HAPPY RETIREMENT ROY GRIFFITH!!!
PASSING ON THE TRADITION...

By: Captain Robert Pelzman

Matthew Lazzaretto is from Santa Clarita, California and was raised in a law enforcement family. His great-grandfather was an Officer with the Redondo Beach Police Department and his grandfather was an Officer with LAPD. Both of Matt’s parents were Glendale Police Officers. His great-grandfather was killed in the line of duty when Matt’s grandfather was just five years old. A generation later, Matt’s father was also killed in the line of duty when Matt was only two. Understandably, Matt proudly proclaims to be a “mama’s boy” and explained that hunting and outdoor activities provided valuable bonding time with his grandfather and other family members.

At twelve years old, HEI Derick Fong certified Matt in Hunter Education at the Oak Tree Gun Club. As a teen, Matt enjoyed hunting upland game on the Carrizo Plain and fishing the Eastern Sierras. During his high school years he realized he could combine his families proud law enforcement tradition with his passion for hunting and the outdoors by becoming a Game Warden.

The goal was set – now came the work. For his high school senior project, he scraped algae from fish runways, painted signs, loaded trout chow, and completed numerous other odd jobs at the Fillmore Fish Hatchery. In December he will graduate (in 3 ½ years) from Sacramento State with a degree in criminal justice. While enrolled at Sac State, he went to the CDFW office in Rancho Cordova to request a ride-along with a Game Warden. On his third or fourth visit, he met Captain Roy Griffith. The Captain told Matt that he appreciated his persistence and assured him a ride-along would be setup. Matt left the office and headed home. A short distance down the road, Matt was “pulled over” by a warden truck. It was Captain Griffith. The Captain told Matt that he appreciated his persistence and assured him a ride-along would be setup. Matt left the office and headed home. A short distance down the road, Matt was “pulled over” by a warden truck. It was Captain Griffith. Griffith asked Matt if he was interested in applying for a Hunter Education Student Aid position.

Matt has been the Hunter Education Program Student Aid for a little over a year and has developed into a respected and valued member of the hunter education team.

Legal or Not?

Hypothetically, if the deer pictured was taken within the hunt boundary and season by a J-17 tag holder – would it be legal? It appears there is no tag attached; for the sake of discussion, let’s assume the deer is tagged. What are the relevant laws or regulations? (Answer on next page)

Yes, it’s legal. The antlers are less than three inches long (barely!). Therefore, this deer is classified as an “Antlerless Deer”. The J-17 hunt allows for “one either-sex deer per tag”. Either-sex deer are defined as antlerless deer or legal bucks…

Relevant regulation:
(a) Forked-Horn Buck Defined. For the purpose of these regulations a forked-horn buck is defined as a male deer having a branched antler on either side with the branch in the upper two-thirds of the antler. Eyeguards or other bony projections on the lower one-third of the antler shall not be considered as points or branches.
(b) Antlerless Deer Defined. For the purpose of these regulations, antlerless deer are defined as female deer, fawns of either sex other than spotted fawns, and male deer with an unbranched antler on one or both sides which is not more than three inches in length.
(c) Either-Sex Deer Defined. For the purpose of these regulations, either-sex deer are defined as antlerless deer or legal bucks as described in Section 351 (b), or legal bucks that have two or more points in the upper two-thirds of either antler. Spike bucks may not be taken.

Bonus Points if you got this one! FISH AND GAME CODE - FGC 204. The commission has no power under this article to make any regulation authorizing or permitting the taking of:
(d) Any spike buck or spotted fawn. “Spotted fawn” means a young deer born that year which has spotted pelage. “Spike buck” means a male deer with unbranched antlers on both sides which are more than three inches in length.
Hunter Education Quarterly 7

Advanced Hunter Ed

As the Fall and Winter hunting seasons have come and gone, hopefully everyone was successful in their pursuits. “Success” can have a different meaning for each person. Success could mean a limit of ducks, a buck, or a Thanksgiving Turkey. Or it could be just having a good time with good friends in the outdoors. Not all of my hunts consisted of bringing home game but, every hunt allowed me to clear my head from my day to day stresses. As spring approaches, and so does the Spring Turkey Season, one of my favorites. For those of you who apply for hunts out of state it is also application season. You try to figure out where you think might work please get in touch with me. I look forward to meeting more of you at the conferences this year. Unfortunately, I won’t be at Bart’s or Peter’s.

In closing I would like to wish Roy Griffith congratulations on making it to retirement and wish him luck in this new pursuit. Roy is the reason I am in this position. Roy’s shoes are definitely going to be hard to fill but I can tell you the entire Hunter Ed. staff is dedicated to doing the best we can to keep the ship moving forward and in the right direction. Please join me in wishing Roy congratulations in his retirement.

By: Lieutenant Alan Gregory

This year was completely crazy and the Hunter Ed. Program saw many changes, challenges, a few set backs and even a handful of successes. No matter what 2015 was, it is now in the past and we are all looking forward. 2016 has seen us hit the ground running and we are moving forward at full speed, or in the words of Roy, “DOING GOD’S WORK AT LIGHT SPEED”.

Probably the biggest thing on everyone’s mind is the new Event Manager System. Back this past Summer all of us decided we would implement a soft roll out, releasing small bits of information and then going live on January 1st, 2016. This would give everyone some exposure to the system and we would just work it out for the few classes that are taught in the beginning of the year prior to the main conferences where everyone would be trained. Now looking back, this may have been one of our bigger mistakes. Just in the month of January over 600 classes were successfully posted. Needless to say we have all been burning the candle at both ends keeping up with all the questions. The good news is everything with the new system seems to be working well, the instructors who are using it love it and for the most part we consider it a monumental success. The prize is in the pudding, for it’s pretty hard to argue with 600 classes being posted in four weeks with no formal training.

For the few skeptics still out there please give it a chance. In the end I truly believe it will make all our lives better.

The other big news everyone is talking about is the retirement of Assistant Chief Roy Griffith. Yeaa it is true he is leaving the department as a paid employee but in true nature he will join the ranks as a volunteer instructor and is planning on teaching Hunter Ed. classes in his new found spare time. For all of you who know Roy understand that his passion towards the preservation of our hunting heritage was engrained in his DNA and he was a huge inspiration to all of us around him. Roy’s shoes are definitely going to be hard to fill but I can tell you the entire Hunter Ed. staff is dedicated to doing the best we can to keep the ship moving forward and in the right direction. Please join me in wishing Roy congratulations in his retirement.

By: Lieutenant Peter Blake

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Continue Pg. 12
Hopefully this article finds you in good spirits. I’m not sure if the timing will find you pre or post conference. If you were unable to attend the March 12th North Coast District Conference please come join us April 2nd in Atascadero, or April 30th in Ukiah for one of the NCD Satellites. Conferences are the best way to avoid the drudgery of the Correspondence Course to fulfill your yearly training requirement.

