

# 11,670

HARD TO BELIEVE I'm writing this, but by the time you read this, I will have retired. After more than 32 years, close to 400 issues, it's time for me, and *Game News*, to move on.

To say I've been lucky seems so trite. I never thought of my work here as a job. It was, literally, a labor of love, and a more rewarding and satisfying career I could have never imagined.

Like many of you, I began reading *Game News* when I discovered it in my school library, always turning first to Field Notes to see if any were from my county, Greene. At the time, I — nor, I'm sure, any of my teachers — could have never imagined I would one day become steward of this fine magazine.

Once on the staff, Ned Smith, Don and Helen Lewis and Keith Schuyler became not just names of people whose work I admired in high school, but people who I became privileged to work with and get to know well. And I couldn't have had a better mentor than Bob Bell. His guidance in teaching me how to write and edit, and work with writers, artists and photographers, and with printers — in effect, how to produce a monthly magazine — was exceeded only in his kindness and patience when I screwed up.

With unimaginable diligence and competence, Betsy Maugans and then Patty Monk took care of the countless contracts, budgets and other business and bureaucratic aspects associated with producing a monthly state publication. Believe me, without those two taking care of all the administrative details, no bills would have ever been paid, and *Game News* would have never gone anywhere. Over my career I was also blessed with an outstanding production staff in Scott Rupp and then Bob D'Angelo, as associate editors, and Larissa Rose and then Lori Neely as *Game News* writers. Every one of them strived for excellence in everything they did, and supervising them meant nothing more than making sure they had what they needed to do their jobs and then staying out of their way. Having such self-motivated employees I could put my blind trust in was a blessing I never took for granted.

Mark Anderson, Marcia Bonta, Chuck Fergus, Paul Matthews, Ben Moyer, Gerry Putt, Jim Romanelli, Linda Steiner, Scott Weidensaul, (listed alphabetically) are but a few of the dozens upon dozens of extremely talented and hard working writers and artists who made it possible for us to maintain the high standard *Game News* readers over decades have learned to expect. That *Game News* appeals to such a wide range of audiences is because of the wide variety of talented contributors who have taken pride in sharing their work with *Game News* readers. To every one of them, my sincerest thanks.

One aspect of my career will never be matched: I got to know and work with Game Commission employees whose combined careers spanned almost the entire history of the agency. I got to meet and talk with officers who lived on remote refuges and patrolled on horseback; I got to know at least one graduate of every training school class; I even received a note in the early 1980s from Seth Gordon, the executive director from 1919-1926, pointing out a wrong date in an article I had written about the elk reintroduction program. Most recently I got to know the members of the 29th Class of Cadets, the latest to go through the training school. And let me just say, the latest patrol vehicles are a far cry from a horse. I can personally attest that the Game Commission attracted extremely dedicated and talented individuals a hundred years ago, and it still does to this day. The future is in good hands.

*Game News* began in 1929 as the "Monthly Service Bulletin," a mimeograph, in-house newsletter developed as a means of communicating with officers and other employees in the field — obviously way before email. Concluding his remarks in that first bulletin, Commission Board President Ross Leffler said, "Take advantage of this service letter, use it as much as possible, and all will be aided in many ways as a result. It is yours — how valuable it will be depends upon yourself."

Fortunately, over the years, many Game Commission employees took that challenge to heart, penning monthly columns about their work experiences, writing articles about research findings and the many

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programs of the agency and, of course, the tens of thousands of Field Notes: In just my 32 years here, I figure 11,670 were published.

No mention of *Game News* would be complete without the name Nick Rosato. Nick has been a mainstay in so many ways. He's been illustrating Field Notes for more than 50 years, close to 4,000 cartoon illustrations, helping to make it far and away the most popular part of the magazine for many, many years. Over the decades he's also illustrated countless other *Game News* features, hunter education materials, posters, Digest covers, the list goes on. In essence, nobody has done more to promote hunting, sportsmanship and the work of the Pennsylvania Game Commission than Nick. Being a small part of his outstanding legacy has been a great privilege for me.

Most important, though, are you, all our readers and dedicated fans who have made my career so enjoyable and satisfying. I always considered you as my boss. Your best interests are what drove every decision I made. Giving you the best I could month after month after month was always my goal. I will most definitely miss the letters, the phone calls, the visits, the emails, the "constructive criticisms," and just the complimentary comments made in passing somewhere along the way. Because of you, it's been a more rewarding career than anyone has any right to imagine.

Thank you. — *Bob Mitchell*

PS: Nick, I'll be more than glad to leave a few fish for the "other guy."