



WSPAA QUARTERLY

Volume 4
December 2012

WSPAA HAS A SUCCESSFUL YEAR **By President Bill Harvey**

As 2012 comes to a close, I am happy to report the WSPAA had a very successful year thanks to over 175 members.

Our Vision is ...”the promotion of fraternal activity, preservation of history, and the sharing of information amongst the current and former employees of the Wisconsin State Patrol.” This, like the “Vision” of any organization is an ongoing effort. Let’s summarize some of the accomplishments.

The WSPAA has a regularly distributed “News Brief” and WSPAA Quarterly to keep our members informed. We have partnered with the Division of State Patrol to receive their weekly reports of activities and with the WI DOT to receive their weekly bulletin. We have also developed a new network among current and past members to report significant social events across the state.

The WSPAA has a webpage, www.wspalumni.org. Included on the webpage are the WSPAA organizational information, some DSP history, our newsletters, and a variety of other pages. The webpage continues to grow. Just recently additional information of all past State Patrol Directors, Administrators and Superintendents were added. Take a trip there regularly to see the changes. Former State Patrol member Diane King has done all of the work on the webpage for us.

We have organized several social events for members to participate: Spooner Train Ride, Tour of the AirVenture Museum, a golf outing and an outing at a WI Dells Resort. Participation was small. But for the first year events, it is a start.

We have started discussions with the Division of State Patrol about the upcoming 75th Anniversary of the organization in 2014. The WSPAA will be a part of the planning committee that coordinates this celebration. Sgt. Scott Lindemann has volunteered to be our point person in working with the State Patrol committee. The work on that effort is just beginning.

As you can see, it has been a busy year. The Board of Directors recently met to strategically plan events for the next year.

Of course, membership is Number 1. Without interested members, there is no organization. Please help us spread the word and get more people involved. There are hundreds of people who have been employed by the State Patrol. Our potential member list is no where near complete.

The regional representatives has been asked to think about events to hold in each region next year. A couple potential events already mentioned are picnics, local tours, and a possible outing at a local sporting goods supplier. This business has an indoor live fire range, a virtual range and simulators. Early impressions are positive and we think this would be a lot of fun. The best part—if we have a competition on the simulators, we can all participate and no one has to clean the weapons, they are lasers. More to come on that later.

Finally, THANK YOU to the Officers and everyone who has done the hard work to make the WSPAA successful. Without their efforts, none of this would have happened. As always, if you want to get involved, we sure could use your help. Contact me at W401@aol.com. Thank you.

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V-President – Bruce Bishop blpabish@yahoo.com

Secretary – Janet Sabatke jsabatke@tds.net

Treasurer - Lyle Bliss LRBliss57@gmail.com

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and Joe Gustafson sp723@charter.net

SW Region Reps: Mike Jennings mikeandjudy@mhtc.net and Phil Wenzel wenzel@dwave.net

SE Region Rep: Jerry Witte jlwitte@charter.net

NE Regional Reps: Available

NC Regional Reps: Available

By-laws Coordinator: Maynard Stoehr mistoehr@charter.net

Newsletter/News Briefs: Bob Young bjyoung@charter.net

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IT'S A GOOD FEELING.....

It's a Good feeling.....

One of the Objectives of the Wisconsin State Patrol Alumni Association (WSPAA) is ...”to provide social and fraternal interaction and communication between and among all of its retired and active employees....” We have seen a couple examples of this in the past year. While these opportunities do not make us any richer monetarily; they do not directly extend our longevity, they do promote a good feeling.

Earlier this summer, active Trooper Al Vick contacted us to see if we had contact information with Trooper John Bruns (retired). A neighbor of Tpr. Vick had a traffic accident some 30 years ago. He was seriously injured and hospitalized for a long time. John Bruns had investigated this accident. After all these years, the driver wanted to thank John Bruns for his professionalism and compassion.

The contact information for Tpr. Vick was sent to John Bruns. He was told about the situation as we knew it and advised IF he wanted to pursue this, to contact Tpr. Vick for the driver's contact information.

