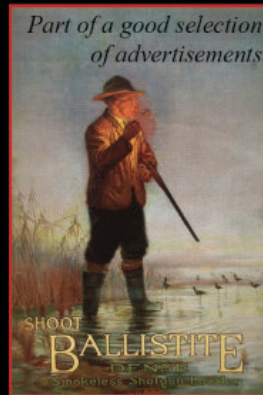
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Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, Illinois  
In conjunction with the Midwest Decoy Collectors Show  
View the April auction preview at [www.guyetteanddeeter.com](http://www.guyetteanddeeter.com)



*Important sleeping black duck by Shang Wheeler*



*Part of a good selection of advertisements*



*Part of a good selection of duck calls*



*Goldeneye by the Ward Brothers*



*Sleeping mallard hen by Charles Perdew*



*Trout plaque by Oscar Peterson.  
10" x 28.5"*



*Canada goose by George Warin*

## April 2018 Auction Catalog

Over 200 full color pages  
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Jon Deeter | [jdeeter@guyetteanddeeter.com](mailto:jdeeter@guyetteanddeeter.com) | 440.610.1768

# Member News



## Club Facebook Group Continues to Grow

If you are not among the nearly 150 members currently participating in the MDCA facebook collecting group, you are missing out on an opportunity to share your collection, get help with ID and valuation, and even buy/sell/trade with other members in a secure and safe environment. Unlike some other online collector groups, there's the reassurance that you always know with whom you are dealing in our group.

If you want to join the group, just set up your personal account at [midwestdecoy.org](http://midwestdecoy.org) (if you haven't already), and then click on the Facebook logo in the Members Only area. You'll be glad you did.

## Are You Missing Club Newsletters?

As you know by now, the Club is using email to communicate important information to our members. This includes

two of our three newsletters each year. This saves the Club a ton in associated printing and postage costs. So, if your listing in the Member Directory doesn't include a current email address for you, then we don't have it and you are missing these newsletters as well as other club communications. All you need to do is send your email address to Jeff Seregny at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com) and we'll add it to your record in our database.



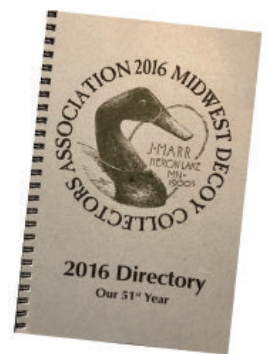
## Pay Your Dues Before the Show

Prior to the holidays, members whose membership expired in December, 2017 were mailed an invoice for renewing their 2018 dues. Thanks to all of you who paid your dues by the January 1, 2018 due date! If you haven't already renewed, we urge you to pay now, prior to the show. This will not only simplify our show registration process, it will also ensure that you continue to receive club benefits.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation. You can make your payment online (once you create your personal online account) at [midwestdecoy.org](http://midwestdecoy.org) or by sending a check for \$25 (\$70 for three years) made out to the "MDCA" to: Matt Bryant, 17114 Erskine Street, Omaha, NE 68116.

## Check Out the Online Member Directory Today!

We all know that connecting with other MDCA members is a big part of what makes our hobby so enjoyable. Our online, searchable member directory makes it easier than ever. It is always up-to-date and allows you to search for other like-minded collectors by last name, city, state and even collecting interest. As the cost to produce the printed directory increases, this is a much more efficient and effective way to connect with like-minded collectors. Again, you must be logged in to your personal account to use the online directory. So, if you haven't ready set up your online account, do it today.



## Membership Report

The Midwest Decoy Collectors Association continues to be the largest and most geographically diverse hunting and fishing collectibles community with nearly 800 active members from all over North America. Our membership includes both novice and veteran collectors alike with interests in a broad range of collectible categories — from shell boxes to fishing lures, and decoys to sporting art — and everything in between. Ours is a group that includes the most knowledgeable collectors anywhere: authors whose work ensures that the history of this great folk art is preserved for future generations; dealers with expertise in every sporting collectibles area; and the nation's top contemporary decoy makers, many of whom utilize the same techniques used by the early masters. All told, membership in the MDCA offers extensive networking opportunities for collectors and the ideal environment in which to enjoy this great hobby.

Since our last newsletter in November, 2017, we've added the members listed below. Please welcome them!

### Larry Ackerman

Hamilton, VA  
*Rock Hall, MD decoys, fish decoys, fish carver*

### Tom Daly

New Providence, NJ  
*Brand new collector who is tired of looking at my own blocks! Partial to vintage and "modern" antiques.*

### Ronald C Jackson

Dorr, MI

### David Johnson

Newman Grove, NE

### Don Lindemann

Indianapolis, IN

### Anthony J Regnier

Wenona, IL  
*Illinois River decoys. Especially ones close to home. Also carve my own for last few years*

### Mark Stockley

Charlton, MA  
*New England, Canada, Love them all*

### Jamie John Wohlrahe

Fremont, WI  
*Duck Decoys - Lake Poygan & Fremont, WI areas*

### Craig Wolfe

Cherry Hill, NJ  
*Nice decoys, fishing lures*



## TALES FROM THE TRAIL

This is the first installment of a new newsletter section in which our members share their favorite collecting stories. We invite you to send us your own personal favorite. It might be about a successful conquest or the one that got away. Anything you think other members might enjoy. Just send your story and photos (if available) to Jeff Seregny at [jseregny@gmail.com](mailto:jseregny@gmail.com).

