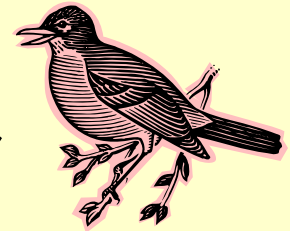




Spring



A L L E G H E N Y C O U N T Y S P O R T S M E N ' S L E A G U E I N C .

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BY: DAN RAGALLER

The membership drive for the new classification of Individual Member in the Allegheny County Sportsmen's League got under way at the Allegheny Sports and Outdoor Show.

The League inducted several new members, one is the first individual youth member.

He is sixteen year old, Kent Nixon. Several of Kent's accomplishments are Highest Honor Roll at his high school, scored 99% in math and science of Terra Nova, member of the National Honor Society, and scored 1250 on his SAT's in ninth grade.

It was felt not to let this young man get away and he was sworn in at the Show.

Other new members are as follows: Carl Becker, John Staffen, Richard Haid.



BY: JACK WALTERS

Conservation awareness is important and can be applied in many areas of everyday life. The home and garden are some of those places.

More Home and Garden
Tips
COMPOSTING

WHAT IS COMPOST?

Compost is a dark, crumbly mixture of decomposed organic matter, such as grass clippings, leaves, twigs, and branches.

HOW DOES COMPOSTING WORK?

Even the first-time composter can make good quality compost. Like



*I give my pledge
as an American to save
and faithfully defend from
waste the national
resources of my
country. . . its soil and
minerals, its forest,
waters, and wildlife*



good cooking, composting is part science, part art. Attention to the following parameters will help you get started.

MATERIALS

Anything that was once alive will naturally decompose. However, some organic wastes should not be composted at home. DO compost these items: grass clippings, leaves, plant stalks, hedge trimmings, old potting soil, twigs, annual weeds without seed heads, vegetable scraps, coffee filters, and tea bags.

Do NOT compost these items: diseased plants, weeds with seed heads, invasive weeds such a quack grass and morning glory, pet feces, dead animals, bread and grains, meat or fish parts, dairy products, grease, cooking oil, or oily foods.

MAKING IT WORK

To prepare compost, organic material, microorganisms, air, water, and a small amount of nitrogen are needed.

Organic material is leaves, grass clippings, etc. that you are trying to decompose. Microorganisms are small forms of plant and animal life, which break down the organic material. A small amount of garden soil or manure provides sufficient microorganisms.

The nitrogen, air, and water provide a favorable environment for the microorganisms to make the compost.

A small amount of nitrogen fertilizer can add sufficient nitrogen to the compost.

You can purchase nitrogen fertilizers at many hardware stores, feed stores, or nurseries.

Air is the only part which cannot be

added in excess. Too much nitrogen can kill microbes; too much water causes insufficient air in the pile.

BIOLOGY

Bacteria are the first to break down plant tissue and are the most numerous and effective compost makers in your compost pile. Fungi and protozoan's soon join the bacteria and, somewhat later in the cycle, centipedes, millipedes, beetles, and worms complete the composting process.

SURFACE AREA

If the microorganisms have more surface area to feed on, the materials will break down faster. Chopping your garden debris with a machete, or using a chipper, shredder, or

Continued page 3

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

lawnmower to shred materials will help them decompose faster.

VOLUME

Compost piles trap heat generated by the activity of millions of microorganisms. A 3-foot by 3-foot by 3-foot compost pile is considered a minimum size for hot, fast composting. Piles wider or taller than 5 feet don't allow enough air to reach the microorganisms at the center.

MOISTURE AND AERATION

The microorganisms in the compost pile function best when the materials are as damp as a wrung-out sponge and have many air passages. Extremes of sun or rain can adversely affect the balance of air and moisture in your pile. The air in the pile is usually used up faster than the moisture, so the materials must be turned or mixed up occasionally to add air that will sustain high temperatures and control odor. Materials can be turned with a pitchfork, rake, or other garden tool.

TIME AND TEMPERATURE

The most efficient decomposing bacteria thrive in temperatures between 110F and 160F. Thus, the hotter the pile, the faster the composting. If you achieve a good balance of carbon and nitrogen, provide lots of surface area within a large volume of material, and maintain adequate moisture and aeration, the temperature will rise over several days.

USES FOR COMPOST

Compost contains nutrients, but it is not a substitute for fertilizers. Compost holds nutrients in the soil until plants can use them, loosens and aerates clay soils, and retains water in sandy soils.