John made the contact and eventually John Bruns and this driver met for coffee. It turned out to be one of those “Feel Good” events.

At the 2012 WSP Annual Alumni Day Luncheon at the Academy, Maynard Stoehr provided a telephone number for Tpr. Daniel Holzem (ret - 6th Recruit Class) and asked that he be called as a potential member. Dan had been in Florida and is now in Appleton.

I made that call and talked to Dan. I told him of the WSPAA. He obviously has a soft spot in his heart for the WI State Patrol and said he would join though he does not have e-mail. He was mailed copies of several of our “WSPAA Quarterly” and a few copies of recent “News Briefs”.

Within days, his WSPAA membership application was received by WSPAA Treasurer Lyle Bliss. The application was apparently facilitated by Dan's daughter, Pam (who has email to relay information to Dan).

Lyle provided Pam with an address to contact one of Dan's old friends, and WSPAA member, in Florida. Pam wrote to the friend and they have established a connection. It was a little clumsy, but it worked. Pam tells us that Dan loves getting letters, emails and phone calls from his friends on the Patrol.

Lyle writes, “I think we have to let the membership know that we will help find their friends if the friend is a member. Making the day for a fellow trooper in an assisted living place makes my day, regardless of what my doctor says.”

Take the time to make someone's day. If there is someone you want to reconnect with, contact Lyle Bliss lrbliiss57@gmail.com or Bob Young bjyoung@charter.net and we will work with you to make a connection with the contact information we have.

This is not a situation of “What is in it for me” but because “It's a Good Feeling.” Make someone's day with a note, a call or a holiday greeting. Make your own day one to “Feel Good.”

MEMORIES....



Cruiser caught in “scattered flurries” in WI

Everyone deserves a chance to visit the gas shack



The original Academy classroom

A CHAT WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

As the end of 2012 approaches, I had the opportunity to sit down with Superintendent Stephen Fitzgerald to discuss the status of the Division of State Patrol (DSP) and plans for the future. As any other state agency, the DSP does not control the budget, budget process, the facilities they occupy or statewide policy regarding many issues. The DSP makes proposals and justifications in the statewide budget process for what they see as needs, wants and desires to fulfill their mission.

Question: As the end of 2012 approaches, what do you see as the success stories this year?

Response: We had a very busy year. We have had a huge turnover with the retirement of very competent senior leaders and staff. We have been able to make promotions, reassignments and reorganization with people who have been nurtured and made ready for these positions over the years. The organization has a long history of preparing future leaders. This allowed the DSP to continue successfully as people left the organization. This is a sign of a successful organization.

We did have a major part in security at the Capitol protests, along with many other agencies. We were able to successfully meet the challenge because of our planning and training for situations like this. By working and training with other agencies, it is easier to work together when these situations arise.

We were also able to upgrade the mobile data computers and the Communications Centers this year. This is a major effort in interagency communications and to keep our personnel at the leading edge of technology at the street level.

Question: What is the current authorized strength of the DSP?

Response: By statute, we are authorized up to 401 in the trooper ranks (400 + the Supt). The inspector ranks are currently limited to 112 positions, by budget.

The DSP ran a recruit class in 2012, the first class in 3 years. Every person who graduated has been deployed into a permanent position number.

The DSP currently has 22 trooper, 7 inspector, and 1 management vacancies. With pending retirements that traditionally occur near the end of the year, there will be additional openings within the next short period of time.

The DSP is working on budget requests to include another recruit class for 30 troopers and a recruit class for 20 inspectors over the next two fiscal years.

While support staff positions do occur, the DSP is able to justify and fill these positions through transfers and hiring as they occur.

Question: In recent years, specialized units such as the Technical Crash Reconstruction Unit, K-9, HIDTA and Dignity Protection have been established within the authorized staffing number. Do you foresee any additional units like this being formed?

Response: No additional specialized units are planned at this time. We continually re-evaluate these units to be sure we are utilizing the staffing to meet our mission and purpose. We may modify a unit as needed.

The Technical Crash Reconstruction Unit is very busy. We are asked by city and county departments to reconstruct crashes regularly. We are also asked by other agencies to computer map crime scenes on a frequent basis.