I’m going to touch first on Event Management since it’s the hot topic. I can’t speak for the other Districts, but NCD has been very positive so far. You all have really shown your self-starting qualities, independence and general glass half full attitude. I’ve been thoroughly impressed with the lack of assistance many of the NCD HEI’s have needed during this transition. Some of you have received some one on one instruction from me. This is encouraging that you are able to recognize your limitation, but not let it set you back. Don’t be afraid to ask for help, that’s what I’m here for, and I am more than willing to get you on track.

With all that said, many of the approximately 200 NCD HEI’s aren’t planning and implementing classes as the “primary” instructor. This means your only needed interaction is reporting your hours in the Event Management system for Grant Match and Audit reasons. I can assure you, this is a simple function done in less than 5 minutes. It is easier than the previous Samaritan program.

Sidebar: you no longer need to use Samaritan, its purpose has been replaced by the “one stop shop” of Event Manager.

As with any new program we are still fine tuning some things. Look for improvements in the future with roster management, easier function to “add” students to a class, reporting outreach hours, etc. It is a very fluid program and many of the additions will be a result of direct Instructor feedback. Some of these changes will already be implemented by the time this goes to print.

As a Coordinator I get to see Hunter Ed in California on a larger scale than you the Instructor sometimes. Now that we are using a program implemented in many other States, I have noticed something that sets California apart. HEI’s in California have a general no student left behind attitude. I’ve been referring to us as the “Ellis Island” of Hunter Ed programs. Many other States only take registered students, while California HEI’s go out of their way to include, walk ins, parents of students, chaperons, etc. This is truly an impressive show of your passion to “Pass on the Tradition”.

I’m going to close with a quick overview of service time. First many of you will see a start date in your Event Manager Profile from 2014. You can disregard this, service time records are kept in a different database. Service time is by far the most difficult record that we maintain. I know that Sarah before, and Fam now, work very hard to make sure these records are up to date and accurate.

Why do I bring this up? It is conference season and the most complaints I get are over service time. If you are affected it’s not a slight, simply the product of the difficulty of maintaining this info for 1000+ HEI’s. With the implementation of Event Manager and some changes in record keeping at HQ, we hope that 2016 will mark the end of these issues.

If you get passed over for a service award you think you deserve, let me know. I will make it right.

As always thank you, your hard work is appreciated! My door is always open, and if you need anything I’m only a phone call or email away: (415) 892-0073 or bart.bundesen@wildlife.ca.gov

Have a wonderful spring.
Central District
By: Lieutenant Shawn Olague

We are hitting the training tour again. Hope we see you all at a main conference. This year there has been a big new shift to our program. I am talking about Event Manager. Some of you will have experienced a lot of it before we hit the training date you attend. We are hoping for some positive input and would like to get all the “bugs” worked out ahead of time, but the one thing I must ask is for you to look at this with a positive mindset rather than a negative one. If you come to our training trying to show us where we are all wrong and the man behind making them happen—Roy Griffith, who retired March 1. I know change can be difficult and you might want to fight it, but you may be better off trying to learn it and manage it to your best interest.

“I know change can be difficult and you might want to fight it, but you may be better off trying to learn it and manage it to your best interest.”

Many of you have done so already, but if you haven’t please send me your income and expense statements ASAP. The Recruitment and Retention hunts will come faster than you know it and I do not want to excuse you due to lack of turning it in.

In your lifetimes think of how many changes have come about. Computers, cell phones, DVD players, etc…for some of you, TVs, cars, pen and paper…just kidding, I know some of you are not that old. I know change can be difficult and you might want to fight it, but you may be better off trying to learn it and manage it to your best interest. It is possible and we are here to help.

With my main conference taking place at Tachi Palace this year, I will most likely have a satellite training in San Joaquin Co. and Kern Co. this year. I like Tachi Palace as a location due to its central proximity in the district. I had planned on being in Los Banos, but a scheduling conflict came up that made me move. I know the venue will be more conducive to the planned training anyway.

But what I’d like to talk about are some of Hunter Ed’s biggest high points over the years and the man behind making them happen—Roy Griffith, who retired March 1. Roy, it was a pleasure working for you and now I’m looking forward to working with you.

I’m not worried about writing the same thing as my peers because it can’t be said enough—Roy was the single best thing to happen to hunter education since the time (1997) I joined the program, and probably before that.

Thanks very much for your willingness to put up with changes in our program. We are excited about how it is serving the public already. We have over 500 classes posted statewide on the system at this time. Great job.

Southern District

The Best Thing to Happen… By: Lieutenant Mike Norris

What a winter it’s been… and I’m not talking about the over-hyped El Nino that put some water on the ground but won’t alleviate the ongoing drought. My winter has seen some highs—in the mountains of Utah, Nevada, and California—and some lows, wrestling with burst pipes in the frozen cobwebby mud beneath a hunting shack and hair-pulling back-n-forths with HEIs over the new class scheduling system.

But what I’d like to talk about are some of Hunter Ed’s biggest high points over the years and the man behind making them happen—Roy Griffith, who retired March 1.

Gone are the days when it seemed there was an infant’s handful of active instructors trying to satisfy the Hunter Education needs in the Nation’s second-most populous state.

Gone are the days of outdat-ed printed rosters and schedules used by Fish & Gamers who, with a phone clamped between shoulder and ear, would sift thru, searching for a class that would work for the caller only to discover that—sorry!—the class was full/canceled/rescheduled.

Gone are the days of Eisenhower-era paper forms with finicky, tedious bubbles that demanded attention from students, Instructors, and administrative staff. Gone are the envelopes to mail and the coordinator’s nagging, “Hey, C’Mon, you said last week you were going to mail up those forms from last year!”

Gone are the days of hoping the newspaper ran the class schedule in the Community Calendar section in time for it to be useful and hadn’t bumped it in favor of an announce-ment for the Garden Club’s next meeting…

Now, upcoming classes are searchable by ZIP code and their number of seats remaining is view-able in real time by anyone with an Internet connection, anytime, any-where. HEIs are able to personally post their classes in this scheduling system, which also collects and organizes student data and test results, then reports if for them with a click. No more forms to bubble or mail.

Now, HEIs number over 1,000
Continued: Mike Norris

statewide and they offer classes at an unprecedented variety of times and locations throughout the state.

And now, with his retirement from the Dept., Roy will be among you HEIs, introducing new generations to the pastime that we all believe in so much.

Roy, it was a pleasure working for you and now I’m looking forward to working with you.

I’ll be working with all you HEIs this spring to make sure everyone’s onboard with Event Manager and this spring to make sure everyone’s working with you.

Mike Norris

 CHEIA North will be sponsoring its second annual Train the Trainer class at the Nevada City Sportsman’s Club in Nevada City on March 25th and 26th. This training will provide instructors with information designed to help them be more productive in their Hunter Education classes. Training will include Range Instruction, Technology and use of the new Event Manager System. There will be a potluck dinner on Friday evening and CHEIA will provide breakfast and lunch on Saturday. A $30.00 tuition is required to help cover the costs of event. To sign up for more information please call HEI Bill Adams at 530-622-3794 or email: buffaloadams40@sbcglobal.net.