To use as a soil amendment, mix 2 to 5 inches of compost into vegetable and flower gardens each year before planting.

In a potting mixture, add one part compost to two parts commercial potting soil, or make your own mixture by using equal parts of compost and sand or perlite.

As a mulch, spread an inch or two of compost around annual flowers and vegetables, and up to 6 inches around trees and shrubs.

As a top dressing, mix finely sifted compost with sand and sprinkle evenly over lawns.

Source: USDA NRCS



BY: RONALD BACHY

What Can You Do For Your League?

Volunteer organizations thrive when their members volunteer their time and most importantly talents to the organization. The Allegheny County Sportsmen's League is no different.

The ACSL represents over 200,000 sportsmen in Allegheny and surrounding counties and draws upon a very small talent pool to handle this enormous task. It is time to expand the pool. There is a need for a longer, wider and deeper talent pool from which to draw.

Do you have the time to write letters? Do you have the time to call your local Congressional Representatives regarding sportsmen's issues? Do you have the time to volunteer at sportsmen's shows, youth events and an occasional meeting? Do you have a special talent that could help the League?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes", then please consider becoming more active in the ACSL.

Every year the ACSL sponsors the Allegheny Sport, Travel & Outdoor Show. Every year the same small

handful of people staff the ACSL booth. Every year the ACSL sponsors a Youth Day. Every year the same group of people respond to the call for help. Every month the ACSL convenes a regular meeting. Every month the same group of Delegates attend.

It is time for change and the time is now. Every day sportsmen's rights are trampled on the local, state and federal level. What are you doing to preserve your rights? Every year less and less youths learn to hunt and fish? What are you doing to introduce youths to hunting, trapping and fish-

ing? What about conservation? What do you do to protect our wildlife resources, our minerals, our land, our water?

The answers to these questions lie only within you. In your heart you know that you can do more. Whatever it is will be greatly appreciated. We need you and more importantly want you to participate. Please come and join us as we go forward to preserve our traditions for our children and for everyone's children.

Thank you.

BY: MICHAEL CHRISTESON

Springtime is here once again

Its time to think about a wildlife habitat improvements for your property. If you are looking for ways to attract some wildlife around your property, planting of nut or fruit bearing trees are hard to beat.

Late April and May is prime planting time for trees, any time after the last frost has past will ensure there long term survival. There are several sources for obtaining high quality trees from county conservation district, internet / mail order nursery, to a local hardware store or local nursery. The choice of where to buy depends on your budget and needs. If you only need a few trees for your backyard best bet are to buy local where you can handpick the ones you want, typical the price is higher than using the other sources where you get whatever they send. If you need large amounts of trees to replant a timbered over area buying in bulk from mail order is usually the most cost effective way to go.

The choice of what type of tree to plant is depends on what your specific needs are as different nuts and fruit trees produce their fruits from July to the first frost in

Nov. so you have to decide what time of the year you want to attract wildlife to your property.

Choices of fruit trees versus nut trees for your specific application along with other assorted items to consider before purchasing your trees.

Native nut trees such as oak, beech, walnut, hickory, butternut and chestnut typical take many more years before they produce their first crop of nuts depending on type of tree selected. Also a factor to consider is how big nut trees typical get when they mature 40-120 feet tall much bigger than fruit trees that seldom exceed 40 feet tall. Another side benefit of hardwood nut trees is they have a possible future timber or firewood value as well as feeding wildlife.

Depending on the family of nut tree selected this is general guidelines under ideal conditions for them to produce there first crop of nuts and like everything there are exceptions to every rule.

Note this is based on age of the tree

not on the age of tree when purchased, 12-24" tall seedlings are typically one to two year old trees, bought as bare roots stock in packages of 5 or more, obviously the older trees cost much more and are grown in separate planters container but they will produce nuts much sooner.

Most oak trees takes between 15-25 years for their first nut crop, some non native oak species such as saw tooth oak can possibly produce nuts in 5-8 years. Beech, walnuts and other nut trees are in the same range average ages as oaks 15-25 years to produce their first crop of nuts. All of these trees can have a good crop of nuts one year and a bad one next year depending on many environmental factors, other trees such as red oaks and black walnuts only produce nuts every other year.

There is one noticeable exception to nut trees, it's the chestnut tree family, you know, the one mentioned in the Christmas song, "chestnuts roasting on an open fire". Chestnut trees are unique in that people do consume them as well as wildlife relishes them for their sweet tasting nuts.

