

Sportsman helps start national outfitters organization



OUTDOOR INSIGHTS
BILL PARKER

Dave Hahn was crushed. What had promised to be an exciting week in the Montana wilderness turned into a week of aggravation. Two years ago, Hahn had booked a long big game hunt with a guide who had been recommended by an acquaintance. But instead of an exciting, enjoyable experience, he met nothing but aggravation. Supplies were limited, accommodations were cramped and dirty, transportation was in a rickety, old pickup truck.

"As far as his guide's ability, Hahn said his party would have

probably done better on its own. Game was scarce. They returned home empty-handed with nothing but disappointment to reflect on. In fact, the experience left such a bad taste in Hahn's mouth he doubts he'll ever go on another guided hunt. Too bad Hahn didn't take that hunt two years later. Too bad he didn't know Dan Hogan, a co-founder of the Outfitters Association of America (OAOA).

About the same time Hahn was experiencing the 'hunt from hell,' Hogan was facing a dilemma: Stay with the safe, secure job he had for the past 17 years as an advertising director with the J. Walter Thompson firm, or follow his heart and make a change. He opted for the latter and now runs Grey Dog Advertising, the marketing division for OAOA.

"It was a tough decision," said

Hogan, of Bloomfield Hills. "Sometimes you just have to follow your heart. I feel really good about it now and I think we've come a long way in a short period of time."

While on a big game hunt with professional guide Wayne Pearson, Hogan realized how favorable such an organization as OAOA could be.

"Wayne really wanted to do something for professional outfitters so we came up with the idea of Outfitters Association of America," Hogan said. "There are over 50,000 outfitters in north America offering everything from hunting and fishing to snorkeling, whitewater rafting, biking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, you name it. Some of them are good, some are bad, and some are in between. What we're trying to do is to promote the good ones."

OAOA has staff in the field that meet with outfitters at their place of business. The staff checks out the facilities, screens references, then decides if they want to accept the outfitter into the organization.

"We don't accept everyone," Hogan said.

Outfitters who are accepted receive assistance with advertising and marketing, discounts from sponsors, their business listed in OAOA's directory. Members also receive exposure on OAOA's web site and television shows, "The Outfitter's Almanac," and "Wayne Pearson's Ultimate Outdoor Adventures," which air Sunday mornings on ESPN 2.

Sportsmen get the satisfaction of knowing any member of OAOA is a legitimate, proven guide/outfitter.

"All our members are trust-

worthy outfitters and guides," Hogan said.

For more information about OAOA, or to order a copy of the directory, call Hogan at (248) 258-6834 or visit the OAOA web site at www.oaoa.net.

Grouse outlook

The statewide ruffed grouse season is under way. While the 10-year population cycle peaked a few years ago, hunters can still expect a good season.

Wildlife biologists with the Michigan DNR say the spring drumming survey of breeding males was down approximately 18 percent from the spring of 2000. But since last year was exceptional for grouse hunters, an 18-percent decline still leaves an ample number of birds.

The difference in this year's hunt, more than bird numbers, will likely be in where the birds

are found. Summer's hot, dry conditions have taken a toll on both hard and soft mast crops across the state. Many areas that once held water are pretty dry right now.

Hunters training dogs during the summer reported the most consistent flushes from lowland areas that were still holding some moisture and were adjacent to traditional grouse habitats. Many birds were flushed from the transitional area between the two habitats.

If the old haunts aren't turning up any birds, make a change and head for the lowlands. You might be surprised.

(Bill Parker writes a weekly outdoor column for the Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers. Questions and comments are encouraged. Send information to: Bill Parker, c/o Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009).

OUTDOOR CALENDAR

ACTIVITIES

OAKLAND SPORTFISHING ASSN.
The Oakland County Sportfishing Association meets at 7:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of every month at Sunita Hall, 1985 Cass Lake Road, Keego Harbor. Call (248) 693-4389 or visit the club's web site at <http://go.to/ocsa> for information.

