In Memory of Blaine Foltz

The Virginia Trappers Association (VTA) lost one of their icons on November 4, 2017. Blaine Foltz, 82, of Spotsylvania, VA, went to be with his Lord. In the 1990-2000s, Blaine served as the VTA President for nine years and District Director for four years. In 2011, he was recognized for his service to the VTA with his induction in the VTA Hall of Fame. He spent his last few days with us reminiscing about past VTA Conventions and trapline exploits; he still talked of the upcoming season and his hope to be on the trapline one more time. Blaine was a man of many talents and hobbies however, trapping was his passion. He and his brother-in-law trapping partner, Arnold Galyen spent nearly 40 years on the trapline. His white van, tagged TRAPPER1, was frequently seen parked on the shoulder of Interstate 95 and downtown Fredericksburg while trapping beaver for VDOT and the City of Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock Canal. Blaine was a meticulous fur handler and was presented numerous Top Lot awards from NAFA. His fur shed was always open to teach and help other trappers skin and flesh their catch.

After “hitting them hard” on the trapline, Blaine had a favorite quote, “nature abhors a vacuum”. Whether the statement about nature is true or not, it’s certainly true that his departure leaves a void in our family.
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* District 8 is vacant

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VTA Redistricting Plan Approved

New VTA District Map Effective April 1, 2018

Results of the 2017 VTA Officers Election

The VTA Nominating Committee met on October 1, 2017 to count and certify the ballots received from the September 2017 election. The members of the committee were Art Foltz (Chair), Bob Graham, James Jackson, and Darren Schenemann.

The Nominating Committee issued 376 ballots to the voting membership. Below are the ballot return statistics;
- 121 ballots were returned and counted
- 3 ballots were returned as undeliverable
- 0 ballots discounted
- 1 ballot returned unfilled with a note reporting member deceased

The ballot check-sheet, signed by the committee members, indicating the number of votes for each candidate and other election records will be maintained in the VTA archive files.

The Nominating Committee certifies the following VTA members to the Executive Board for the 2018-2020 term. The number of votes recorded for each nominee is provided. All nominees ran unopposed.

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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Josh Fitchett</td>
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VTA Scholarship Program

PAGE MORAN, BILL KINDERVATER, CURTIS WILBURN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Are you or someone you know a high school student in their senior year, a high school graduate or currently enrolled in an undergraduate program and maintaining a 3.0 GPA? This Scholarship program is for residents of Virginia or Maryland enrolling at a Virginia or Maryland College or University and whose declared major field of study will be in the related fields of Wildlife Management.

Applications must be filled out completely and returned to the Virginia Trappers Association Training Coordinator’s office no later than March 31st of the calendar year of application. Any applicant who has previously received this award may re-apply. The selection committee will use, but not be limited to, the following criteria when reviewing an application.

- financial need
- academic qualifications
- extracurricular involvement
- field of study
- community involvement.

The application package should consist of the Application page, transcripts from current and all previously attended secondary schools and college or university(ies) as applicable, one academic reference (form provided), two character references (form provided), financial statement (form provided) and an essay. This essay will provide the committee with an example of the applicant’s writing skills, the academic commitment of the applicant to his or her chosen profession, and what he or she sees as his or her contribution to the chosen field. Related forms can be found at http://virginiatrappers.com and click on the VTA Scholarship Program link.

Please send your application and related materials to:

Virginia Trappers Association Scholarship Committee
c/o Norman Pierce Training Coordinator
315 Harpers Bridge Road
Rawlings, VA 23876

District Report

A district meeting was held on October 1, 2017 in Spotsylvania County. Members of District 7, District 8, and the other counties comprising of the new District 4 were present. There were 21 people in attendance.

After the meal, we started the business portion of the meeting. About 50 percent of the group attended the July Convention so we covered the Board of Director and General Membership meeting minutes. At the end of the meeting we discussed the need for a District Director for the new District 4. James Jackson from King George volunteered to be the new Director. A call for other nominees and an announcement of the District 4 Director election at the next meeting (sometime in March or April 2018) will be posted in the VTA newsletter.

-Art Foltz
Outreach Report

A VTA display was presented at the annual Fredericksburg Izaak Walton League (IWL) Dog Mart on 30 Sep 2017. This event is one of our recurring venues for community outreach. This years event wasn’t as well attended as past events due to a lack of advertising by the IWL. The low attendance was addressed by a number of vendors and the IWL agreed to better promote the event in the future.

The IWL provides the VTA a prime location for our display; the entrance pavilion, adjacent to the Sheriff Canine demonstrations.

We had a good number of visits to our display and a large number of youth. A 110 bodygrip firing game was introduced at this event and succeeded in keeping visitors at our display long enough to allow discussion on the benefits of trapping.

The Fredericksburg Chapter of IWL has been a longtime friend of the VTA; providing their facilities for trapper training events and hosting trapping briefings to their membership. The VTA should continue supporting the annual Dog Mart.