Continued on page 7

BY: PAUL FEDORKA

Paul W. Fedorka developed his interest in firearms when first being taught to hunt by his father. He is an avid hunter, skeet shooter and enjoys participating in combat pistol, IDPA and re-loading, and has served as a Pennsylvania Deputy State Constable.

He realized his passion for teaching while passing on this knowledge to his own sons. He has served on the boards of several gun clubs and is an active member of the FOAC, IDPA and NRA.

He is now devoting much of his time to teaching others. Paul is a NRA 'Distinguished Expert' in pistol and shotgun marksmanship. NRA Training Counselor Certified to teach NRA Instructors in Rifle, Pistol, Shotgun, Home Firearm Safety, Personal Protection, Reloading and Range Safety Officer.

Paul's teaching philosophy is pretty simple: *Consider what you learn in our classes as a starting point to build upon and practice, practice, practice.* **Remember Repetition Breeds Excellence**

Kim Stolfer is an NRA Training Counselor Certified to teach Instructors in Personal Protection, Rifle, Pistol, Shotgun, and Home Firearms Safety. He has developed, instituted and taught NRA programs at numerous Gun Clubs throughout Pennsylvania. Further, he assisted other clubs in developing and instituting NRA programs. A hunter and active competitor in various shooting sports, such as the DCM, IPSC, Combat Rifle and Pistol, and Silhouette as well as an NRA 'Distinguished Expert' in handgun marksmanship. Kim is also the Chairman (and co-founder), of Firearms Owners Against Crime, a statewide grassroots political action com-

mittee, and Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Allegheny County Sportsmen's League and Vice-Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Pennsylvania Sportsmen's Association. Kim is a member of the American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers (ASLET) and graduate of the Lethal Force Institute. Kim is a veteran of the USMC and an ardent opponent of those who would contravene our Constitutional liberties.

Together with the help of dedicated individuals, they have blocked attacks on many sportsmen's clubs; worked with Pennsylvania policy makers, as well as those of other states, to facilitate Concealed Carry Reciprocity Agreements that will allow law-abiding citizens of those states to lawfully carry concealed firearms. In addition, SAFE instructors have made numerous presentations to legislators on firearms training and safety issues as well as provided



Together in 2004 Paul and Kim formed Shooters Active in Firearms Education (S.A.F.E.) a firearms training organization. Kim and Paul believe that through education and training, we will be able to protect our gun clubs, sportsmen clubs and our second amendment rights.

They work hard every day to keep our heritage alive for us and future generations by training and educating politicians and the public. Kim spends most of his time working with legislators helping to write legislation to protect our gun rights and to stop laws that would violate our second amendment rights.

introductory exposure for elected representatives to actual firearms use.

S.A.F.E. Instructors believe that our greatest resources are our children. Without a well founded education in the basics of firearms safety, the shooting sports as we know them will cease to exist.

S.A.F.E. instructors have developed and implemented firearms safety courses designed just for the youth.

We offer volunteer assistance to your youth day on the range and in the classroom.

All free of charge.

S.A.F.E. Instructors have developed a Family Firearm Safety course that lasts about 3 to 4 Hours and can be tailored to exactly the expected audience. These courses are provided at no charge to the club and the community.

Your club or organization can charge a nominal fee. You can serve lunch and open up your ranges. We will provide the instructors and range officers.

This is a great way to solicit new members, generate additional revenue and promote good will in the community.

S.A.F.E. Training Counselors and Instructors are committed to sharing our knowledge and expertise. We have donated, without charge, our knowledge and expertise to numerous military units throughout western Pennsylvania to upgrade the weapons handling skills of these military units. The drain on resources facing our military due to the worldwide commitments has left a serious gap in the individual soldier's personal weapons handling skills.

In addition to the basic skills, our instructors introduce these young warriors to the newest state of the art skills acquired through many years of training, practice and well developed contacts within firearms training circles. This training encompasses rifle, handgun, tactics and hand to hand concepts that are essential skills in today's

Continue page 6

C O N T I N U E D F R O M P A G E 5

urban combat environments.

Once this training is completed we offer individual training opportunities to each soldier, marine, sailor or airman according to their expected duty assignments and needs.

New for 2008, S.A.F.E. will be teaching a new community oriented course called NRA's **Refuse To Be A Victim**.

The cost of this course will range from \$5.00 to \$15.00 a student dependent on the materials and course requirements.

