

**80th MUCC ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
**JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup> TO 18th, 2017**

COMSTOCK INN & CONFERENCE CENTER, OWOSSO, MICHIGAN

MUCC President, Tom Heritier, opened the convention at 9:15 A.M., June 17th, 2017 at the Comstock Inn and Conference Center, Owosso, MI. Tom thanked past Presidents, living and dead. He introduced Past Presidents attending this convention; Ron Burris, Bill Krebbs, Don Misner, Dawn Levy, Jack Van Rhee and Fran Yeager. A moment of silence was held for those persons listed in moments of memory. Larry Eucer's name was read to the Convention. Changes in the Agenda were announced. The makers of the resolutions were asked to limit remarks to 5 minutes. Those in favor of or opposed to the resolution were asked to limit remarks to 2 minutes. Orders of the Day were given. A Quorum was met. Fran Yeager gave a preliminary credentials report. There were 76 voting delegates with 284 votes present at the opening of Convention. Bill Krepps gave the initial Nominating Committee report. Nominations were taken for club officers. 7 new nominations were taken from the floor before nominations were closed. A list of the Candidates for the numerous offices is available to our club for your information. The minutes of the last Convention were approved. A welcome was given for 2 new clubs affiliation with MUCC. The Bylaws Amendments were discussed and passed at 10:43 A.M. Resolutions were begun after the vote.

Dan Echinger, Executive Director of MUCC, gave the annual report. Dan spoke about how well the last year has gone for MUCC. A lot of good actions were taken by the Staff. He thanked all those attending the meeting for their support. Dan is proud to represent MUCC. The organization is unique to the other States for its influence and effective policy accomplishments. It is a shining example to the rest of Conservation entities. He spoke highly of the hard working staff and their enthusiasm. He mentioned Amy Trotter, Resource Manager, who works with the Legislature, Stephanie Rustom, Project Manager, who puts events in order and works on fund raising efforts, Amber Albert, Personnel and Business affairs, Shaun Mckee, Camp Director, oversees education projects, Sue Pride, Member Relations and Co-coordinator for Tracks Magazine, Nick Green, the new Editor and Magazine director. Nick was previously a reporter for a local newspaper. He will be responsible for social media and TV reporting and a number of other members for their work for MUCC. MUCC has a good record on getting Legislative approval for our resolutions. MUCC is working with Congress at the Federal level for funding support for the Great Lakes Initiative. Dan told about the start 80 years ago, by the Shiawassee Conservation Association, organizing local and State clubs to gather together for Conservation efforts. There were 35 clubs for the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. MUCC has evolved from

that modest beginning to a major force in protecting the resources and wildlife of the State of Michigan. The organization has stabilized the revenues and budgets, developed administration into a major process. A new program is being developed for Junior Campers. It will be a pilot program with 100 kids working on public land program projects to show them the benefits of their efforts for Conservation. There is a need to establish a money value that Hunting and Fishing provides to the State of Michigan. Dan spoke about the protection MUCC has provided for the Trust Fund to prevent the Legislature from dipping into it for balancing the Budget. The bill 280 will be reworked this term to help prevent the local governments from taxing Clubs. MUCC continues to present a good example for the nation and overseas for conservation programs. He spoke about the goals for the organization, including enlisting more women members, increasing membership to 100,000, and providing the Public with examples of the value provided to them by Outdoor Sports. He thanked the Clubs for their support for the Youth Camp. MUCC hopes to put 400 kids through camp this year. 60,000 kids have gone to camp over the past 80 years. Tracks Magazine is going to 15,000 kids this season. The goal is to increase that to 17,000 kids this year. The Organization still needs sponsors for the schools to reach as many kids as possible. It is vital to get the children to support conservation at an early age, and Tracks does it well. PETA and HSUS can be defeated in their efforts by education at the grade school level. The meeting broke for lunch at 12:30 PM.

The Convention was reconvened at 2:00 PM. The Chair was corrected on a point of order by Levy. Russ Mason, DNR Director, spoke next. He expressed his thanks for the help MUCC provided in gaining \$1 million to fund work on the CWD problem. He talked about the difficulty with the Public's concept of Hunting. 8% of Michigan's citizens are hunters. 92% don't recognize the financial benefits gained from the Hunting community. The number of Hunters has traditionally grown after each war period, and fell off during extended times of peace. Russ said we need to reach out to the Public with the amount of money put into the economy by hunting and fishing. New programs are being put in place. The DNR will sell credits to landholders of suitable properties put into public hunting access. The CWD problem has now been put into a criminal investigation. It seems the farm where the deer came from has not been co-operating with the investigation. As of this time, there are 12 deer definitely found to have CWD. The Dept. has to find easier ways to test for the disease as it takes too much time and expense to verify a positive finding. The DNR needs to have Taxidermists submit samples from deer heads, when they are received, for testing by the Dept. The symptoms are similar to Mad Cow disease and similar diseases. The Prions eat the brain material away. The disease is incurable. Once infected, the animals die a slow death. Examples from the Western and Midwest States will be studied to attempt to find an effective plan based on their experiences. Wisconsin has 50% incidents of infection lately in areas 50 miles from the