Conference season is just around the corner and all of the dates and locations have been set. You can find a list including all associated information posted on the Instructor Resource Page. This is also where you will RSVP to whichever conference you plan on attending. This year the Northern District Conference will be held in Corning at the Rolling Hills Casino on April 23. I hope to see you all there.

Mike Norris

Continued: Peter Blake

For those who missed our main training conference in Ventura, where Event Manager was demonstrated, I’ll be holding a couple make-up (satellite) conferences this spring, one in the San Diego area, the other in Riverside/San Bernardino area—check the Instructor Resources page of the Hunter Education website and look along the left side of the page under Announcements for the registration link or type this mouthful into your browser: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunter-Education/Instructor-Resources.

Those unable to attend a satellite conference will need to complete an on-line correspondence course which will be released shortly.

Finally, I have a new mailing address: Lt. Mike Norris/CA DFW, 4665 Lampson Ave. #C, Los Alamitos, CA 90720. Please use this, and only this, address for your paper correspondence. One-thousand thanks for all that you have done and will do for generations of hunters, I look forward to another great year working with you all.

Mike.norris@wildlife.ca.gov

Nonlead Ammunition in California

This Point’s for You!!!

By: Lt. Peter Blake

Effective July 1, 2008, the California Fish and Game Commission modified the methods of take to prohibit the use of projectiles containing lead when hunting big game and nongame species in an area designated as the California condor range.

Phase 2 Effective July 1, 2016

In October 2013, Assembly Bill 711 was signed into law requiring the use of nonlead ammunition when taking any wildlife with a firearm in California. This law requires the Commission to adopt by July 1, 2015, regulations that phase-in the nonlead requirement. This outreach effort included question and answer sessions at sportsmen’s shows, meetings with hunting organizations and a series of eight public workshops throughout the state. CDFW then presented draft regulations, as modified by public input from these workshops, to the Fish and Game Commission.

In April 2015, the Fish and Game Commission adopted CDFW’s proposed regulations, which will implement the nonlead requirement in the following three phases:

Phase 1 – Effective July 1, 2015, nonlead ammunition will be required when taking Nelson big-horn sheep and all wildlife on state wildlife areas and ecological reserves.

Phase 2 – Effective July 1, 2016, nonlead shot will be required when taking upland game birds with a shotgun, except for dove, quail, snipe, and any game birds taken on licensed game bird clubs. In addition, nonlead shot will be required when using a shotgun to take resident small game mammals, fur-bearing mammals, nongame mammals, nongame birds, and any wildlife for depredation purposes.

Phase 3 – Effective July 1, 2019, nonlead ammunition will be required when taking any wildlife with a firearm anywhere in California.

Existing restrictions on the use of lead ammunition in the California condor range remain in effect while implementation proceeds.

CDFW conducted extensive public outreach during 2014 and proposed regulations that phased-in the nonlead requirement. This outreach effort included question and answer sessions at sportsmen’s shows, meetings with hunting organizations and a series of eight public workshops throughout the state. CDFW then presented draft regulations, as modified by public input from these workshops, to the Fish and Game Commission.

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Existing restrictions on the use of lead ammunition in the California condor range remain in effect while implementation proceeds.
My G-3 Hunt
By: Claudia Daw
December 5, 2015

I arrived in Lone Pine two days prior to opening day. I stayed at the Budget Inn, a lovely, plain, roadside motel owned by a young Indian couple. They were so interested in whether my stay would be pleasant. I met up with a retired Department of Fish and Game warden on Thursday and he took me to see various hunting spots that would offer a positive outcome. We went up and down, in and out, through canyons, streams and low lands for about eight hours (the terrain in the high desert was a surprising combination of lava flows, ice age moraines, volcanic dust posing as soil, and sage brush. The mountains rise suddenly at nearly a ninety degree angle). Every now and then we came across other people who were scouting the area, but we never talked to them. At the end of the trek I was told to take the next day and choose where to hunt. Since I would not be there the next day, I told them to check in with him every time I moved to a different location.

The next day, Friday, I drove to all the places seen the day before. I looked through my spotting scope for does because that would be the place to find bucks; after all, it was the middle of the rut. Additionally, three huge considerations, at least for me, had to be addressed. They were accessibility, kneeling down to field dress the deer, and getting the meat out once the animal was quartered. About two years ago I had my right knee replaced and it has given me problems ever since. I finally decided on one particular valley that seemed to meet the needs of my physical limitations and also had a lot of deer activity. It was a valley that contained no less than sixty does and a dozen bucks. I watched bucks engage in shoving contests that at times appeared quite violent; the weaker of the two yielding to the stronger. On one occasion, a minor buck was skewered in the rump by the dominant buck when he turned to leave. The little buck took off like a scalded dog.

It was a wondrous and exhilarating sight to behold; the clash of the titans.

Once decided upon, and when phone reception was available, I called the retired Warden and told him where we were going, where to meet and the time of the rendezvous. Happy as a lark, I drove back to the town, bought two Han- gryman turkey dinners, one for that night and one for breakfast, then back to the motel. I went to bed at about 6:30 that evening and awoke at 2:00. That morning I ate the pre-fab dinner but omitted the usual cup of coffee since I did not want the caffeine to negatively affect my shooting accuracy, took a shower, got dressed in wool, wool, wool, threw my backpack in the truck bed, and took off. The rifle I chose for the trip was a Winchester .270 and a 130 grain Winchester Razor copper bulleted cartridge. I arrived thirty minutes early at the meeting place and parked on the street. During those thirty minutes, five 4x4 trucks passed me by. At 4:45 a truck pulled up behind me, it held the three men I was to hunt with: the warden who had generously taken me on a tour of fabulous hunting spots, the former Captain of Hunter Education for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, we’ll call him Captain America, and another of his buddy’s, a retired police officer. Both the Captain and the officer drove about seven hours to participate in this event, which is known as the most amazing hunting opportunity in California. We spoke for a minute then headed for the chosen area. Meandering through the mountains seemed to take forever, my excitement growing with each passing mile. Finally we arrived at our destination. I pulled up behind them, and once safely parked, I joined them in their truck. We discussed the strategy for the hunt and waited until about six o’clock. Dawn was supposed to break at 6:35.

I chose a valley that was accessible from an abandoned miners trail with a locked gate at its entrance. The shoulder, from the road to the gate, could accommodate two trucks. My plan was to take advantage of that parking opportunity but alas two trucks beat us to it. The small group of men from one of the trucks was arguing with the couple from the other. In the still of the morning we could clearly hear the men insisting that the couple had no right to hunt or park at that location. It was a ridiculous argument since the entire area was public land. Anyway, when it was time, we walked around them not saying a word. The trail we were on was easy to traverse and we traveled it until we could no longer hear the voices of those at the entrance. Once the dawn began to break we deployed the spotting scopes and binoculars. Two of us looked down into the valley while the other two glassed up the mountain. We saw a lot of does, spikes, and forkies. I did not want to kill a forky. To me, it would be like going to a five star restaurant and ordering a hamburg- er. What a waste.

