

1976 world championship

WILDFOWL CARVING COMPETITION

Salisbury, Maryland

CHAIRMAN — Knute Bartrug

VICE-CHAIRMAN — Fred Kreiser

CONTEST COMMITTEE

Jean Bartrug, Enid Kreiser, Charles Bounds, Max Hughes, Ted Crockett, Tom George, Harvey Derby, Marshall Moore, Joe Gilbert, Vince Schumacher, Bob Farlow, Pete Vigneri and a great many volunteers.

PROFESSIONAL DECOY JUDGES DECORATIVE LIFESIZE

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Harold Haertel | Hal Sorensen | Anthony Rudisill |
| Guy Greenwell | John Griswald | Marie Conway |
| Malcolm Flemming | | John Sutton |

AMATEUR & NOVICE

Russel Van Houzen
Don Allen
George Walker

DECORATIVE

George Rieger
Bill Schultz
Charles Vaughn

LEM & STEVE SHOOTIN' STOOL JUDGES

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Preliminary | | Final |
| Bill Joeckel | Knute Bartrug | Lem Ward |
| Hal Sorensen | Ken Gleason | Paul Marshall |
| Paul Casson | | "Corb" Reed |

PAUL SHAFER MEMORIAL HEAD WHITTLING CONTEST

1. J.B. Garton
2. Cigar Daisey
3. Russ Van Houzen
H.M. Ron Rue, Pat Godin & Bob Brophy

BEST CARVED & PAINTED CANVASBACK

Jim Foote
Bob Havel
Fred Traver

FOR THE RECORD

111 Professional Carvers with 476 Carvings
94 Amateur Carvers with 413 Carvings
146 Novice Carvers with 404 Carvings
93 Shootin' Stool Carvings
38 States Represented



(continued on page 36)

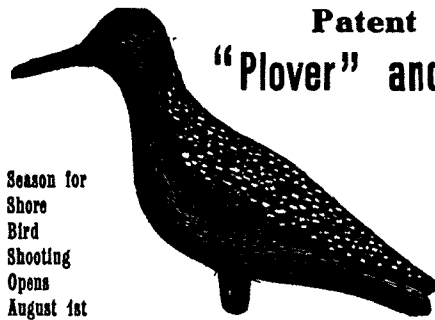
OLD DECOY AD — Courtesy of Willis G. Pennington

The American Field

19 August 1911

Patent Folding Tin "Plover" and "Snipe" Decoys

Season for
Shore
Bird
Shooting
Opens
August 1st



These decoys are made of two oval-shaped parts or sections, which, when closed together, make the exact form of the bird. They pack or nest one into another, so that a box containing one dozen measures only 10 in. by 9 in. and 1/4 in. deep; are nicely painted to represent the bird.

Varieties made: Black-breasted Plover, Green Plover, Red-breasted Plover, Turnstone or Chicken Plover and Yellowleg Snipe.
Prices for Plover, \$4 per dozen; Yellowleg, \$4.50. Discount to the trade. Ask your dealer for them.

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107 Washington St. Boston

Importers and Dealers in High Grade Guns, Fishing Tackle, Camp Outfits, Field and Marine Glasses, etc., etc.

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"A YOUNG MAN CRAZY ABOUT MAKING DECOYS"

BILL CONROY of narragansett bay

By Jackson L. Parker

Color Photography by Eugene Hirshberg

As I travel about New England talking to carvers, I am struck not only by the diversity of styles but also by the different reasons they took up carving.

Take Bill Conroy of Rhode Island for example. As a duck hunter, he is a purist preferring to shoot over wood decoys rather than plastic. When he went to a local carver for a new rig, he decided he could do better himself, and he did.

To test the decoys he made, he set them out in the water and threw bread to them, attracting two black ducks who landed among them and began feeding.

Not only did this give him a feeling of accomplishment, but it also produced a satisfaction known only to hunters who carve their own decoys and call in their own birds.

At that time, in 1970, Bill thought he was unique being completely unaware that he was in the midst of a renaissance of decoy carving. He never would have known otherwise if disaster hadn't struck.

He was by trade a welder in his home town of Pawtucket and developed an occupational illness. When the doctor ordered him to quit work if he wanted to keep on living, he moved his family (wife Sue and five children) to the beautiful island of Jamestown at the mouth of Narragansett Bay and began carving decoys for those local hunters who also preferred wood to plastic.

It wasn't long before his talent was discovered by the nearby biologists and conservation officers of the Great Swamp Management Area of the Rhode Island Division of Natural Resources. They brought him ducks and skins as models for the carvings they ordered, and more important, they freely criticized the technicalities of wings, bills, heads and other details until he got them right.

Catching the carving fever known as the desire to create the perfect decoy, he looked for expert aid, especially in painting, and found it in Holger Smith of Mattapoisett, Massachusetts (see NAD, Fall 1974). This is another thing that struck me, namely the way carvers freely trade information, helping each other the way Holger helped Bill, and ultimately profit when the student progresses to the level where he can give his teacher a few pointers.

The Conroy technique is to make working decoys of solid sugar pine unless a request is made to make them hollow. All decoratives are hollowed out and made of basswood. He puts on the vermiculations with a fountain pen. When a hunter buys a rig from Bill, he gets the decoys in different positions so they look natural. He is getting orders for decoratives but still turns out working decoys to share the pleasure of shooting over wooden stools.