Michigan border. The State deer farms are really concerned about the latest developments. Their livelihoods are in danger. They may be required to build double fences to protect their habitat. There are plans in the works to move 30 to 40 wolves to Isle Royal with a 5 year program. There is rejoicing in the UP over the news! There are no plans to remove any Moose to the mainland. The Cormorant problem is out of State hands to correct. They are federally protected and an agreement with the Feds is an iffy proposition. There is a 2 to 3 years delay for review. The Michigan Legislature is hoping to get permission from the US Legislature to be able to manage their control. There is a Federal ban on killing them here. The possibility of Sandhill Cranes being designated as a game species is being discussed. The population has been increasing by about 10% per year in Michigan. The DNR is seeking data from States that allow them to be hunted for information to develop a possible season if they can be hunted here. Russ feels the issue needs to be resolved with the Public in a good manner. He also stated the DNR will not be raising Pheasants for planting. It is too expensive and the birds are difficult to raise to the point they are sporting to hunt. At least with chickens, you don't have to worry about pellets in your dinner.

Resolutions were continued after his talk. For the 1<sup>st</sup> time since I began attending Conventions, all the Resolutions were completed by 4:37 PM. The Awards Banquet was held at the Shiawassee Conservation Club at 6:30 PM. The dinner was superb. Roast Prime Rib, cut to order, baked potato w/sour cream, sautéed mushrooms, warm rolls, green beans w/sliced almonds, garden salad bar and a desert table to die for. One of the best Banquets MUCC has put on thanks to the cooks at the Club. After the Dinner, Andy Buchsbaum, National Wildlife Federation representative, spoke to the gathering. Andy was associated with MUCC back when Tom Washington was head of MUCC. Tom was a major force behind the organization during its' growing period. He had the ears of the Legislature back then and was able to influence a lot of decisions related to Conservation. Unfortunately, Tom, a type A personality, died too soon, and left a big hole to fill. His brother, Sam took over the reins after Toms passing. While Sam did a good job, he was not the leader his brother was and things did not go as well. Andy spoke of all the Past Presidents after that and a lengthy history of the MUCC up until today. Andy turned over the mike to Dan Eichinger to give out the Awards. As there are 12 recipients, in the interest of brevity, I have the Banquet listings available for those interested in who got awards for the various categories after my remarks. A silent auction and refreshments were available until midnight. The club had a bus available for attendees to go to and from the event. As there was an open bar, it was a very good idea.

The polls opened at 7:30 A.M. to 8:30 A.M. for election of officers on 6-18-2017 at the Convention Center. President Tom Heritier called the Convention to order at 8:30 A.M. The Treasurers report as of Apr. 30<sup>th</sup>, was given by Fran Yeager, a copy of which I have

made available with my report to be available to members on request. The report was approved as read and a motion to file as printed subject to audit, was made and passed. The results of the process are noted in my copy of the convention booklet and are available to all members. Dan Eichinger spoke to the Convention about the goals of the organization. They include increasing membership to 100,000 members, increase revenue, and a larger staff for MUCC. The \$100,000 raffle did not go so well. At \$100 per ticket, no surprise. Not enough emphasis on it to the Clubs. The odds of winning the \$50,000 are considerably better than the Lottery, but not too many individuals have an extra \$100 in their pockets to take a chance on winning. Dan talked about the MUCC dues and what your \$5 buys you. Only 1% of votes on important Legislation can swing the vote on Conservation and hunting issues. MUCC has significant lobbying influence with the Legislature. When critical issues are on the table, they provide the voting power of the Clubs to provide a favorable outcome for hunting, fishing, land access and conservation protection. Dan is on the board of "Hunting works for Michigan" voluntary program. It is designed to bring together Sportsmen and Businesses that benefit from hunting and fishing to show the economic value gained from the sportsmen and women. The program was launched last Oct 26<sup>th</sup> with 148 partners. The statistics show hunters support 34,400 jobs and spend 2.3 billion dollars nationally each year, with support for \$1.2 billion in salaries and wages. Each hunter averages \$4,400 on trip and other expenses related to the sport. In 2016 the Pitman Robertson Act gave back to Michigan, \$22.4 million. The Federal Duck Stamp will be 83 years old this season. The money is used for critical habitat for Ducks and Geese. 5.5 million acres of habitat is impacted from this process. This economic impact needs to be communicated to the Public and Legislature. This information is available at the website, "huntingworksforMichigan.com".

The election committee gave its final report by Bill Krepps. There were 84 delegates with 293 votes present at final count. The election results are available to the meeting in my copy of the Convention booklet after my report.

The Convention was adjourned at 9.35 A.M. I would like to thank Qua-Ke-Zik members for the opportunity to represent them at this year's convention.

David Kotrch

Qua-Ke-Zik MUCC Representative