This is a 4 hour seminar that discusses various ways to protect one self. This course uses only the classroom and is an excellent opportunity to solicit new members and promote your club.

Safe **Training Counselors** can help your club develop a **Range Safety Officers** program.

They can certify RSO's, help you develop your club's SOP and work with our new RSO's.

If your club has a certified RSO program in place, your club may be eligible to receive a discount in your insurance premium.

RSO's work to teach the proper safety techniques to all shooters, thus preventing accidents.

S.A.F.E offers the following NRA Certified Basic Courses

Home Firearm Safety

Pistol & Pistol First steps

Personal Protection in the Home

Personal Protection Outside the Home

Shotgun & Shotgun First Steps

Rifle & Rifle First Steps

Range Safety Officer

Refuse To Be a Victim

S.A.F.E offers the following NRA Certified Instructor Training

Home Firearm Safety

Pistol & Pistol First steps

Personal Protection in the Home

Personal Protection Outside the Home

Shotgun & Shotgun First Steps

Rifle & Rifle First Steps

Chief Range Safety Officers

All NRA certified basic courses and certified instructor courses are fee based depending on the course. Fees for each individual course are posted on the S.A.F.E. web site when courses are scheduled.

Be A Good Member Of The Community

Recreational facilities of all types (target shooting, auto race tracks, golf courses, etc.) face obstacles from NIMBY (not in my back yard) groups whose end purpose is to eliminate the facility. The NIMBY groups are often small in number, but many of them have mastered the means by which public opinion is influenced. Facts often matter

less than perceptions. It is far more difficult for any NIMBY group to create a negative perception of a recreational facility if that facility has already demonstrated by actions, words, and deeds that the facility is a solid contributing member of the local community.

It is important for a target shooting facility to create and maintain positive community and public relations. To do this, the managers or directors must take command of the process, and conduct a proactive program that continuously presents constructive, positive aspects of the facility to the public. The proactive program should include activities that continuously build a sound positive relationship with the community and alleviate any non-favorable misperceptions.

Promote news worthy events and activities throughout the local community as news. This is much more credible information to the public than advertising. Post fliers, send mailings, or have a special "open house" to positively persuade the public.

Summary

After building a positive reputation in the community, continue to work at maintaining that good reputation. Conduct popular

activities and events on an annual basis. Continuously seek and listen to community feedback. Be a helpful, thoughtful, involved, and contributing member of the community.

It is the goal of Shooters Active in Firearms Education to help clubs and organizations promote a positive outlook to the community by providing quality community oriented courses at little or no charge, certified firearm courses to individuals who wish to continue their training and by certifying Quality Instructors.

IF you and/or your club's officers are interested in these classes and our instructional expertise we invite you to respond so that we might open up a dialogue on these issues. We thank you for your time and your consideration of the above and we are at your service IF you are interested.

Thank you,

Shooters Active in Firearms Education

Web

www.safe-tee.net

Phone

(724-899-3414

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Typical all chestnut trees start production of their first nuts at 4-8 years of age; they do not reach full production till 10-15 years of age. Because they pollinate in early June after all chances of frost is gone, they have an almost 100% guaranteed yearly crop of nuts every year something most other nut tree can not



provide in most of PA. One other special note you must have more than one chestnut tree for cross-pollination in order to for them to produce nuts, as they are self-sterile. There are three basic species of chestnuts; Chinquapin, Chinese and American or hybrid chestnut crosses of them. Chinquapin produces lots of tiny nuts ideal for song birds, grouse, and turkey and as other wildlife food. Chinquapin trees typical never exceeds 15-25 feet tall with its soft nut burs, they make an ideal backyard trees.

Chinese chestnuts has the biggest nuts of all three, typical don't exceed more than 40 feet in height but they do produce big nasty sharp seed pod burrs that keep all the critters from eating them till the are fully ripe.

American chestnuts were once called the redwood of the east, and have the sweetness tasting nuts of all three but a virus introduced back in the early 1900's wiped out nearly 4 billion trees, and has reduced most of them to isolated stump sprouts in most of there natural range. At one

time it was estimated that one of every four trees in PA was an American chestnut. Highly prized for its beautiful wood for building cabinets, its legendary rot resistance for use in building barns or homes, also used for telephone poles and fence post. Its nuts were collected, used to make flour, roasted and eaten for food. There are several organizations trying to bring this once historically valuable native species back by selective breeding of blight resistance trees in a controlled manor with some of there offspring inheriting their parents blight resistance in order to be reintroduced back into the wild again. The American Chestnut Cooperators' Foundation <http://www.accf-online.org/> breeds only 100% pure American chestnuts and offers some very reasonable priced blight resistance seedlings



for sale every fall for planting. Go to ACCF web site for all the details and more history on this great lost American treasure, along with detail on how to obtain some American chestnut tree for planting on your own property next fall.

