

**Memories of the 1999 OSTA Convention**  
**Article from May - Jun 2000 Buckeye Trapper**  
**by Eric Goedel**

The 1999 OSTA Convention is history, and actually has been for some time now. As I sit here to put my memories into some type of written manuscript, I really don't know what to write so I guess I will start at the beginning.

After the site was determined, and since it was to be held in Coshocton, it was basically a no brainer for me to be chosen as the Convention Coordinator.

The time up to the convention was mainly spent answering questions on the phone or returning messages on the answering machine. This wasn't too bad. Most questions were quite simple; like how do I get there, what are the places of interest, what motels are available, any camping available, is there a carryout nearby? Like I said, pretty simple.

Well, Thursday morning finally came around and everything began falling into place. Doug Haubert and Steve Massie, along with several volunteers, started getting the Dealer spaces set up. Mike and Patti Conrad, with several Directors and several more volunteers, got the demo area set up. In the meantime, Corky Klausing went with me to check out some of my favorite trapping areas. I mean we went to get items to spruce up the demo area. Hey, somebody had to do it! And since Corky and myself thought we did such a great job we took it upon ourselves to make another trip to get more items. Maybe next year we will figure out how to do it in one trip, but I kind of doubt it.

Well, once we got back from the second trip and lunch, (hey you know how much work it is to scout for beaver) everything was done. Well not quite, but things were really shaping up.

Steve was busy showing Dealers their spaces. Larry Williams was setting up the sound and PA system. Bob Fissell was probably over testing all of Shirley's cooking. (Personally I believe that should be my job next year. How about it Shirley?) And Doug was, I believe, still out on the race track breaking in his new off road golf cart. (Here again, I think maybe we should get me one of those next year. You know, just to help out Shirley, think about it Gibby, Ole Buddy.) In the meantime a pile of volunteers and other Directors were helping Dealers set up, getting the traffic flow plan finalized, putting up signs and banners, and then, like a speeding bullet, Steve Massie appeared on his "Tour De France" bicycle. "Hey Eric, go get more duct tape." (Note: Get bicycles for next year for backup transportation.)

Friday was pretty much a blur. I got to visit with a bunch of old friends, and also met a gang of new ones. I bought more than I needed or could afford. But now when I look back, I really should have picked up some supplies instead of a pile of antique traps and old junk. But I truly love it all.

The social hour was a great success with Ron Reinhart cooking up his shredded B-B-Q beaver. The OSTA booth opened up for business and did quite well. We even sold about half of the new OSTA can coolers. (Patti those are beer coolers, some guy told me he tried to put a can of pop in one and it wouldn't fit.) I just know that a good OLE boy wouldn't mislead me. (Would you Rex?) Shortly after the social meeting was over, I found myself back at my tent and for some reason, still unbeknownst to me, so did a bunch of other trappers (Note: Next year put tent in very, very far corner.)

Saturday afternoon was here. Really it was in the morning, kind of. Regardless, it was time to put the turtle soup on. I want to especially thank Russ Collar for all his help with the turtle soup and Beau Guilliams for his help in catching the turtles and preparing the soup.

This year I wasn't able to catch many demos, but the one event I won't miss is the trap setting contest. My son Dakota has been participating in this event for four years now, and this as his last year in the Pee-Wee Division. I really get a kick out of watching those kids. For this event, a big thank you goes out to Fur-Fish-Game for purchasing the awards. My son won the Pee-Wee Division this year and it really was quite a thrill for me and his mother. But we'll see just how tough he is next year in the Junior Division.

After the trap setting contest it was time to get back to the simmering kettle of "world famous" or at least "Fresno famous," turtle soup.

Well, Saturday afternoon quickly became Saturday night and we all know what that means; A-U-C-T-I-O-N!

The auction, as always, was well attended and very well supported. The donated items were very much in demand. (Although I don't know what in the heck Patti wanted that duck for.) After the auction ended I reopened the turtle soup stand and soon got rid of the remaining five gallons of soup. Once I got things cleaned up a bit, I began to make my way back to my tent. As I approached my tent I saw a large group of people gathered around a campfire. (Note: Next year take three or four lots in very, very far corner.)

Well, Sunday morning came quickly. (So they told me later) and just like that everything was quickly coming to an end

One thing I did get to do at this year's convention was to observe. Let me explain. The OSTA is made up of about 1500 members, and with all these members I found that they all have one thing in common, they truly care about trapping.

Take Lester Fitzgerald for example! Mr. Fitzgerald had done more for the OSTA than most of us can even dream about. But he is really no different than you or I. He spent most of his working life as a mechanic. He is a father and a trapper. But as Mr. Fitzgerald and I sat around the fire and shared a couple of bowls of soup I learned a lot about him. I realized he was no different, no different at all.

I also got to sit around that same fire and kettle of soup with Hal Sullivan and his son Eli. Although I have respected and admired Hal for many years for his articles, his dedication to the trapping industry and his opinions on matters concerning the OSTA. (Which I don't always agree with, but do respect.) I found Hal to be no different. But I did finally figure one thing out. I always thought Hal looked about half-malnourished. After watching Eli eat and eat and eat, I came to the conclusion that I would probably also look pretty skinny too if I had to compete at the supper table with Eli for the past 18 years or so.

Another person that I have gotten to know over the past few years, is Paul Dobbins. Paul, a few others, and I have sat around the campfire and talked trapping while eating frog legs and tasting that awful drink from the South for a few years now. The only thing I find different about Paul is that he does have the perfect job. Paul traps beaver year round for a paper company; and he calls that work, go figure. (Paul, I'll have frog legs next year so you bring the other half of dinner, or was that breakfast?)

I spent a good bit of time talking with President Doug Haubert. He is also a father, a husband and a trapper. Why Doug spends so much time (and I really mean a great deal of time) dedicated to this organization, I sometimes wonder. But I truly believe it is for our heritage, to do what we were meant to do.

I also have to mention Steve Massie. Steve is also like you and me, a typical joe, husband, father, and here again no different. But to the countless hours he spends every year for the OSTA, I just want to say thanks.

I spoke with a lady who worked in the Ridgewood food stand. She said she "couldn't believe how clean everyone was." At first I thought she meant that she was expecting a bunch of guys who just climbed down

from the mountain. But then she said that every time they went to clean off the tables and benches they were already cleaned, and that the trash was thrown away as if no one had been there.

I can't even begin to write down all the events or about all of the people who I spoke with that weekend, but there is one more thing I would like to fill you in on.

I was talking to a D.O.W. Officer who said that he had never seen a group of members who supported their organization, financially and in attendance, as the members of the OSTA do. When he told me who he was comparing us to I definitely felt a great deal of pride in being associated with this organization and with all of you. Thanks Rick!

So now let me tell you why I really wrote this article. It's because of YOU! It is to say THANKS to all the volunteers who helped with the demo area, putting up banners, manning the gates, parking the traffic, picking up the trash, helping out at the auction, bidding at the auction and supporting the Dealers who support us. I can't ever begin to mention it all. And to the Directors and Officers who do all they do for the simple reason that they believe in their organization and for what it stands for.

In closing I guess all I have to say is, Thank You. I want to thank you for allowing me to be part of this great, great organization.