Finally, we came across a large bevy of does, young bucks who were respectable 2x3’s, 3x 3’s and a few forkies.

They were meandering up the hill from the valley below. Suddenly, from behind them all, a 4x5, big bod-
I was bedded down and obscured by branches and grass I was left with only a neck shot. Not my favorite choice. Because of all the natural obstructions there was only three inches of his neck available as a viable target.

**I kept whispering to myself, “Breath slowly, take a deep breath, let half of it out, pull the trigger straight back”**.

The shot rang out, the buck collapsed, his body twitching as his nervous system collapsed, but other than that, no movement. It was 8:15 in the morning. Someone shouted that they could not believe how good the shot was; another said it was the best they had seen so far. I kept my rifle sighted on the buck in case he got up, but he never did.

The small herd of deer, both buck and doe, remained in the vicinity after the shot. They sniffed at his body. When we started downhill, toward him, they stayed until we were half way there. Then they retreated to the edge of the ridge and watched us. They continued to do what was left behind made the birds, foxes, and coyotes cry.

ied behemoth appeared. He was following a doe. His neck outstretched, antlers back, top lip curled upward, following as if in a trance. Paying no attention to anything or anybody except the doe he was stalking. They were 375 yards away and downhill from us. We were all awestruck at the bucks massive body and magnificent rack; amazed that we came upon such a creature so early in the morning.

I took off my pack and threw it to the ground and followed it, laying prone for the shot. I knew that the rifle was most effective below 500 yards and this shot was within that range. The “hold over” for this shot was 32 inches above the heart lung target. I acquired the target and as I was doing so two does walked behind him which meant no shoot situation. After all, had I taken the shot the bullet would have most likely passed through him and killed the doe behind him. Thinking the does would move away I stayed in my shooting position, but they never moved. They kept shadowing him. Then he walked behind a boulder, obscuring his body. You could see his rack through binoculars, which was a type of torture to me. Finally, we picked up our gear and moved to the ridge the herd was on, hoping the buck would still be there. The retired warden decided to go to the next ridge beyond us and report the whereabouts of the buck should he leave the immediate area. Luck was on our side.

Finally the buck moved from behind the boulder to a nearby manzanita bush and bedded down in the tall grass. We could not see him. Fortunately, the aforementioned doe got up to move, and when she did he did too. He walked about ten feet, sniffed the air, and then bedded down again. He was two hundred yards away, downhill. Forty yards uphill from him, appearing like Egyptian Sphinxes, two bucks laid, one to the left and the other to the right. At first I moved into the prone position for the shot but the grass was too tall and I could not get a good sight picture. I moved again, this time into the sitted position, legs crossed, and elbows on my knees. Fortunately Captain America had an external frame back pack which he suggested I use as a shooting platform. I sat on the edge of the trail, legs dangling over the side, my coat under the rifles forearm to absorb the recoil. Once I had moved I could not see where the buck was located. The retired police officer helped me relocate him. Since he...
so for many minutes before leaving. One handsome 3x3 returned during the field dressing process about an hour later. He stood about thirty feet uphill from our location and stared. Finally he turned around, sauntered up the hill, passed about ten feet away from the warden who had stayed on the trail guarding the equipment. They both looked at one another; the buck paused, and then proceeded up the mountain side. I had never seen deer behave in this manner before and was told that this was not unusual during the rut. After all, they were all exhausted from the mating process and exhaustion brings about an altered state of consciousness.

I hobbled down to the buck using a walking stick my friends Lydia and Robert had given me, carefully navigating around rocks and brushes. Upon arriving, I stroked the buck's head and talked to him. Perhaps a silly ritual for most, but I cannot just kill such a magnificent creature that was both stunning and majestic at the same time. If it is true that we all have a spirit, then I wanted him to know my feelings. Captain American allowed me this time with him to know my feelings. Captain American allowed me this time with him to know my feelings. I sent them to everyone on my contact list. I sat behind him with my rifle; picking up the buck and when I was done he was set in the most splendid pose, giving him the respect he deserved. I showed him my pictures. He had never hunted before but was interested in taking a Hunter Education class.

I am most grateful to Roy Griffith and those who helped him get legislation passed that would offer special hunting opportunities to Hunter Education Instructors.

He and his willing hordes worked tirelessly for us. Winning this opportunity was a wonderful surprise. For me, this really was the “hunt of a lifetime”. Thank you to Roy and the men who helped me during the “Open Zone” hunt. You have changed me.
Died and went to heaven is the only way to describe my Great Britain pheasant shoot. This came about in a very odd way. My wife and I took the 70th Anniversary tour of the D-Day Invasion hosted by the Steven Ambrose Historical Tours. The historian assigned to our group happened to be a retired British Army Brigadier General.

We were following along in the footsteps of my uncle who was in World War II in a Civil Affairs regiment. My wife was being awarded a 2-year fellowship at the University of Lancaster. Afterward I would obtain my Ph.D. from Lancaster University, in Lancashire. Afterward we would return home in the Cotswolds and begin the shoot from there. I asked if wearing orange was required.

"Oh no!" But all my upland game outfits wear hunter orange.

"Do I have to wear knickers?!" I was corrected again.

"They are called plus fours and, no, you don't have to wear them."

"May I wear my chaps?"

Yes, he did. Immediately I inquired if there might be a slight chance that I go on such a "shoot" later in the year. My wife was being awarded her Ph.D. from Lancaster University, in Lancashire. Afterward I would love to accompany him on a shoot.

That was the start, after we completed our tour and returned state-side and several hundred e-mails later (to which he exclaimed, "There is more planning for this than "Operation Overlord" a reference to the D-day invasion), our visit and shoot was solidified. My son and daughter-in-law were going to accompany us and, of course, my son wanted to join the shoot. Permission granted. However, in order to make this happen we both had to join the British Association of Shooting and Conservation - BASC (loosely the equivalent of our NRA) in order to obtain our liability insurance.

We were to stay at the Brigadier's home in the Cotswolds and begin the shoot from there. I asked if wearing orange was required.

"Right, yes," he said grudgingly.

Well, I did want to fit in. I warned my son about dressing warmly and wearing the proper boots.

"I'm covered dad." OK. I didn't push it.

The Brigadier's home was lovely of course, and after drinks his wife fixed an incredible dinner—duck breast. After dinner we went to the study to prepare the shotguns. They were locked up and then removed from the safe, my son chose the Beretta, and I chose a beautiful old field gun. Shot bags were prepped. We were ready for an up and early quick breakfast the next morning.