CHASING THE

# *Lafrance "Minnow Chaser"*

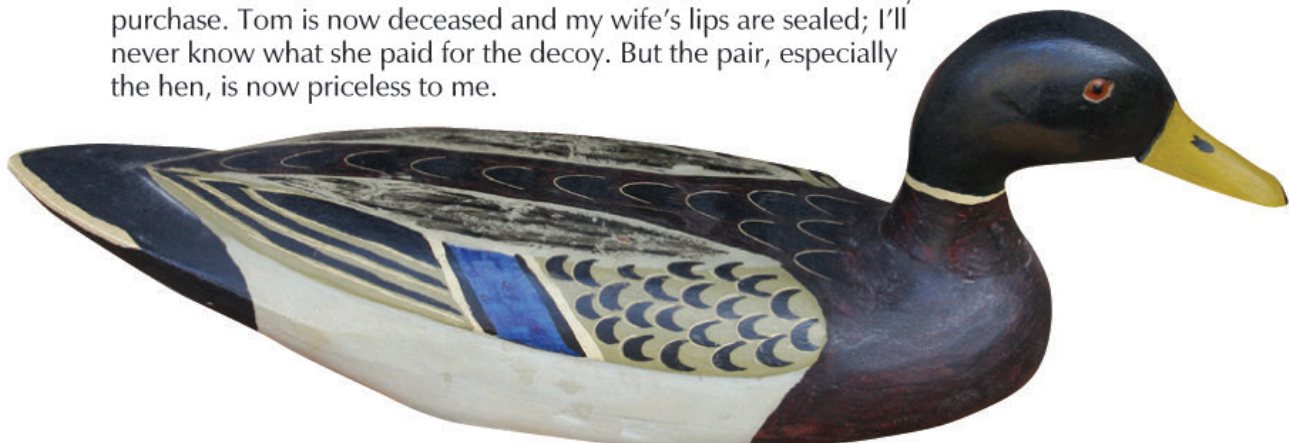
BY BRUCE LOWE



When I first began to build my Louisiana decoy collection, I looked forward to seeing Tom O'Key at Pheasant Run every April. Although Tom lived in Illinois, he had travelled often to New Orleans to purchase Louisiana birds. On one of these visits he went to Charles Frank's home to possibly acquire more decoys from Charlie's large collection. While visiting Mr. Frank, Emile Vacant, another New Orleans collector, came by with a pair of Mitchel Lafrance mallards for sale. Vacant had purchased this pair in a New Orleans sporting goods store in the 1950's. Tom bought the pair, and eventually sold the drake to me in 1999 at the MDCA show. The most desirable bird in the pair, however, was the hen. Carved as a classic Lafrance "minnow chaser," the decoy has an extremely outstretched neck. I tried for years to buy the hen from Tom, but he always wanted much more than I was willing to pay.

Finally, in 2012, I phoned Tom and asked him to bring the decoy to Pheasant Run – hoping that we could work out a sale. I was very disappointed when he told me that the bird had recently been sold.

But this tale has a happy ending. In early June of 2012, my wife and I went out to dinner with another couple to celebrate our wedding anniversary. Toward the end of a very nice meal, a waiter approached our table with a large covered platter. With great fanfare he removed the cover and revealed the recently sold "minnow chaser." My wife had bought the bird from Tom! The whole transaction was handled discreetly and it was a cash purchase. Tom is now deceased and my wife's lips are sealed; I'll never know what she paid for the decoy. But the pair, especially the hen, is now priceless to me.



# 2018 Show Preview – Our 53rd Year!

As the largest and longest running event of its kind, the 2018 North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show will once again be held at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois starting on Tuesday, April 24 and concluding on Saturday, April 28. For many this will be their once-a-year opportunity to rekindle old friendships and maybe even add a decoy, call or some other sporting collectible to their shelves.

On the pages that follow you'll find a preview of the many activities planned for this year's show including Room-to-Room trading; the Tabled Show in the Mega Center exhibit hall; and the Guyette and Deeter auction. The show is simply a "must attend" gathering for anyone interested in America's hunting and fishing past and the great folk art that grew from it. Check out the day-by-day calendar of events on the opposite page.