Other organizations are crossing Chinese and

American chestnuts trees in order to create a hybrid to achieve a level of blight resistance. The long-term future of this hybrid chestnut crosses remains to be seen if they inherit the same physical traits for large size as the pure American trees would or will they just remain a novelty items for backyard hobbyist. From a feeding of wildlife stand point it really doesn't matter which chestnut variety you choose all sorts of wildlife will find their nuts very tasty.

Fruit trees are more familiar to most people, its common knowledge that wild animals love to eat these sweet tasting fruits. Typical fruit trees are bought as potted trees several years old or as bare rootstock and maybe already mature enough to produce fruit when purchased. I recommend removing all developing fruit as early as possible for the first two years after planting them. This ensures giving all possible energy in the newly transplanted tree to establish a proper rooting system. The short term benefits of getting one or two pieces of fruit over maximum plant growth for long term survival should be always considered first.

Some of the more common fruit trees are; apple, cherry, crab apples, pear, peach, and plum trees, but there are other not so commonly known ones like, mulberry, persimmon serviceberries, black & choke cherry, hackberry and other less common fruit trees. Since most of these commonly known

trees listed grow less than forty feet tall they are ideally suited to backyard environments with limited space for planting. One of the downsides of trees such as apples, pear, peach, plum trees is to maintain full production capacity is that every year these trees should be pruned back along with other required yearly maintenance. On the plus side for fruit trees they also provide many ready made health snacks for you and wildlife to enjoy

With all the deer and small critter that can do tremendous damage to you newly planted trees you might want to put cages around them for there protection. On this web site has the length on wire required to make cages for the size of enclosure you need. <http://www.accf-online.org/cages.htm>



In conclusion, no matter what type of nut or fruit tree combination you select, proper planning and research on your part will ensure the best trees to fill your specific requirements for your property. Consult a professional forester, county conservation district office or landscape expert on proper planting, soil, tree spacing, lighting, protection, water requirements or any other detailed information on tree selection for your specific property needs.

OUR MISSION

To promote and foster, by all lawful means, the protection and conservation of our renewable wildlife resources through hunting and fishing, together with all pertinent natural resources and to promote the improvement of hunting, fishing, and competitive shooting. The ACSL shall make every effort to work in cooperation with the respective federal and state wildlife agencies, competitive shooting organizations and our member clubs to comply with this article and policies as defined by the delegates of the member clubs. To encourage among its' members and among organizations with like or kindred objectives good fellowship and cordial cooperation toward achieving these ends. To defend and protect, by means of educating public officials and the general public, the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, especially the Second Amendment and Article 1, section 21, respectively.

All efforts, activities and objectives of the officers and Delegates of the ACSL shall be for altruistic purposes towards these goals and shall not be performed for the private gain of any one person or club.

ACSL ADDS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP OPTION BY: DAN RAGALLER

Responding to repeated requests of outdoors enthusiasts and gun owners throughout Southwestern PA the ACSL has added an individual membership option. It is now possible for individuals to participate in meetings and help shape the policy and future of our efforts by joining the ACSL as an individual member. This support will also help us continue to promote the outdoors, protect and enrich our habitat and defend hunting, fishing, and the shooting sports as well as our constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

Membership in the league opens the door to participation in a wide variety of committee activities that span many pursuits such as the Game Committee, Youth day activities, Sports Show development and coordi-

nation, Legislative Committee, Membership Committee, Banquet Committee, Firearms Training and Instruction activities, Conservation Committee, Fish & Clean Streams or Safe Boating. In addition members have the opportunity of collaborating with officers, state agencies and policy makers in shaping regulatory and legislative initiatives that affect all of us.

This is a perfect opportunity for anyone who has felt a burning in the pit of their stomach to do 'something' about what they see going on around them. YOU can make a HUGE difference if you join with us and add your passion and talents to our common shared goals. We look forward to working with you and the first step is to contact Dan Ragaller via email at [danra-](mailto:danra-galler@verizon.net)

galler@verizon.net or through the ACSL website - www.acslpa.org - and request a membership application.



**Our first two Individual Members
Harry Lewellen & Bill Fluharty**