Off we went in his little SUV with his two dogs, a Springer and the other from a good family. We arrived at a 1000 acre horse estate that the owner lets for hunting (not quite Downton Abby, but close) , corrected, "Shoot, dear boy" not hunt!

"We don't do that here," I was told, and of course, was immediately embarrassed—bad form, apparently. I finally got a couple of birds... 

"I'm used to "hunting" pheasant with a couple of my buddies and their dog.....dog points. ...shake the bush... pheasant flushes... pheasant is shot... dog retrieves... bird gets bagged... done deal.

"We don't do that here," I was told, and of course, was immediately embarrassed—bad form, apparently. I finally got a couple of birds...
and started to walk over to retrieve. Nope, that’s the job of the retrievers with their beautiful black labs. OK round one over—both my son and I did finally score some hits.

Back to the estate and another gathering and imbibing of more port and small sausages. What’s the following is the answer from our host, the Brigadier:

“‘You hang our game as it brings out the real taste of game. Obviously in a hot climate you cannot do that as the birds get high and covered in flies very quickly, but you would lose the real “gamey” taste. Too many people here don’t hang their game long enough and quite honestly a pheasant then tastes exactly like a chicken. Rule of thumb we hang our pheasants, partridges, duck et al for at least 7 days - during very cold weather, which we have been having here lately, (this was in December) we hang them for 10 days or even longer. The exception here in UK is grouse when they are shot in August, which is usually a hot or warm month. They are then plucked the same day or if you have a fly proof game larder a day or two later. The snobs say that the birds should be cooked rare as this brings out the same “gamey” taste, but personally I don’t like game rare and bloody to eat!”

No “first blood” here. He said politely indicated that it was my bird, then I insisted it was his bird, then he said it was our bird, but we couldn’t retrieve it.

It started to get dark (early) and the hunt, ummm, the shoot was done. Firearms unloaded and case. Back to the manor for our last gathering consisting of tea and cake and, you guessed it, more port. While standing around the fire we re-lived the hunt, ummm, shoot and then I brought them out (I had brought with me my California Hunter Education Orange hats that we give to our Hunter Ed students). I gave one to each of our mates as a souvenir. They had a puzzled look when I handed them out and asked me about the logo on the hat.

“What manner of fowl is this!” They asked. The California Valley quail, I proudly explained our state bird. I even had enough hats for the ladies in the kitchen.

“Lady ladies did all of our preparations, after all!” I also gave some to the retrievers who stayed over. Snap a group picture and the day was done. Our host gave us a small souvenir booklet with the total of the day’s take:

Pheasant – 135
Partridge – 36
Duck – 38

As we started to leave the estate, we noticed the birds were tied to the sides of the game keeper’s pickup truck in pairs to cool. I later found out this is called a brace. Only a few birds went home with the shooters the rest went with the game keeper. We took a brace for our host to give to one of his friends. The maitre d’ hand shake to the game keeper ended the day. Then back in the little SUV where both my son and I held two wet and very tired dogs on our laps as we travelled home. We asked our host about firearm laws and, boy, are we lucky in the U.S. In the U.K. they can only own long arms (no pistols) which must be secured in a fly proof game larder, a day or two after the shoot and the birds, which have not been taken home by the beaters and the guns, are sold to him. They don’t get very much for pheasants or partridges (50 pence…..879 a brace, but more for duck - £3.80…..£6.04 a brace). The Game Keeper is paid a regular salary which he receives throughout the season from the other syndicate members. He pays himself from the monies he receives from the members of the syndicate (roughly £750 per gun per day…..£1185.00) or from the money he receives from the days he lets (a 200 bird let day would cost the man, who took it, £6,500…..£10,270.00). The Shoot Captain runs the day and organizes the guns on the plan which have made in conjunction with the Keeper. There are three teams - the Guns, who obviously shoot and the beaters, who put the game over the guns to be shot at. They are organized and paid by the Game Keeper. As a rule of thumb each beater receives the equivalent amount of an agricultural worker - around £25…£39.50 - £30…£47.40 per day plus of course any fuel money. The Picker Uppers (The Retrievers) are also paid the same rate. Their responsibility is to ensure that all the game, which has been shot, is picked up, and any wounded game is killed off humanely and brought back.”

All in all a wonderful experience and glad my son and I were able to participate I don’t know, but thinking of going maybe next time a Stag" hunt??!
Scout Bozman’s Amazing Weekend

By: Scout Bozman

It was Monday August 24, 2015. My dad had just gotten home from work. We sat on the couch and talked and then he asked me if I wanted to go hunting for elk this Friday, of course I said “yes.” I was beyond excited. We went through our week. Friday came fast, as we drove to meet our good friend Doug who had made the hunt possible. I thought myself, what happens if I miss? I soon got that out of my head when we met Doug, and drove to the rancher’s house, his name was Alex.

So after we talked and got my tag, all of us went down to a watering hole. It was about 6:30 and a herd of 15 elk which included 1 bull and the rest were cows. We looked at the bull but it had broken horn. He had 7 points on his right side but only 2 on his left side. The reason why he had so many cows was because the elk were still in the rut. We all got to hear him bugle and see the cows stand and play fight. I decided to let the bull go. It was the end of that day, so we went back to camp. We got to camp at 9:00pm and went to sleep.

My dad woke me up at 3:30am. It was the second day of the hunt. That day we sat in the blind for 14 hours waiting and the only thing we saw were a few coyotes, squirrels, and the most interesting thing was a buck antelope. The elk (all 200 of them) stayed on the DFW land and never left. We got back camp at about the same time.

Then came the third day we decided to go to a different place that Alex called the wild lands. We drove around for about 20 minutes to get a picture of the land and boundaries. We started glassing and saw a solid 6 by 6 bull. The only problem was the uphill battle we were facing to put a stalk on him without scaring him. So we began to sneak through the bushes, tumbleweeds and slide past the resident rattlesnakes. We got to a spot where we could see him clearly and within range. We studied him and decided to pass on him (it was tough to leave him). When we started to walk away he did not think twice, he bolted and that was the last we saw him. We went back to the blind and sat for another 4 hours until it was time to go.

I thought that was it but, then my Dad talked to Alex and set it up to come back the following weekend. So my Dad and I went through another week of school and work. All I kept thinking was that I hoped it hadn’t been a mistake passing that 6x6.

It was Saturday of the second weekend, and we did not have our good friend Doug with us. But we did the same thing. We went to a watering hole and sat. All we saw were elk, lots of them, but there was one problem, they were not close enough, they were all too far out. We saw the same antelope as we did the weekend before. We sat there for the rest of the day and it was time for us to go back to camp.

On Sunday we woke up at 3:30am and left to go to the blind. We got to the blind about 5:00am and started glassing. We sat for about an hour. Nothing was close. Then we decided to go back to where we saw the 6 by 6. On our way, we spotted a herd of elk on Alex’s land so we stopped to take a look.

In the herd was a huge bull. So I said that’s the one.