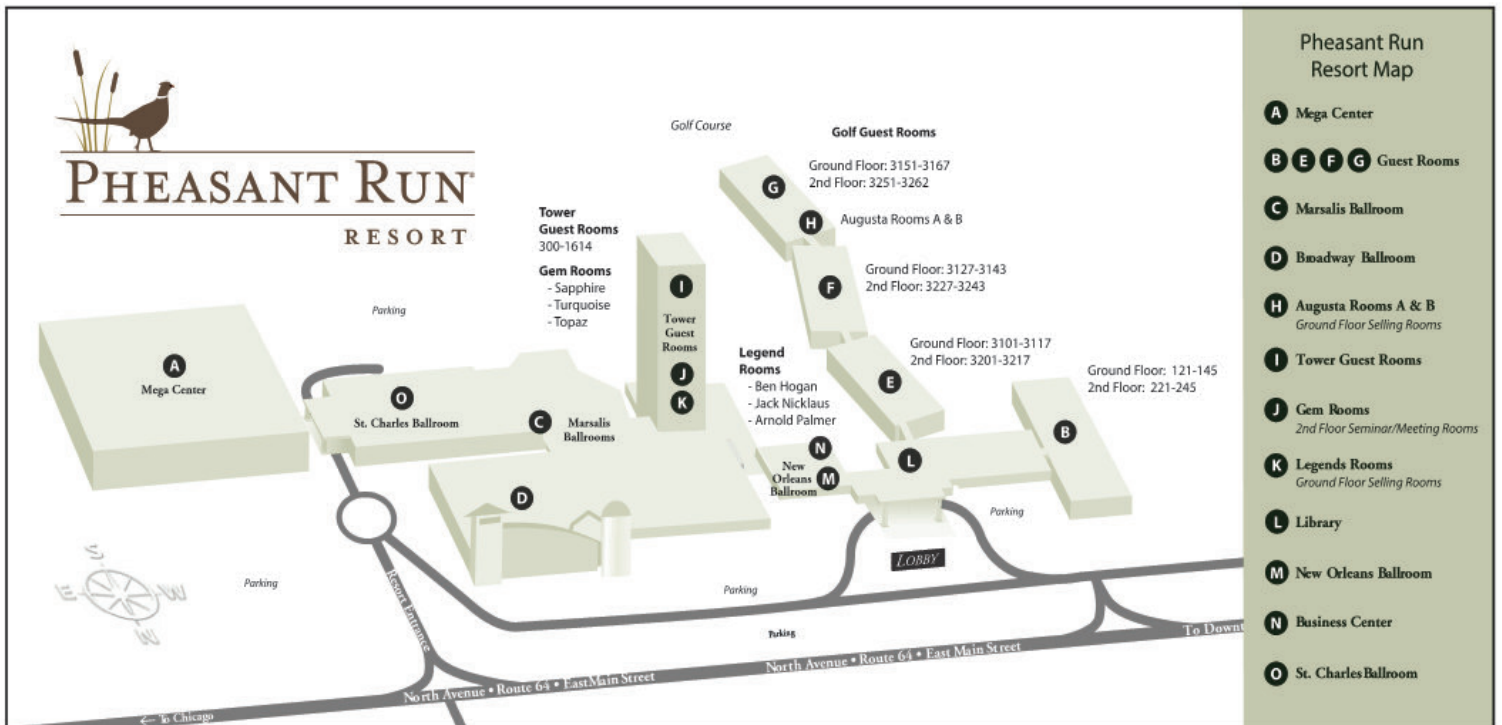
## Pheasant Run Resort Continues Renovations

This long-time home of our show continues to modernize their facility bringing more rooms into service for this year's show. That means that all rooms on the "B" Wing will be available to our selling dealers. Plus, we'll be adding the Marsalis Ballrooms to our common selling space areas, providing even more opportunities

for those who have rooms in the Tower. This all means greater convenience for our members and more buying opportunities for attendees.

## Popular Features Continue for 2018

- Once again, the **Mega Center will open at 10am** on Friday for a Members Only "Early Bird" session prior to public admission at 2pm. The Guyette & Deeter auction will start at 11am giving our members plenty of time to shop the show before the first lot goes on the block. Set-up will be from 8am-10am.
- Our **silent auction will run continuously** for both days in the Mega Center, starting at the 10am opening of the Members Only "Early Bird" session on Friday. This is a great opportunity to reduce your inventory, pick up a few more items, or sell some pieces even if you weren't able to reserve a selling table.
- **Free appraisals** will be offered in the lobby of the Mega Center all day on Friday and Saturday for all show attendees. Many members bring in items from their own collections for identification and valuation, while other wonderful pieces that have been squirreled away in attics around the Midwest find their way to Pheasant Run for review. We always see something special.





## NEW! “Bring Your Favorite Canvasback” Contest

There’s nothing like visiting other members and seeing all of the great pieces that reside in private collections around the country. This year we are inviting each member to bring their favorite canvasback decoy to display in their room and on their table in the Mega Center. The MDCA Board will make the rounds during the week and select the “Best of Show.” The winner gets a free year’s membership and his/her decoy will be recognized in the post-show newsletter. This should be a wonderful opportunity to see some really great examples of the “king of waterfowl!”



**Make your plans now to attend now!**

- Call Pheasant Run at 630-584-6300 to make your room reservation.
- Reserve your selling tables for the Mega Center event using the “Table Reservation Form” in the back of this newsletter.

## Show Schedule

### Tuesday, April 24

All Day – Room-to-Room trading

### Wednesday, April 25

All Day – Room-to-Room trading

8:30am – Chautauqua Fish Decoy Seminar/  
Jon Deeter (Preservation A)

6pm – Guyette & Deeter Auction Preview  
Reception (St. Charles Ballroom)

### Thursday, April 26

All Day – Room-to-Room trading

9:00am – Missouri Decoy Group Meeting  
(Marsalis Ballrooms)

9:30am-1pm – Show Registration in Lobby

11am – **Guyette & Deeter Auction**  
Day 1 (St. Charles Ballroom)

4pm – Evans Collectors Meeting  
(New Orleans Ballroom)

6pm – Call Makers Auction & Party  
(New Orleans Ballroom)

### Friday, April 27

9am – Call Makers Meeting & Contest Judging  
(New Orleans Ballroom)

10am-2pm – **Members Only**  
“Early Bird” Show (Mega Center)

11am – **Guyette & Deeter Auction** Day 2

2pm-7pm – **Public Sales Event**  
(Mega Center)

– Vintage Stoughton, WI Decoy Display

– Vintage Chautauqua Fish Decoy Display

– Lake Poygan Shooting Box Display

– Shot Shell Box Display

– “Hays Decoys: Controversies and  
Misattributions” Exhibit

– Featured Carver Exhibit – Pat Gregory

– Contemporary Carver Demonstrations / Displays

– Continuous Silent Auctions

– Free Identification and Appraisals

### Saturday, April 28

9am-2pm – **Public Sales Event**  
(Mega Center)