- Art Foltz

VTA FUR SALE MARCH 10, 2018 AT 8:30 A.M.
17218 TAYLORS CREEK ROAD; MONTPELIER, VA 23193

Operating Procedures
All persons selling their fur at the auction (Sellers) and all persons shipping their fur via NAFA (Shippers) must register at the time of check-in. Fees: All Sellers and Shippers; payable upon registration check-in

- $10.00 VTA members with current membership card
- $20.00 Non-VTA members

All Sellers and Shippers will receive a receipt when checking in. The NAFA representative will not accept any fur without a check-in receipt.

Early Registration will begin 9:00 A.M. Thursday, March 2nd and close at 6:00 P.M. Thursday, March 9th.
Buyers will be assigned their tables at 7:00 A.M.
Pre-registered Sellers will be assigned to their table(s) at 7:30 A.M. Sellers 1-15 (est.) will be assigned to the first round.
Unregistered Sellers will be allowed to register after 8:30 A.M.
The first round of the auction will begin 30 minutes after the last fur is in place on the tables or at 8:45, whichever comes first.
Pre-registered Sellers not answering the call at 7:30 – 7:45 will lose their position and be reassigned a number at the end of the line.
To pre-register or for more information contact Josh Fitchett at 804-836-5220.

DISTRICT 1 FUR SALE MARCH 17, 2018 at 8:00 A.M.
Live Stock Market; Wytheville, VA
To pre-register contact Travis Bandy at 276-210-7105
It was finally here. After 13 months of anticipation the time had finally come. Snacks and water packed. Thermacell primed with a fresh mosquito repellent refill. My weapon of choice, a .54 caliber flintlock, loaded and ready for what lay ahead. Camouflage from head to toe, and covered in scent away, we step into an adventure that won’t soon be forgotten. A black bear hunt in the Great North Woods.

For those that don’t know, Steven Wilcox donated a week-long bear hunt with lodging provided, at the 2016 state trappers convention. I was lucky enough to place the winning bid. Steven, is the owner of Birch Hill Camps in Wytopitlock, Maine. Wytopitlock is in Aroostook County, approximately 30 miles from the Canadian Border. The way that I understand the story is this.... A few years ago, the anti-hunters/trappers proposed a bill to eliminate bear hunting and trapping in the state of Maine. The Maine trappers and hunting guides fought back as hard as they could with limited funding. They reached out to other organizations such as ours, and with the help of these sister organizations, were able to fight and win. As a thank you for all the help, Steven has been donating hunts to several states. So, in turn, he is helping those states raise money for future issues that may arise. All of those things have reiterated to me how important it is for us as outdoorsman to stick together. No matter the differences in our passions for the woods, whether its trapping, hunting with hounds, waterfowl, or fishing, we have to stand together against those that wish to tear our rights away. Now off my soapbox and back to Maine...

I purchased the trip in July of 2016, and planned to go late August of 2017. I was able to take my 11-year-old son, Richard, since his school starts after Labor Day. There seemed to be a few obstacles here and there in planning a trip around work, school, family, and the military (they especially do not care about your plans). But Steven was great throughout planning and we had our dates set.

Richard and I left home on a Monday morning at 3 am. It took us about 17 hours to reach the cabin. We did stop for a good meal once, a few fill ups, and a stop at the grocery store nearest camp (30 miles away!) to stock up for the week. I will admit also to needing to stop in New Jersey for a quick nap in the parking lot of a rest stop. Since Richard slept those first 5 hours of the ride he just couldn’t understand why I needed to rest my eyes! The trip up was uneventful, which is what you want on I95 up the east coast. For those that have driven the George Washington Bridge in New York, you might not believe this, but we made it right through with barely a slow down! There really is a first time for everything, and a second, evidently, because we did it on the way home too.

When we arrived at the Cabin Steven came down and gave us the rundown of how he envisioned the week going, showed us around the cabin, and pointed us to some fishing holes. The plan was to fish the mornings and hunt later in the day, since bear primarily move in the evenings. He told us about a few areas we would be hunting and brought his camera with some awesome game camera pictures of those areas. We were pretty beat from the road so off to bed we were happy to go.

Up early the next morning and down to the river! The river was low and the fishing wasn’t spectacular, but we did catch a few smallmouths. The fish caught weren’t nearly as memorable as the scenery. Words can’t really describe the beauty. The wide, slow moving river flowed over stones as big as boulders. Flowed might not even be the right word, meandered maybe, so slow it looked still. No wind on that day so it was like a mirror, a sheet of reflective glass to double the beauty. Just so still it reflected the images above. Deep blue skies bordered with blue spruce and hemlock as far as you can see. Pure untamed country, with the occasional bald eagle to remind you that it is truly wild in the far north.