They were coming out of the wild lands and heading for the fallow fields. My Dad and I ran to get in front of them before they got to the open field. We got about 350 yards from them and they were still coming. We set up my shooting sticks and got steady. At about 280 yards the lead cow spotted us and turned away but the bull kept coming. We made a cow call and he stopped. My Dad said “Take him now”. I shot 2 times. Then he started staggering. My Dad said “Keep shooting until he is on the ground”. 2 more shots and he stopped then fell. I was so happy. When I walked up to the bull I couldn’t believe how huge he was. How are we ever going to get him in our truck? The measurements were 6 x 6, over 40 inches wide, with 15 inch fronts. We gutted it and tried to put it in the truck but it was too heavy. We called the rancher, Alex. He came with a welding truck that had a mini crane and we put the bull into the back of the truck. We went to our friend’s ranch to skin and quarter the elk. He let us use his walk-in cooler.

It was about 3:00 in the afternoon we had just eaten lunch and our friend Garett (it was his ranch and the only ranch we took the elk to) asked if we wanted to go check out new parcel of land that they had just gained hunting rights on. Garret said if we saw a deer or pig I could shoot it since I had the tags for both. We had just gotten on the ranch when we spooked a nice 3 by 3 buck. We drove up to a hill top and started glassing. The day was coming to an end (about 5pm). We got to our final spotting point and saw 4 does and Garet said he saw a buck. We marked the spot and started our stalk. We got to the valley he was in and sat for about 10 minutes. We could see him through the trees but there were too many branches for a shot. Finally the buck started walking and poked his head out of the trees but, his shoulder was covered by a tree. He made one more step, I shot and hit right in the shoulder.

The buck was a huge fork (over 20 inches wide with 14 inch forks) and my Dad said he was the biggest he had ever seen. We saw a group of pigs that evening but, we did not shoot one because my Dad said he was done dragging, gutting, and skinning.

This weekend was an amazing experience. I got my first bull elk and a trophy blacktail deer all on the same day!

I would like to thank some special people. My dad for taking me on this trip. Garret, for helping me get my deer. Doug, for thinking of me and making this hunt possible. Alex, for letting us hunt his ranch.

Department of Fish and Wildlife

24 Hunter Education Quarterly

Department of Fish and Wildlife
What a Week

By: Scott Braly

This story starts about fifteen years ago. My son, Graham is now 17 years old. I started taking Graham pheasant hunting with me about that time, even carrying him in a backpack for the first year or two. Since then he joined me on dove hunts, duck hunts, deer hunts, squirrel hunts, and snipe hunts. We did not always bring home game, but we always made it an adventure. Graham took his Hunter Safety Course when he was twelve and we started applying for the limited draw apprentice deer, antelope, and elk hunts. Graham finally drew a tag for the J-4 deer hunt when he was 15. We had a great hunt and he took his first buck on that hunt. But he never drew an elk or antelope hunt.

Until last year a young hunter was considered an adult hunter once they turned 16. That recently changed so that young hunters are considered juniors until they turn 18 years old. So, Graham, and other 17 year olds had one more chance to put in for the special apprentice only hunts. We filled out Graham’s applications in May, and then crossed our fingers, and waited. About three weeks later the draw results were released. We held our breath as Graham’s cousin, Shaun checked the results online. We could not believe Graham’s good luck. He had drawn both a Spike Bull Elk tag for Grizzly Island, and Pronghorn Antelope tag for the Surprise Valley zone.

Now the planning, preparations, scouting, and anticipation started. We had hunted Grizzly Island many times over the years for waterfowl and pheasant, and one of my closest friends is Pat Graham, who works with the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and is the area manager at Grizzly. Pat and I met when we were students at Humboldt State University in the 1980’s. Pat and his crew are very helpful to all of their hunters, and I knew he would help us with all the information we needed to have a great hunt.

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We knew a whole lot less about Antelope and Surprise Valley. We called Richard Schinn, a DFW Biologist in that area, and he was very helpful with lots of information. We ordered several maps of the area and spent many hours going over them, as well as pre-scouting on Google Earth. In July Graham’s Grandma, Carolyn joined us on a scouting trip to Surprise Valley, which is in the far Northeast corner of the state. We had a great stay in Cedarville, and saw quite a few antelope in the hunting area. We headed home having a good idea of where we wanted to focus our efforts during Graham’s hunt.

A few weeks later Graham’s Grandpa Jack joined us when we went over to visit with family friends John and Mike Edgar. Jack, John, and Mike are lifetime friends and hunters, and probably have over 180 years of hunting experience between them. We looked over maps for hours and shared hunting stories. John and Mike hunted Antelope in Surprise Valley over 35 years ago, and had lots of good information for us. It was a memorable day spent with great people, and left us even more excited about the adventures ahead.

Finally the time arrived. The elk hunt ran for only four days and the antelope hunt period was nine days long, and they overlapped. Since we did not want to miss school, Graham is a senior in high school, and I teach high school, we would be limited to hunting weekends, the first for elk, and the second for antelope.

On Wednesday afternoon we drove to Grizzly Island for the 5:00 mandatory safety and orientation meeting that takes place before each of the elk hunts. Pat, his area biologist, Orlando, and game warden Sean Kenady did a great job reviewing safety, regulations, and letting the hunters and their chaperones know what to expect on the hunt. We headed home after the meeting, ready to return in a few days.

We woke early the next morning, ate a light breakfast, and headed out. We drove a short distance and parked the truck near a locked gate. We hoped the herd of bulls we had seen the evening before would still be in the same area. As we walked in the cool morning darkness we were soon hearing bulls bugle in the distance. After about a mile we crossed a ditch to the west, and hunkered down to wait for dawn to come. There was a pretty stiff breeze blowing out of the west, which is what we were hoping for. We slipped into a long ditch that went in the direction of the elk, bisecting two very large, open fields. We were hoping the well vegetated ditch would give us enough cover to get within range of the herd. As we crouched and crawled our way down the ditch, Graham in the lead, we started to see elk crossing the ditch far ahead of us, all crossing from right to left. Each time this happened we stopped and let the animal move on, so that it would not spot us and alert the herd.

We arrived back at grizzly Island late in the afternoon a few days later. We spent the last few hours of light driving through the area and scouting for the next day, and saw lots of elk. We could have hunted that evening since the hunt period was open, but we both wanted to wait until the next day. We did find a distant herd of about twenty bulls, including several spikes that Graham wanted to try for the next morning. After a good dinner, we turned in for the night thinking and talking about elk, and dreaming about what adventures the next day would bring.

Finally we reached the spot the elk were crossing the ditch, and by then most of them had moved off and bedded down out of range. Except that is for two 6x6 bulls that decided to bed down within fifty yards of the ditch. Graham’s tag was for a spike bull only,
but it was amazing to be that close to two large bulls. We remained hidden and watched them or quite a while. A little while later they stood up and started mock-fighting with each other, clacking their antlers together, and continuing to bugle. Finally the bulls spotted us, stared, and then moved off in the direction of the main herd. But they did not run or really spook.