Displays / Demonstrations /  
Appraisals Continue

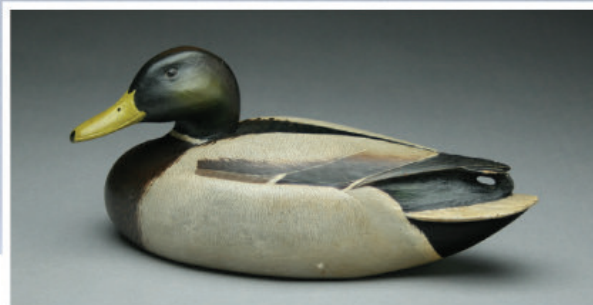
# Member Display

## Stoughton, Wisconsin Decoys

This year's Member Display promises to be a special one. It will feature vintage decoys made in and around Stoughton, Wisconsin, a treasured canvasback hunting area (Lake Koshkonong) which drew attention from hunters and celebrities from all over the U.S. and abroad.

The work of well-known makers such as Enoch Reindahl, Ferd and Mandt Homme, Russell "Raz" Barry, and many others is sure to delight show attendees. What makes these men unique is that they were self-taught artists who were careful observers of nature. Reindahl, in particular, had photographic skills which helped him so accurately mimic the natural birds in his output.

Many of these makers were friends, which created a competitive fire as they tried to outdo each other. However, it was a friendly rivalry where they shared tips and techniques with each, which continuously improved their work. Almost all of the carvings were true working decoys made for their makers or close friends, with very few miniatures or decorative carvings. None of these carvers made more than 100 decoys so this is a rare opportunity to see these fine examples of their work. These pieces will be available for viewing Friday and Saturday in the Mega Center.



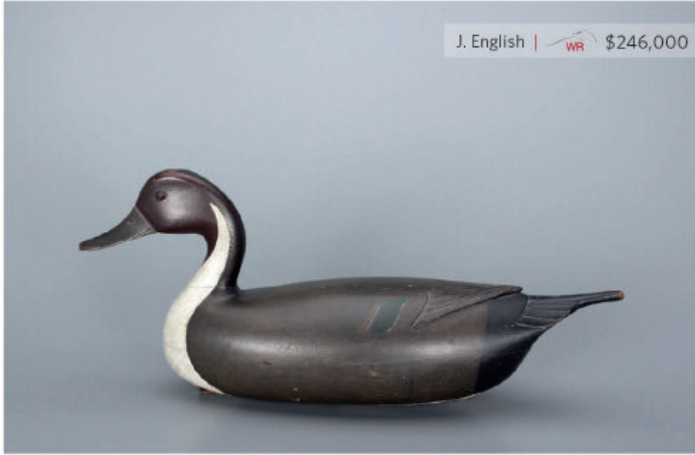




O. Pleissner | WR \$345,000



A.E. Crowell | \$661,250



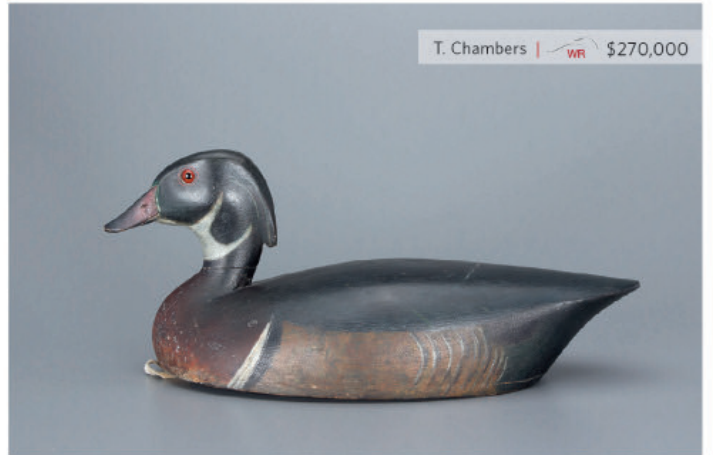
J. English | WR \$246,000



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# Chautauqua Fish Decoy Display



The installment of our annual spearing fish decoy display will feature New York's Lake Chautauqua fish decoys, or "minnows" as they were sometimes called. New York State fish decoys are among the first examples known to be produced by non-indigenous people and generally date from the end of the 19th century, when spearfishing was a highly popular sport. The sport became so popular that few examples date later than 1905 when ice-fishing was outlawed throughout the state because of concern over declining fish populations.

Lake Chautauqua fish are among the most highly coveted decoys by collectors. These decoys were almost always made of wood, tended to be somewhat muted in color and impressionistic in terms of both design and detail. They are generally characterized by leather tails slotted into the bodies with single piece fins.



While many makers are unknown, attendees will also see outstanding examples by the likes of Harry Seymour, Edward W. Irwin, Andrew Carlson, Albert Heminway, E. G. Gleason, Harry Conroe and more. This display in the Mega Center is simply not to be missed.

**EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR:** Prior to this Mega Center display, Jon Deeter, collector and co-owner of Guyette and Deeter, will talk about the history and identifying characteristics of these rare and remarkable fish decoys on Wednesday morning at 8:30. Come early as this is sure to be a popular event.