The K-9 program has been very successful. The DSP has a person in training now to become a trainer of handlers. The DSP plans to train K-9 handlers for the DSP and other agencies soon.

The Dignity Protection Unit has been expanded. Times have changed and our protection services have changed. We not only protect the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, we also provide protection for dignitaries from across the country and world who visit our state.

Question: What do you see as the direction and issues for the DSP in the next 2 – 5 years?

Response: The WI State Patrol is primarily a rural traffic law enforcement agency. We enforce traffic laws every day. We investigate crashes. We are continually trying to reduce crashes and fatalities. We provide education to drivers in many different forums. The Bureau of Transportation Safety, now part of the DSP, works with many groups and organizations to promote this message.

The WI DOT works on roadway design, marking, signing and education to reduce crashes.

This is a team effort.

CHAT WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)

The Academy is a very valuable resource for law enforcement training. We are working to have other state agencies conduct their training at the Academy. The Department of Natural Resources has conducted their recruit training at the Academy for many years. In recent years, they have held their in-service there as well. The Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) has conducted several programs at the Academy. The Department of Corrections is studying the possibility of holding some in-service and manager training at the Academy.

The Academy is also host to many meetings held by other state agencies.

The goal for the next few years is to continue the growth in utilization of the Academy to other groups.

Question: What do you see or would you like to see of the WSPAA participation during the 75th anniversary in 2014 and the planning leading to that milestone?

Response: The DSP has not started the planning for this in earnest yet. We need to get serious about this very soon. With the limited staff we have, we just have not pushed this to the forefront yet.

I want the WSPAA to be involved as much as they want to be. Many alumni have strong positive memories of their time with the DSP. They are the historians of the DSP. Many have memorabilia of those days and we need to provide some means to share that.

With the major events we conduct each year, such as inspecting all school buses and other special events, we do not have the staff time to complete all that needs to be done. The alumni members lived the history. They are the living historians.

The DSP will be moving forward on this issue soon.

This is just a short summary of the status of the DSP today. Many of the things the DSP is involved in are foreign to those of us who served many years ago. It is amazing how things change in such a short time. The DSP today is truly a 21st century law enforcement agency.

Thank you to Superintendent Fitzgerald for taking the time for this interview, his support and openness. The DSP continues to progress and shine.

SOME FACTS ABOUT WISCONSIN “MUNICIPAL” LICENSE PLATES ERA 1965 by Terry Stewart

- 1) Double star 1 and 2 were issued to the Governor's two vehicles.
- 2) Star plates 3 through 3000 were issued to “municipal official” (cops, etc.)
- 3) Municipal 3001 through 4000 were reserved for State Patrol vehicles; however the license plates were never physically produced.
- 4) 4001 through 5000 were reserved for municipal cycles.
- 5) 5001 to the end were issued to municipalities for non law enforcement vehicles (cars, trucks, road graders, etc.).
- 6) The State Patrol had its own license plate design and freely swapped those plates around from one vehicle to another. The vehicles bearing these plates were actually registered with a three thousand series municipal plate that was never physically produced. This was the only license plate used in Wisconsin that was not established by statute. The numbers on the plates generally corresponded to the officer's radio call number. The radio call numbers also were generally indicative of the State Patrol District to which the officer was assigned.

In 1963 Officer Fran Vickerman crashed his 1963 Chevy patrol car while in a high speed pursuit on I-90 in the City of Janesville. His vehicle went off the highway and dropped onto Ruger Avenue which crossed below. The Janesville PD completed a very thorough accident report. The wreck had been removed to Harrison Chevrolet's storage facility awaiting disposal. The Janesville police officer called State Headquarters on the recommendation of Sgt. Maynard Stoehr. He found that he had not recorded the license plate number at the scene and when he went to view the wreck, the plate had been removed. He then ran a VIN check which returned the strange license number which he knew was not on the vehicle at the time of the accident. Some lengthy explaining followed.