Graham and I talked quietly about our options. We decided to back off down the ditch a ways to get the breeze more in our favor, and then try to belly crawl across the field to get closer to the bedded herd. We made it about half way through the field before the elk started to get nervous and stand up. They started to move off. There were twenty five animals in the herd, all bulls, and 9 of them were spikes. Graham picked the one he wanted to try for, and then it was a matter of waiting for a good shot with his .308 resting on our daypack. Finally the bull cleared the others and presented a broadside shot. The rangefinder read 130 yards.

At the shot the bull went down. What an experience! We tagged the bull, took pictures, and then contacted Pat and Orlando. They help hunters transport their elk back to the elk camp, where they take various scientific measurements, and other data. Then they let the hunters dress, skin, bag, and ready the elk for transport home. We were able to drop the elk off at the butcher and be home by evening.

Six days later we were leaving for Graham's antelope hunt. After about a five hour drive up highway 395 we arrived in Cedarville and checked into the Sunrise Motel. We unpacked a few things for the morning, set our hunting clothes out, and went to bed.

The alarm went off at 4:00, and soon we were driving north to the area around Fee Reservoir. We had seen quite a few antelope in this area during our scouting trip. It was still dark when we arrived at the dry lake. But soon the sun was peeking over the eastern horizon and we started scanning the distance with binoculars and spotting scope. We spotted a sizable herd of antelope over a mile away, towards the south end of the lake bed. We formulated a plan to get closer and headed in that direction. The wind was not ideal for the stalk, but there was an old berm-like dam about 6 feet high that ran the width of the dry lakebed. We planned the stalk so that the dam was between us and the antelope, providing excellent cover. We would not know if they were still there until we peeked over the berm. Along the way we walked through a group of about thirty Sage Grouse. The birds were not very concerned about us, and it was neat being that close to them. When were about 20 feet from being able to peek over the berm and see if the herd was still there, we heard a distant whistle. We stopped in our tracks and looked in the direction of the sound. About 400 yards away, on the edge of the Juniper trees there were two other camouflaged hunters. We had not seen them before this, but they were obviously hunting the same group of animals, and they were there first, so we backed out of the area, without peeking over the berm.

Graham held his breath and squeezed the trigger.

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We then went back to the north end of the lake bed and set out walking down an old jeep road in an area we had seen a good sized herd in July.

Before long we spotted them. There were about ten does in the group, and two bucks, one really nice one, and one pretty young. Graham’s tag was an either sex tag, but he had decided that he wanted to try for a buck.

The herd was well over 300 yards away, and we wanted to get closer. As we moved slowly through the scattered Junipers, the larger buck suddenly took off after the younger one. They streaked by at about 200 yards, dust clouds curling up behind them, the bigger buck grunting loudly the whole time as he chased the younger one out of the area. We sat down under a Juniper, giving Graham a good steady shooting rest, hoping the larger buck would walk back slowly to rejoin his does after chasing off the younger buck. A few minutes later he came back just as we hoped he would, but never slowed down until he reached the does. By then the does had spotted us, and the whole group started heading off towards Nevada.
Next we decided to head a few miles further to the north, and try an area that we had not scouted in July. The area looked really good and soon we started seeing antelope.

A distant group over a mile away, in the middle of another dry lake bed, with no concealing cover at all. A young buck bedded by himself on a distant knob about half mile away. We decided to keep looking. It was exciting seeing so many animals, and we knew that if we were patient, and kept working at it, opportunities would come.

About 10:00 we spotted another herd off to the west about a mile away. A look through the binoculars revealed one buck and five does, and when we studied them through the spotting scope the buck looked really nice. They were feeding at the upper end of a long, narrow valley, with a low ridge paralleling the entire length of the valley. The ridge had a good scattering of Junipers and rock outcropping along its length. We took one more look at the animals, backed off to the other side of the low ridge, and started moving towards them, picking our way through the sage, rocks, and junipers. Graham in the lead. We jumped several Cottontails, and flushed a covey of Valley Quail along the way. The stalk was on, but we judged the distance we were covering correctly, it should get us into good range of the antelope, assuming they did not move off in the meantime. The crosswind was high at 100 yards, anticipating a longer shot than we are used to with deer. The Barnes Vortex all copper loads had proven very accurate in Graham’s .308. The buck was broadside, clear of the does, and Graham said he felt good and steady. At the mid-range, I had a shot that would put the bucket in cold storage at a grocery store in town, ate a nice dinner, and went to bed early.

The next morning we got the buck out of cold storage, bought a couple of big and tasty maple bars at the grocery store in town, ate a nice dinner, hung the buck in cold storage at a grocery store in town, ate a nice dinner, and went to bed early.

Neither of us wanted the day to end, but headed back to Cedarville in the mid-afternoon. We had worked at it, and finally got in our 20 hours a year in Hunter Ed.

The day just kept getting better and better.

After a nice tailgate lunch, we went for a short walk to look for obsidian, while the buck continued to cool in the shade of the juniper. While we were looking for obsidian, we looked up to see another really nice buck and doe antelope running towards us through the trees. The buck was grunting the whole way. They stopped about 30 yards away and stared at us for a moment before running off in the other direction. Graham and I just looked at each other in disbelief.
S.O.- So what is in store for you now?

R.G.- I have accepted the position of Legislative Director with the California Rifle and Pistol Association. This is a unique opportunity I couldn’t pass up. It will allow me to be an advocate for hunters and Hunter rights from another forum. CRPA are big supporters of Hunter rights and legislation in California I’m looking forward to being part of that team and continuing to fight for what I believe in with the voice while I have one left. I hope to continue to have the opportunity to work with California’s hunter education instructors statewide and keep them apprised of regulatory actions that concern them.

S.O.- What are you going to miss the most?

R.G.- Being the leader of something I really believed in! I’m going to miss supervising a staff of the most dedicated state employees ever known. I never considered one of them a subordinate or even coworker… they were family… family that never failed to make me proud!

Well Roy, you left an impressionable mark on the program for sure. We who remain will try to continue the passion you exuded for our great hunting tradition. Your leadership and caring will be missed by those of us who worked for you and those who worked with you. We wish you many successes on your future endeavors.

Good luck from us all.
Sadly, veteran CDFG Game Warden, Alan Weingarten lost his battle with cancer this afternoon. If you fished the American River much at all in the last twenty years, you knew Alan and if you didn’t know him, you missed out on a great opportunity—

Alan was a man’s man, short of stature but strong of will and heart...

After graduating from high school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served our country facing combat in the Falkland Islands and later, in Grenada.

Alan was tough as nails but he also had a kind heart towards worthy people and a good head on his shoulders and cared a great deal about our planet and its fish and wildlife resources.