## Missouri Factory Decoy Collectors Group Meets Again

In 2017, member Greg Renner gathered a group of collectors to further our collective knowledge of factory decoys made in Jefferson City, Missouri. This "study group" will gather again this year to further explore the varied output of the Hays, Gundelfinger and Benz factories, with an eye toward deepening understanding of these often-under-appreciated decoys. This important effort will ensure that the vibrant history of these makers is not lost. Be sure to check out the related Mega Center exhibit, "Hays Decoys: Controversies and Misattributions."



# Extraordinary Firearms Auction

March 21-23, 2018 | Fairfield, ME

a division of Morphy Auctions

James D. Julia Auctioneers have been involved in the auction business for nearly 50 years now, and for the last 15 years Julia's has been the leading auction house in the world for high-end, rare and valuable firearms. We have sold more rare and valuable sporting arms than any other auction house in the world, we are the world's leading seller of important Civil War and Confederate items, we have also sold more Class 3 weapons than any other auction house in North America and much more. Now, with our merger to Morphy Auctions, the Morphy and Julia companies take pride going into the future with the ability to offer sellers and buyers alike the finest auction experience in the world.

Below is a small sample of items offered in our March 2018 Auction

*The spectacular collections of Ray Bentley featuring the finest and rarest deluxe antique Winchesters in the world*



Session One of the extraordinary Ray Bentley silver trophy collection will include a historic, sterling, oversized beaker to Baron von Richthofen from Kaiser Wilhelm, an incredible detailed sterling British battleship, rare and historic, finest known Lloyd's Patriotic Fund £100 Trafalgar trophy, only 15 awarded and a beautiful repoussé bowl with extraordinary scenes of rescue at sea for the Steamship *San Francisco*, and more.



Session One: Ray's Winchesters are Simply Breathtaking



Important Rare Ammo Collection



Many Superb Single Actions

Spectacular Cased Gold and Silver-Plated Navy, All Original



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Extraordinary Marlin Engraved 1893 with Gold and Platinum Inlay Presented by Marlin to Annie Oakley



Historic and Exceedingly Rare Hyde Submachine Gun (Sale will include approx. 100 Class-3)

Matched Pair of Coggan Engraved H&H 28 ga w/ Case and Accessories



James D. Julia, Inc is now a division of Morphy Auctions. For more information about this exciting merger visit [jamesdjulia.com](http://jamesdjulia.com)

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Auctioneer: James D. Julia | Lic#: ME:AR83 | MA: AU1406

# Lake Poygan Gunning Boxes Return

MDCA Board Member “Emeritus” Roger Ludwig will gather yet another group of these unique, multi-purpose tools for attendees to examine up close. These old boxes, native to Wisconsin, were designed to efficiently carry an array of hunting paraphernalia including shells, gloves, matches, and any other necessary gear. An important component of these unique boxes was a cradle for the hunter’s shotgun, helping to protect it from ending up wet in the bottom of the boat, or worse yet, from falling overboard into the drink! Some of these boxes even had cubbies for thermoses and many were designed to double as seats.

About a dozen wonderful examples from throughout Wisconsin will be on display in the Mega Center both Friday and Saturday of show week.



# Bold Graphics of Shotgun Shell Boxes Will Shine



In 2016, Shotgun Shell Boxes made their debut at Pheasant Run and were a big hit with all who attended. Thanks to MDCA Member Rudy Ronning, another group of these beautiful boxes will make a return engagement this year. Rudy’s display will feature boxes from a variety of manufacturers as well as different gauges and forms. The display will include 2 and late 1 piece boxes as well as a number of hand-loaded examples. Rudy plans to bring at least one box made by 17 of the 18 makers covered in the “go to” book on the subject, “The Encyclopedia of Shotgun Shell Boxes.” So this promises to be a wonderful opportunity for all to learn a great deal about this fascinating collecting area. Be sure to check it out in the Mega Center on Friday and Saturday.



## Pat Gregory: Featured Carver Exhibit

We are delighted that prolific and immensely talented contemporary decoy maker, Pat Gregory, has agreed to share a large group of his carvings at this year's show. Pat came by his immense talent through years of tireless effort, but his family genes didn't hurt either. His great grandfather, Illinois River decoy carver, George "Homerun" Barto, was a huge inspiration, along with his love of duck hunting.

This exhibit will be highlighted by a wide assortment of Pat's work including his teal rig, his layout rig of diver decoys, and other assorted rigs used by Pat in the field. Several specialty rigs on display will include some of his 2014 Delta Marsh rig which pays homage to the work of master Duncan Ducharme. A recently restored rig of decoys made by Traverse City, Michigan maker Jim Wicks will also be on display. This fine work demonstrates Pat's wonderful ability to give great old decoys new life and put them back into service.

Pat has been a fixture in St. Charles for years and his considerable talents will be on full display in the Mega Center on Friday and Saturday.



## More Contemporary Talent on Display

In addition to our featured carver exhibit, more than two-dozen member carvers will show off their work in the Contemporary Carver's Corner. This will include carving and painting demonstrations where attendees can learn the "tricks of the trade" directly from these contemporary masters. There are always a number of attendees who just can't tear themselves away from these fascinating and educational demonstrations.



THE MIDWEST'S PREMIER SPORTING COLLECTIBLE AUCTION FIRM

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For Your Support  
See you in St. Charles!**

- Grant & Megan Cole

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*Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Magazine  
Our 18th Year*

The background image shows the interior of a rustic log cabin. The walls are made of horizontal log sections. A brick fireplace is on the right, with a wooden mantel holding a yellow pitcher, a blue pitcher, and some fruit. A window in the center shows a view of a landscape. To the left, there is a wooden bench with a patterned blanket. A chair with a colorful patterned seat is in the middle. A large moose head is mounted on the wall above the fireplace. A white lamp hangs from the ceiling.