(Note: In 1965 the title State Patrol Trooper did not yet exist)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

by Bruce Bishop

Have you ever wondered what happens to old Trooper pilots when they take off their badges and unpin their wings in retirement? Well, most of them just keep on flying, but now for fun. Bill Plendl is one of them. Bill graduated in the 4th Academy Class, badge #229. He is a pioneer contributor and innovator in the early days of using airplanes in law enforcement.

Following service as a combat infantryman during the Korean War, Bill joined the Patrol in 1956. This is the same year he got his private pilots license. But it wasn't till 1962 that he joined Bill (Skip) Walker and Lewis Beyer as one of the first three State Patrol air enforcement program (AEP) pilots.

The State Patrol first utilized a leased Cessna 150, high winged airplane. Later the state purchased Cessna 172's. Bill hovered over the highways of District One and other areas working with hundreds of different ground troopers on the ground, not only in speed enforcement but also in searching for lost persons, apprehension of fleeing violators or escapees, spotting traffic congestion, aerial photography, detecting overloaded vehicles, and in one instance spotting a litterer and having him apprehended.

Bill retired in 1987 after 31 years of state service. Not counting a forced landing on I-94 and a couple of aborted take-offs, his flight career was incident free. He logged over 8,500 hours of flight time while on duty. Besides flying, some of Bill's other hobbies include woodworking and Canadian fishing.

Bill married his Betty in 1955 and they had five children. His son, Kevin, followed in his father's law enforcement footsteps becoming Chief of Police in Waunakee. A grandson, Matt, State Patrol Academy Class #55 is a Trooper in the De Forest Post. Grandson Nick serves on the Fitchburg PD.

He lives at 416 Prospect Road, Waunakee, WI 53597. His telephone number is 608 849-5747. Call or visit him. Maybe he'll let you hop a ride in the 1965 Citabria which he flies out of the Waunakee Airport.



Bill Plendl on his last day of work for the State Patrol
10-17-1987



Bill with his nephew's 1965 Citabria airplane
11-12-2012

There has been discussion of developing a story detailing the history of the aircraft program in the Wisconsin State Patrol. That effort has not yet started. Thanks to the cooperation of several of those who have served as pilots, we have a preliminary list of current and past pilots listed below. If you know of someone who we have missed, please drop a note to bjyoung@charter.net. Thank you.

Max Allison	Bill Barnett	Lewis Beyer	Harold Burton	
Ryan Chaffee	David Erwin	Mike Foltman	Clinton Fruit	
Jim Grover	Glenn Haroldson	Tom Harris	Gary Helgerson	
Darrell Hill	Don Johnson	Jon Jones	Tom Jones	
Cliff Klingbeil	Pat Konz	Robert Kowalski	Mike Kraemer	
Gary Markowski	Dennis McConnell	Arnold Merkle	James Otterback	
Bill Plendl	Dennis Schroeder	Derek Scheutte	Jan Steinbergs	
Mathew Strub	Steven Tape	Bob Thompson	William Walker	John Wolfe

EVENTS

Regularly Scheduled Gatherings:

First Thursday of the Month - Anyone retired from the State Patrol is invited. This is an informal gathering, no reservations needed, just show up at 9:00 am at the Green Lantern, McFarland, WI.

Last Thursday of Even Numbered Months - WISDOT/DNR Retiree Breakfast at 9:30 am at "The Prime" in Trego, WI. Contact Tim Heffernan (tprt@charter.net).

Monthly— ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out) - contact Larry Doxrude for date, time and location. Everyone welcome. Larry Doxrude: ldoxrude@charter.net

If you know of additional events or gatherings of State Patrol alumni, please let us know so we can post it for all to see or attend. Send these items to bjyoung@charter.net. Send items in as soon as you hear of them. Thank you.

WSPAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ New Member OR

Street address: _____ Renewal

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Current DSP Assignment: _____ Retired/Separated: _____

Highest Rank: _____

Dues Paid : _____ Full Member OR Associate Member:
\$15/year - (Check one)

Return to: Lyle Bliss, 1749 Mango St. NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905-3336

Membership Contacts: Janet Sabatke: 608-833-5580 Lyle Bliss: 608-931-4060

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