DOWNRIVER BASS ASSOCIATION
The Downriver Bass Association, a non-tournament bass club, meets at 6:30 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Gander Mountain (14100 Pardee Road) in Taylor. For more information, call Ron Fodor at (734) 676-2863 or send an e-mail to riverrat122@home.com.

METRO-WEST STEELHEADERS
Metro-West Steelheaders meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in the cafeteria at Garden City High School. Call Dominic Liparoto at (248) 476-5027 for more information.

MICHIGAN FLY FISHING
The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Livonia Clarenceville Middle School, located on Middlebelt

Road between Seven and Eight Mile roads. Visit www.mfc.org on the Internet for information.

FOUR SEASONS
The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30-9:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Livonia Civic Park Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road. Call Jim Kudaj at (734) 591-0843 for more information or send him an e-mail at jkudaj@aol.com.

HURON VALLEY STEELHEADERS
The Huron Valley Steelheaders meets the third Thursday of each month at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 27600 Hall Road, Flat Rock. Call Carroll White at (734) 285-0843 for more information.

SOLAR
The School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation (SOLAR), a non-profit organization interested in promoting the appreciation of outdoor activities, meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the Colony Hall in Southfield. Call (248) 988-6658 for info.

CLINTON RIVER BASS 'N RATS
The recently organized Clinton River Bass 'n Rats meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Gander Moun-

tain Lodge. Call (810) 247-8900 for direction and additional information. The club is an affiliated chapter of the B.A.S.S. National Federation.

METROPARKS
METROPARK REQUIREMENTS
Most Metropark programs are free while some require a nominal fee. Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all programs. Call the respective parks toll free at the following numbers: Stony Creek, 1-800-477-7765; Indian Springs, 1-800-477-3192; Kensington, 1-800-477-3178; Hudson Mills, 1-800-477-3191.

FRIDAY NIGHT CANOE TRIPS
Discover a bit of Michigan history, and Stony Creek Lake life, while paddling a 34-foot Voyageur canoe during "Friday Night Canoe Trips" set for 7:30 p.m. Oct. 5 during the fall at Stony Creek Metropark in Shelby Township. Reservations (\$2.50 per person) are required for the canoe trips, and children must be at least 6 years old. The trips depart from the boat rental facility located at the Mount Vernon picnic area. For information,

call (588) 781-4621.

FALL BOAT SHOW
Boats for the new model year 2002 are making their national debut at Boat Show USA's Fall Boat Show, which concludes today at Metro Beach in Mount Clemens. Show hours are noon-8 p.m. every day. Admission is \$7 for adults and \$1 for children under 12. For more information, contact the Boat Show office at (313) 884-1776.

OAKLAND PARKS
COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS
Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all nature programs at Oakland County Parks. Call (248) 625-6473 to register or for more information.

FALL HAYRIDES/HARVEST FEST
Maybury State Park in Northville Township is offering the sights and sounds of autumn as wagons roll through farm fields and woods at the park. Rides continue each weekend from 1-4 p.m. through the end of October. Also the park will host its 11th annual Harvest Festival Sunday, Oct. 14, from noon-4

p.m. Included will be traditional autumn activities on the farm, wool spinning and weaving, cider pressing, blacksmithing, harvesting demonstrations and grain processing. All activities begin at the Maybury Farm Visitor Center Classroom.

STATE PARKS
STATE PARK REQUIREMENTS
Maybury State Park, Proud Lake Recreation Area, Bald Mountain Recreation Area, Highland Recreation Area, and Island Lake Recreation Area offer nature interpretive programs throughout the year. A state park motor vehicle permit is required for entry into all

state parks and state recreation areas. For registration and additional information on the programs at Maybury call (248) 349-8390. For programs at Bald Mountain call (248) 625-6767. For programs at Proud Lake and Highland call (248) 685-2187. For programs at Island Lake call (248) 225-7067.

WAYNE PARKS
COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS
Wayne County Parks offers nature interpretive programs throughout the year. Advanced registration is requested. Call (734) 261-1990 to register and for more information.

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