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# Guyette & Deeter to Offer Final Group of Peter Brown Decoys

This year's sale will feature the fourth and final group of decoys from the collection of Peter Brown, considered by many to be the finest group of Canadian decoys ever assembled. Peter Brown had a powerful, positive influence on Canadian decoy collecting in the 1980's and it can certainly be said that the sale of the collection through Guyette & Deeter has had that same powerful, positive influence some 30 years later.

The proceeds of the sales benefit DU Canada so this is a rare opportunity for DU supporters, waterfowlers, folk art collectors and decoy enthusiasts to acquire an historical, important waterfowl hunting artifact while supporting DU Canada and its mission. This promises to be a good one. Plan to participate.

## GUYETTE & DEETER, INC.

Weekly Online Auctions Ending Every Thursday Night at  
**DECOYSFORSALE.COM**

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## MEMBER PROFILE:

# Rick & Paul Wyczalek

## OHIO BROTHERS SHARE A COMMON BOND

If you see one of the Wyczalek (why-za-leck) brothers at a decoy show, you can bet the other brother is right around the corner. Rick and Paul have been fixtures at St. Charles and other sporting collectibles shows around the Midwest for years now. While having taken slightly different paths, these brothers from Huron, Ohio share an unbreakable bond that is fueled in large part by their interest in collectable old decoys.



*Paul (L) & Rick (R)  
with their recent  
estate sale find*

### The Seeds Are Planted

Born in New Jersey, the Wyczalek's interest in the outdoors began to evolve at an early age when the boys were introduced to fishing and crabbing by their grandfather. They share fond memories of trolling for largemouth bass, pickerel and trout in grand dad's old wooden row boat on waters of Lake Hopatcong and Wawayanda Lake.

This burgeoning connection with nature was brought to a boil when the family moved to Huron, Ohio in 1967. In this small town on the shores of Lake Erie near Sandusky, the first day of the

rabbit season was enough to get an excused absence for any middle school boy. So, the brothers were quickly exposed to the intricacies of this fast-paced sport by their new schoolmates. At the same time, a friend of one of their new teachers, took them under his wing and introduced them to trapping muskrats and fox. These formative years were rich with a variety of outdoor experiences during which their fascination with all kinds of wildlife blossomed. Rick still smiles as he recalls his first experience with wood ducks during one of these early forays into the field.



*Eddie Driscoll Canvasbacks, ca. 1950*





Ben Schmidt Drake Widgeon, ca. 1940s



Ben Schmidt Hen Mallard, ca. 1940s



Rare Ben Schmidt Cork/Wood Hollow Goose w/Removable Head, ca. 1930s

## Their First Decoys

1999 provided the catalyst for the brothers' love of decoys when they made a trip with their father to the home of a banker friend who had old decoys scattered throughout his home. The boys were instantly attracted to the form and paint on these old relics, and their desire to learn more about them was ignited.

With their interest piqued, the brothers leapt at the opportunity when they heard about a "decoy show" in nearby Westlake, Ohio. Despite still being very new to this hobby, they both bought their first decoys there. Rick found a low head drake Bluebill made by Houghton Lake, Michigan maker Frank "Doc" Baumgardner. Not long after, Paul bought a decorative Canada Goose made in 1979 by Richard Watson of Fairhaven, Michigan. In the following years they continued to search for additions to their collections, mostly at local estate sales and antique shops. However, there was clearly much more to learn.

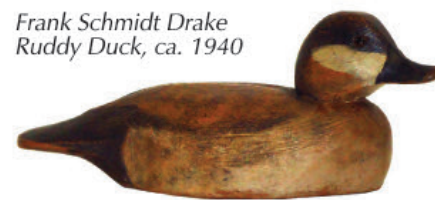
## The Turning Point

Given its nearby location, they returned to the Westlake show several times in subsequent years. It was at the 2005 show that they took their new-found passion to the next level. There they met long time collector Ken Cole who graciously took these still "green" collectors under his wing. He sold them their first collecting book, "Waterfowl Decoys of Michigan and the St. Clair Region," by Clune Walsh and Lowell Jackson, and invited them to his home to see his collection of Ben Schmidt and other Michigan decoys. To help fuel their obvious enthusiasm, Ken gave them a copy of Barney Crandell's, "Decoying: St. Clair to the St. Lawrence." From this experience, both left with a much greater appreciation of how to evaluate quality and a heightened desire to build their own collections.

