

# IGW: FROM WHENCE IT CAME

*By: Pat and Don Hastings Sr., Founders*

I was standing in a field in Montana one evening as dusk was creeping in and I was doing an imitation of someone with a hot foot or maybe an old Indian dance. While hopping up and down I was saying, "Shoo, shoo!" Now looking back, that seems silly as can be, but I was not alone. In the circle, which I was part of, were four or five men, some in game warden uniforms and all doing the same thing with variations. Out in the middle of the circle was a grizzly bear cub that probably only weighed a 150 pounds or so. It was eyeing this spectacle, but at the same time appeared ready to make a dash into the line, much like a half back in a football game. Our job was to contain him until we could get more tranquilizer in him. I had not quite decided yet what I was going to do if he decided that through me was his easiest route. I was not accustomed to bull dogging grizzlies, cubs or not. My wife Pat was nearby, also involved in this operation.

What was a middle aged semi-retired couple from Illinois doing in the middle of a Montana field corralling grizzly bears? That was just one of the hundreds of similar situations we found ourselves in as we roamed the world doing features for our IGW magazine. Here is how we came about doing these extra-ordinary things.

In early 1984 I was an Illinois Conservation Police Officer and talked to a DU delegate at some conference (I wish I knew his name) and he suggested game wardens should have a trade magazine of their own. He said he thought about starting one but never did. I went home and told my wife Pat we should start one. She had just retired from running several of our businesses and was lukewarm to starting another. She also reminded me that we knew nothing at all about publishing a magazine. She was right about that, but I kept thinking about it.



That spring I heard the Texas Game Wardens had a magazine of their own. I somehow found a game warden, J. C. Romines, who was involved with their magazine. I called him and my two sons and I drove down to Jacksboro, Texas to visit J.C. and found a real friend. He encouraged us and we came home full of ideas.

But then I talked to some area magazine people who said it would not fly. I tried to stay confident.

Finally at Easter 1984 we gathered our huge family together (8 kids, spouses and grandkids) after dinner and asked them to help us stuff 8,500 envelopes with a letter to game wardens all over North America asking "IF" we could publish a quarterly magazine for \$12 a year, would they buy it? The response was unbelievable as the return envelopes piled into our local post office, most with \$12 checks enclosed. We eventually got over 1,000. Now all we needed was a magazine to send them. This would not be the only time we called on family, for even smaller grandkids in later years peeled off address labels and stuck them on

magazines for mailing. It was a family operation for sure.

By the summer of 1984 I had been saving all kinds of stories and photos, so I typed them up, pasted them on paper, laid them on living room floor, and decided what would go in our first issue. I took it to a printer and with baited breath ordered about 1,500 copies. I also took a couple thousand dollars out of our savings to start the venture now called the International Game Warden Magazine. We had big plans despite a small start.

In August 1984 we received the first copies of the charter issue. In an attempt to trace our profession the cover had a photo of an officer from England who we had met on a trip in 1975. His name was Maurice Holland and he was keeper of the New Forest in Hampshire England. The lead story was the murder of Idaho game Wardens Pogue and Conley Elms by Claude Dallas. We also had a Memoriam in honor of 38 officers killed in the line of duty all over the nation. A somber beginning but a subject we felt had been neglected. We mailed magazines to about 1,300 officers and they become our charter members. We numbered them consecutively and Illinois conservation officer Monte Burnham became #00001 for he gave me the first \$12 when it was still just an idea. Like so many, he had confidence in us.

This issue was only possible with the finding of two wonderful ladies, Martha Pooley and June Weber to help us. Martha did the lay out work at the start and later just about did everything necessary to put out the magazine. June did great illustrations and even some comic strips for tiny pay. They stayed with us all the time we owned IGW. They are wonderful friends.

Someone (I have forgotten who), gave me the suggestion that Pat and I should travel to various states and provinces and work with officers there and make the visit into a feature for an issue. A great idea and we did Alaska as a start. We

fished for salmon, hunted bear and moose and rafted the Chilcat River. We lived and worked with Officer Jesse and Sue Smith and their family in a remote post and many other families. We stayed a month. That trip set the stage for some fifty future trips. We owe so much to so many who took us in, guided us, entertained us with hunting and fishing opportunities, and just made it all possible. We have thousands of good memories from these trips and I wished I could list all of them but space would not permit. We never had a bad trip or experience. Here are some of the highlights.