On to hunting the bear! Steven took us in to the site just after lunch and set us up in a natural looking blind he had put together. It was wide enough for Richard and me to sit side by side in folding chairs comfortably. Fairly well hidden in the brush we wait. The bear did not come on this day. But, we sure enjoyed those woods, like we do every time we are lucky enough to be in them. Now, the Maine woods are a lot different than our Virginia woods. First off, you can’t see like you can here, the hardwoods are virtually nonexistent. It’s almost all spruce, fir and hemlock. There are lanes cut for seeing and shooting but past that you won’t get any 100 plus yard sightings really. The biggest difference though is the sound. There isn’t any. I mean quiet. Sitting in the Maine woods was the quietest I have ever heard this earth. There aren’t any squirrels or tweety birds making a ruckus in any leaves so it is just plain peaceful. When the mice aren’t moving, and the breeze pauses there isn’t a sound for 100 miles it seems.

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Back at the cabin in the evenings were great. Just a father and son enjoying being away from rest of the world. No signal on the cell phone, no cable TV, no internet. Just simple. We ate like boys ought to eat on a hunting trip, grilled meat and beans with rolls almost daily. Fresh eggs brought from home and thick cut bacon for breakfast. I cooked, he cleaned. We lived simply and well for that week and both enjoyed it immensely.

That was our routine. Breakfast, fishing, lunch, hunt, dinner and relax, repeat. Some fish were caught, lots of laughs had and memories made. Lessons were learned along the way as well. For instance, do not forget your bug spray, the mosquitos are terrible on the river. Or your thermacell for the woods. Do not feed a young boy beans every day for a week either, that I do regret!

We saw a sow with a pair of cubs on our third day of hunting. It is not legal nor ethical to shoot sows with cubs or the cubs themselves, but we had a front row seat, at less than 40 yards on the ground, at just how bears move and play. Very exciting to watch and I got some pictures as well. It was the first time either of us had seen bears in the wild. For the fourth and fifth days of hunting we were in a different location than the first three days. The fourth day we saw nothing but the fifth and final day of hunting, with anticipation at an all-time high, we spotted a bear coming in near dark.

This might sound silly to those who have seen a lot of bear, but from a rookie’s perspective a cub looks like it must weigh 400 pounds until it gets to a known distance, or it gets beside something that you are sure of its size. Needless to say, the bear we spotted turned out to be a cub, and its sibling not far behind. The momma bear stayed farther away and we never got a real good look at her, but at one point she didn’t like something and made a loud huffing noise. This must have been a warning to the cubs because one ran right up a tree, and I mean quick! The other ran to me, as if I called a well-trained dog to my lap. Now, here I am, in the middle of the Great North Woods, with an 11 year old, and not even a hand on my gun with a 70 pound wild black bear cub running full steam at me. No, not near me, not beside me, AT me! What would you do? What should I do? Well, what I did do was nothing. Not a flinch, neither did Richard. I guess all those times deer hunting just took over and since it didn’t know we were there maybe we figured it didn’t need to know. I sure didn’t want to let it know I was there with momma bear nearby! It stopped no more than ten feet in front of us. I guess I will never know why it stopped but I am glad it did. Now that I am home I can think, what would have happened if it ran over us and figured out we were there...? Would momma bear stick up for the cub, or would the cub have just ran off? Who knows? But, what I do know is that something potentially terrifying had just became something bewildering. A bear, ten feet from us in the untamed forest of the north, without a clue we were there. Something I know I will never forget, and I am certain neither will Richard.

So, we didn’t get a bear to bring home, and although, sure, I would have loved to have harvested a black bear in Maine, but in no way, am I disappointed in the trip. What we set out to do was hunt black bear, and we did just that. Hunting is the pursuit. Hunting success isn’t and shouldn’t be defined by the kill of an animal.

The trip was in every way, fantastic. Before going we had never seen a porcupine, or a moose in the wild, now we have. We had never been north of Rhode Island, now we have. Never hunted out of state, never had just a father and son trip, never ate beaver stew, and now we have done all those things and many more, together. I hope Richard can cherish those memories in the same way that I will, and I look forward to making many, many more.

A huge thank you to Steven Wilcox of Birch Hill Camps, Wytopitlock, Maine. He sure didn’t owe the VTA anything but has given a lot, I look forward to seeing him again. A great guide and friend. I truly enjoyed our talks about hunting and trapping, it is a clear passion of his as well.

Happy trapping everyone!

-Josh Bruce
Are you on Facebook? Are you a member of the Virginia Trappers Association - State page? It’s a quick way to be aware of events, news and information about the VTA. You can ask questions and learn about trapping. It’s also a good place to see what people are catching or even share pictures of what you have caught. Join us today!!

Thank YOU!

In 1991 Randy Colvin got me to go to a state trapping convention where he also convinced me to join the VTA, then become a District Director. It has been a very rewarding 26 years. I thought I had retired 4 years ago. But I was needed a year later. Today, January 1, 2018, I have again retired.

To all of you who put up with me for these many years, bless you for your patience. Bless you also for your friendship. You have enriched my life and taught me so much.

Thank you for allowing me to serve the VTA these many years.

Ed Crebbs, Retired (again)