Their education continued in earnest just a month later in St. Charles. Cole continued his mentorship by walking the brothers around Pheasant Run and introduced them to other collectors,



Ben Schmidt Coot, ca. 1940s



Frank Schmidt Drake Ruddy Duck, ca. 1940



Ben Schmidt Mallard Drake, ca. 1930s

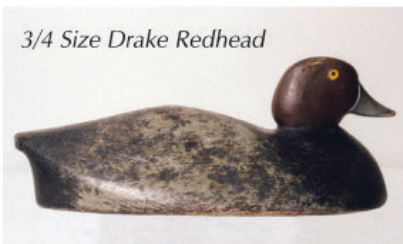
## FRANK "DOC" BAUMGARDNER, HOUGHTON LAKE, MI, CA. 1920S



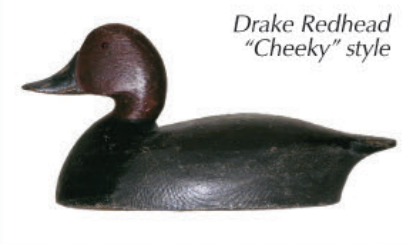
"Pocket Size" Drake Bluebill



"Pocket Size" Hen Bluebill



3/4 Size Drake Redhead



Drake Redhead "Cheeky" style



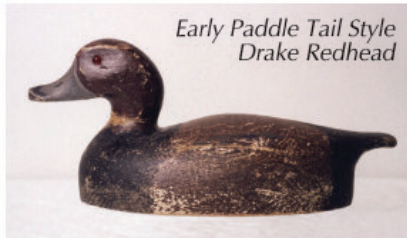
Hen Ringbill "Cheeky" style



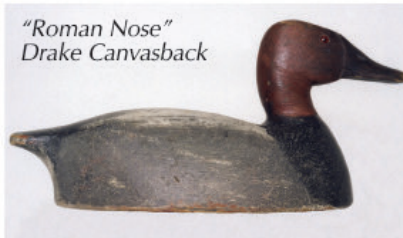
Drake Ringbill "Cheeky" style



Early Paddle Tail Style Hen Redhead



Early Paddle Tail Style Drake Redhead



"Roman Nose" Drake Canvasback



Herters Great Horned Owl, ca. 1950

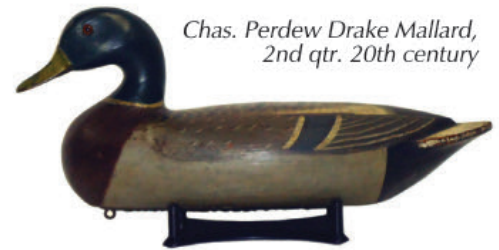
Rare Frank Baumgardner  
Canvasbacks



Chas. Perdeu Hen Mallard,  
2nd qtr. 20th century



Chas. Perdeu Drake Mallard,  
2nd qtr. 20th century



encouraging them to ask questions as they went. Happily, they learned that there were no "stupid" questions – that collectors were more than willing to share their knowledge and expertise.

The relationships established at that show proved to be invaluable going forward. They had been convinced by their initial visit to Cole's home that actually handling decoys, and talking with their owners about their experiences and overall collecting philosophies was the absolute best way to learn. So, they actively pursued visits with as many collectors as possible. By their last count, Rick and Paul have visited 26 different collectors and seen some of the finest decoys in the country. A literal "who's who" of collecting – names like Tonelli, Carnaghi, Cook, Krebsbach, and many others. Through these visits the brothers have not only learned a ton about 100's of decoys and their history but also they have seen many interesting ways to aesthetically display the decoys to enhance their enjoyment. Rick advises, "it's just foolish not take someone up on an invitation to visit."

## The Collections

While the brothers are inseparable, their specific collecting directions have

taken divergent paths. Rick has continued to focus on acquiring Baumgardner decoys. From the beginning, he was fascinated by this Michigan maker's work, and in particular, the great number of different styles he employed. After finding a matching hen for his initial drake bluebill, he built on this by actively pursuing other Michigan collectors who might have Baumgardner's or be able to provide leads. By 2007 his Baumgardner collection had grown quite substantial, to the point where it was undoubtedly the largest and most comprehensive assembly of this maker's work anywhere. Rick shared his expertise and deep knowledge of this maker and his work through a comprehensive review in the November/December, 2007 issue of Decoy Magazine.

While Rick still chases more unusual styles and species of Baumgardner decoys, he has selectively expanded his pursuit a bit. As the result of running an ad in a local paper, he found an opportunity to buy a crow by Illinois icon Charles Perdeu, a maker whose work he had long admired. He subsequently had the good fortune to acquire several more Perdeus including a Mallard pair and a VL&A call, all of which he treasures as much as his Baumgardners.

Today, he is looking to add good Ohio decoys to his collection, hoping to establish a stronger connection to his home state.

Paul's interests are firmly rooted in Michigan decoys as well. Having initially been exposed to them on a visit to Ken Cole's, he soon became enamored with the work of Ben Schmidt. Not long after that visit, he bought his first Schmidt decoy, a very nice Drake Redhead at the 2005 St. Charles show, and he was hooked. He has since expanded his Schmidt collection to include a Black duck, an early pair of Mallards, a Widgeon, a coot, and a very rare and unusual hollowed out Canada goose.

Like Rick, Paul has ventured outside of his primary focus as well. After seeing a Herter's Great Horned Owl for the first time at the Westlake show in Ohio in 2006 he just knew he had to have one. Passing up several earlier opportunities to buy one in fair condition, he waited patiently for five years to find an excellent one.

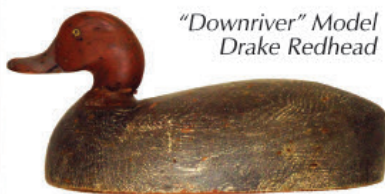
Paul firmly believes that patience is indeed a virtue when it comes to collecting. In his early collecting years, he saw a photo of a Frank Schmidt (Ben's brother) Ruddy Duck. He liked it so much so that he was determined to find one for himself some day. While it took nearly 10 years,

## FRANK "DOC" BAUMGARDNER, HOUGHTON LAKE, MI, CA. 1920S

"Downriver" Style  
Drake Canvasback



"Downriver" Model  
Drake Redhead



Drake Redhead  
"Mason Head" style



Hen Bluebill  
"Mason Head" Style



Drake Bluebill  
"Mason Head" style



Hen Canvasback  
Oversized "Lead  
Bird" style



Drake Canvasback  
Oversized "Lead  
Bird" style



he finally accomplished his goal in 2015 at a Guyette & Deeter auction. Paul insists that “persistence and focus” are the keys to these successful pursuits.