In Florida I helped remove an alligator from under the Space Shuttle a few days before launch. It would have been boiled in the flame pit. We helped Laurie Brouzes trank and move a polar bear at Churchill, MB and do an autopsy on one killed by a home owner when it tried to come in his house. The Ontario department and it's officers treated us to a fly-in successful moose hunt and we brought home a freezer of moose meat. We had a successful black bear hunt in Saskatchewan courtesy of old friend David Harvey and his officers. We rode a patrol boat one dark night in a phosphorous bay in Puerto Rico and watched the glowing water trickle off our paddle. We canoed in the boundary waters of Minnesota and did a story on the "Root Beer Lady". We visited rain forests and a volcano in Costa Rico. We rode a camel in Australia, watched penguins march by to their rookery in New Zealand and lived in a game warden's cabin on the beach in Hawaii. Keith Kiler gave us a Disney like ride "UP" the Snake River in Idaho in a jet boat and Pat and I got to catch and release a five foot long seventy year old sturgeon. We rode a monster tracked machine with game wardens in the Florida Everglades; rode horseback and took trout fingerlings to stock a high lake in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado with Cary Carron and rode a mule down into the Grand Canyon and back to visit with a US park ranger at the bottom.

We also went along on a drug raid at a dude ranch where illegal game was hidden in Colorado; backed Bunny Grantland up in Georgia when we stopped a drunken, shotgun toting night poacher who at first refused to give up his gun; rode snowmobiles up a mountain at night near Yellowstone with Elmer Davis and Dave Etwiller; visited at a "Keepers" convention in Ireland and

captured deer by net gun from a helicopter with Kurt Bahti in Arizona; scuba dove for the first and last time on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia; helped wardens carry down the body of a hiker who froze to death on a mountain in New Hampshire; and (as per the opening paragraph) we helped Tom Bivins trank and move a huge grizzly sow and her three cubs away from a ranch into the Montana wilderness.

In Scotland we visited with the rangers of the Countryside Commission and stopped by Loch Ness, but failed to see the monster. We were out with officers in a patrol boat when the Tall Ships arrived in Boston harbor – just a majestic sight for sure. We rafted part of the Grand Canyon but turned down a full raft ride through all of it, as it appeared a bit too tough, even for us. We patrolled down the Green River in Utah in a dory and also stayed with Chief Bob Danet on a visit to the US Virgin Islands and did a boat patrol in a sea turtle sanctuary. Wardens in New Mexico took us up to the top of a mountain in a cable car for lunch at a restaurant that was a breath taking ride and on and on.

I suppose I could fill several magazines with all the wonderful things we experienced in the fifteen years we published the magazine. I could list probably a thousand people who we had contact with and so many became friends and some we still hear from. Besides the features and travel to find them, we are also proud of all the other parts of the magazine that came about over the years. Our part in honoring fallen officers—the reward fund to catch Claude Dallas—the Fraternalism awards—the conservation officer coloring book for kids—support for NAWEOA, the museum and other officer associations and so many other programs that we fostered and all of you helped thrive.

There is just no way to put a monetary value on what we were able to do because of publishing the magazine. We never went into the venture for money and fortunately for fifteen years we were always able to meet expenses, but as far as a financial success I fear most people would say it was a failure. But Pat and I hope for our fish and wildlife enforcement officer's profession, it has meant so much more in fraternalism, good will and professionalism. We hope it was a means to bring us as wardens out of our relative obscurity of years gone by.

We owe so much first to our family who helped in every possible way. Then to the hundreds and maybe thousands of you who offered us your hand in friendship and your assistance in making it a success. You took us into your homes, made all our visits so genial, sent us stories and photos, good suggestions and ideas and supported us in every way. Without Martha Pooley our magazine would never have had the professional appearance that it had with her talent and her faithful care. It left Pat and I free to roam around the world.

Then all the volunteer writers and columnists who were as faithful as if on salaries and last but not least the thousands whose annual subscription footed the bills. Never have so many people did so much for two people like Pat and I. Yet so many perhaps never had the chance to even meet us. We are indebted to everyone who helped in any way.

Lastly on this exciting 25th silver anniversary how wonderful it feels to see the magazine in the capable hands of NAWEOA with Editor Doug Lucyshyn leading the way. The magazine to us has been like a baby we conceived and half raised and then turned over to foster parents to continue on. We have such pride in seeing how it has turned out and how it continues to be of importance in all of our chosen profession. We hope its voice will never be stilled.

So from the bottom of our hearts, Pat and I say thank you for making our dream come true and may the "IGW story" serve as a reminder to all of you to always give your personal ideas a chance and who knows, like us, your dream may become a reality and live on for twenty-five years.

**Editors Note:** *Pat and Don Hastings founded the magazine in August 1984 and published it for fifteen years. They are now in their late 70s and for the past twenty years have maintained a summer home in Edwardsville, IL and a winter home in Melbourne Beach, FL. Don was as an IL game warden for 25 years and retired as a Captain in 1987. He continues to write as a past time and do wildlife photography. Pat is an accomplished artist, specializing in grandchildren portraits. Their family consists of 8 children and their spouses and 21 grand children and 6 great grandchildren.*