Alan went to college and studied marine biology and earned his master’s degree with a thesis on marine phyiology (algae). He worked as a scientific aid for CDFG, conducting surveys and biological assessment of our local sturgeon populations. He worked his way up the ladder, paid his dues and eventually graduated from the CDFG Officers Academy.

He spent the better part of the last twenty years as a game warden, protecting what he loved (the fish and wildlife of the Sac/SJ Delta and the American River Parkway). During that 20 years, he put himself in more precarious and often life-threatening situations than most folks see on television... He always had wild stories to tell about his contacts with shady characters in way out places in the dark.

On the river, I always looked forward to seeing Alan because his presence kept the shady-bags away and kept the semi-shady people semi-honest (at least for the day).

He loved the resource and he loved his job. I’ve met few people, and never another warden, who cared as much about protecting our salmon and steelhead runs and who actually immersed themselves in the resource as intimately as Alan did.

Many things set Alan apart from your ‘typical’ game warden:

He wasn’t petty and would issue citations (or not) commensurate with his perception of an angler’s intent. He wasn’t a quota guy trying to scratch tickets to make a name for himself. If a guy screwed up and overlooked something or simply didn’t know... Alan was perceptive enough to know this and would issue a warning and an explanation of why the regulation was important... but bull----ers liars, play-dumb-ers, and those deceitful or disdainful (towards the resource or towards him) would get a big, fat ticket and a ______ grin.

His two deal-breakers (and rightfully so...) were poachers and litter-bugs.

We all knew Alan as the camouflaged-phantom. I can’t count the number of times I was standing there fishing and out of nowhere comes a voice from the levee directly above me. “Hey Mark! How’s the fishing?” or I’d get a text from Alan about the fish I’d just caught and released and then he would text back, “you DO see me on the bluff up here right??” “No Alan, I can hardly see to tie a knot.” and I’d squint and look up and see what I couldn’t see but knew was my camo’d warden buddy looking through a Leopold spotting scope.

Dedicated To:

Alan Weingarten

We lost a great game warden and one hell of a man today~;

Story originally submitted to Klene’s American Fly Fishing Co. Forum by Member “Steelies”/2603

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Hunter Education Quarterly 35
Alan was a people's person and smart enough to know that the best way to protect a resource was to REALLY get to know the guys and gals using it and turn us in to a resource for information. He freely gave out his phone number to the regulars on the river and encouraged us to call him anytime we saw someone abusing the fisheries. I would bet my ass that Alan got more calls from anglers and other recreationists on our river than the whole Cal-Tip hotline staff during any given salmon/steelhead season and why? because HE would actually answer and do his best to get there or send someone who could get there and deal with the situation at hand.

Sometimes there was a touch of gray in that fine line between friendship and professional obligation with Alan but he always made himself available to you if you sought him out and I always appreciated that about him.

What started as a mild melanoma and subsequent carcinoma from over exposure to sunlight, quickly advanced to life-threatening cancer. We thought/hoped he had it whooped when, after a several month hiatus, he resumed his duties as game warden on the river this October. Admittedly, he didn't look so good when he first returned but when I saw him in January, he seemed to get color and composure back in his face and he had a spring in his step. It was great to have him back for the upcoming steelhead season. It was great to have him back, period!

On February 20, Alan called me and in a rather sedate voice told me he was calling to let me know he would “be out of commission for a while” and that he had taken a turn for the worse and that the cancer had spread to his liver... He told me he'd enjoyed our friendship over the years and appreciated my ethics as an angler and caretaker of the river. It meant a lot to me.

I told him about my uncle who had been diagnosed with terminal (one month to live) cancer and how he took his kids on a cruise and refused chemo/radiation but then had a change of heart and went through that hell again and came out of it and is still alive 5 years later... What else do you tell a guy who's dying? I told him thanks for all he's done for the river I care so much about and I told him I wanted to see him before I couldn't. I told him that I loved him and I hung up the phone.

Today, I got two phone messages; one from another warden and one from a mutual friend and I didn't need to call back to know...

Alan has left for Valhalla and he won't be coming back to this place.

It's heartbreaking on so many levels. He wasn't even 60 years old... His wife, daughter and son will miss him. The river will miss him and we all will miss him. All the wardens in the region... Hell! all the wardens in the STATE couldn't replace the passion with which Alan protected our local river and its fisheries.

Alan was a rare breed, indeed.

He stuck around long enough to at least see the beginning of the end of the drought and maybe, just maybe, the falling tears will water and sow the seeds for a new beginning and...
sail his Viking ship to new lands...
to fight the horde, sing and cry, “Valhalla I am coming!”

I hear its pretty damned sweet in Valhalla–

So all you friends: Go wet a line and catch a pretty one, hold her up to the sky and say...

Thanks Alan!
I love you man~
Mary Annette Bradley, 61, passed away peacefully in her home on Nov. 6, 2015.

Mary was born in Nebraska City, Neb., on March 16, 1954, to John and Margret Gaines Bradley. In August 1969, the Bradley family made Blythe their new home. She attended Palo Verde High School and was a member of the Class of 1972. Mary was employed at Yellow Mart Stores for the past 41 years and earned the nickname “Yellow Mart Mary.”

Mary loved the outdoors and all types of sporting activities. She supported local youth sports activities and it was not uncommon to see her on the sidelines cheering on any team, no matter the sport.

As a child, Mary learned to hunt and fish. She made it her goal to spend every opportunity she had enjoying the outdoors.

One of her greatest joys was going hunting and/or fishing in exotic places such as Africa, Argentina, Fiji, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Mexico and Canada.

She loved to travel, see new places, try new things, buy souvenirs for those she loved, take lots of pictures and eat the local cuisine. She would always say “How do you know if you like it, if you don’t try it.”

Always one to be involved using her organizational skills, Mary was a member of the Palo Verde Valley Community Improvement Fund, Blythe Elks Lodge, Blythe Chamber of Commerce, Ducks Unlimited, Blythe Little League, and many, many more organizations.

Holding true to her roots and wanting to pass on her love of the outdoors to future generations, Mary became a Hunter Safety Instructor and was honored by the California Department of Fish and Game as Instructor of the Year.

Obituary

Mary Bradley

HEI#1382

“As you can see, I had mine already! The moral of the story is - Get those Preference Points!”

-Steve Bennett

HEI# 0459

Cady Mountains
Frank Alessio, 2015’s HEI of the Year, runs one of those old-school classes and is one of the hardest-working HEIs this side of Sacramento. Certified in 1997 after assisting another HEI with classes for years, he’s on the books as having taught 199 classes that placed certificates in the hands of 5,549 students—that’s the population of some towns!

He has donated 1,639 hours of his time to the Hunter Education Program, much of it spent with his co-instructor David Premetz.

“Frank is a dedicated individual who tirelessly gives of his time and energy to promote Hunter Education,” said Premetz. “He personifies the true spirit of ‘Passing on the Tradition.’ I cannot think of a more deserving individual for this prestigious honor than Frank.”

Congratulations, Frank!