Paul is also quick to offer some advice about buying on a budget that he feels many collectors lose sight of. Strapped for cash at the time, he bought his Ben Schmidt Black duck on what he refers to as the “decoy payment plan.” He negotiated with the seller to allow him to make a series of installments until the agreed upon full price was met. This way he was able to acquire a bird that he couldn’t really afford at the time it was available. He counsels that collectors just have to be creative sometimes to make a deal happen.

## On the Collecting Trail

One of the brothers’ favorite collecting stories includes finding Paul’s Ben Schmidt goose in 2011. They became aware of a small auction in Whitmore Lake, Michigan, about three hours from their home in Huron. There were only a few decoys in the sale but online photos seemed to suggest that an unusual cork-bodied decoy might have been made by Ben Schmidt. Unsure, they

contacted their mentor and Schmidt expert Ken Cole, who volunteered to meet them at the auction to check it out. They all concluded that it was indeed made by Schmidt, and was perhaps a one-of-a-kind piece with a cork body mounted on wooden bottom, with a removable head. While a few other collectors were there, they were able to win the decoy at a reasonable price. Paul chuckles that it took three guys to buy one bird – Rick found the auction listing; Ken provided the Schmidt confirmation and did the bidding; and Paul bought the bird.

More recently the two stumbled across a group of scarce decoys by Ohio maker, Eddie Driscoll, ca. 1950. Driving along a country road this past summer they came upon a lady in her yard setting up what appeared to be a yard sale. They stopped and saw a few Driscoll canvasbacks buried among a ton of other items. Inquiring about their availability, they quickly learned that the lady was just trying to get organized and not ready sell anything. They thanked her and asked her to give them “first shot” whenever they might be available. For almost two months they drove by this property hoping to see some activity, until one day they saw that

things had begun moving around the yard again. They stopped and were surprised to learn that everything was about to go into an estate sale. Disappointed but not disheartened they joined the fray in the sale and grabbed every decoy they could find, which ended up being 11 Driscoll canvasbacks, including two very rare hens. They also bought an early 12-foot long punt boat push paddle that made the day even better. As Rick puts it, “We had to do a lot of push-ups to get in this one!”

## Brotherly Love

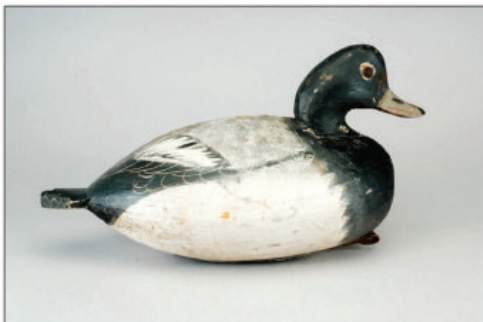
Rick and Paul both stress that being able to share their passion for decoys with each other has been “priceless.” While this common interest allows them to remain close, they believe being able to lean on one another really helps them make better buying decisions. They look forward to once again making their annual pilgrimage to St. Charles this year with hopes of adding another piece or two to their collections. Either way, they will certainly enjoy the ride together. Rick can be reached at [rickw@bex.net](mailto:rickw@bex.net). Contact Paul at [pjwyczalek@bex.net](mailto:pjwyczalek@bex.net).

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On Friday morning they hold their annual Membership and Business Meeting. Then in the afternoon and on Saturday the Fancy Call Contest Calls and results are on display in the Mega Center for all to enjoy. You won't want to miss seeing their great work.

# Reserve Your Tables for the April 27-28, 2018 Mega Center Show now using the Table Registration Form on the next page! >>>>

As in the past, priority will be given to returning exhibitors who have held tables in prior years **provided your reservation and payment is received by March 15th.**

**The table cost remains the same as last year:**

- \$75 per table for reservations and payment by March 15, 2018
- \$100 per table for reservation and payment after March 15, 2018

## Early Mega Center Set-Up Time!

Once again, this year, set-up time in the Mega Center will be on Friday morning from 8am until 10am when the doors will be open for a members only "early bird" session, four hours before the public comes in at 2pm. Only table exhibitors will be allowed in the Mega Center during the set-up hours.

A name badge will be provided for all exhibitors, available at the Show registration desk beginning on Thursday morning. Please wear this badge in the Mega Center at all times.

## Send in Your Table Reservation Form Now!

To reserve your tables, please fill out the Table Reservation Form on the next page and send it, along with your check, by March 15. If you wish to make a change in your table location or have another request, please indicate this on the form. Your canceled check is your confirmation.

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**PLEASE NOTE:** All exhibitors must be MDCA members in good standing. If not already paid for 2018, you can pay your dues online at [midwestdecoy.org](http://midwestdecoy.org) or by including your dues along with your table payment. **If someone is sharing your table** they must either be a family member, or be a MDCA member in good standing. They can join online at [midwestdecoy.org](http://midwestdecoy.org) or by including their dues payment and member profile information along with this form.

### Checks should be made payable to the MDCA. Amount

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Table(s) @ \$75 each (\$100 each if after March 15th) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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