

Dean Tvedt

I grew up on a farm near Cross Plains where I attended a one-room country school for the last four years of the grades. Since our farm was the closest to the school I had the prestigious job of starting the wood burning furnace each morning during the colder months of the year.

Needless to say, I wasn't very popular if the fire went out before the teacher and other students arrived.

Garfoot Creek, a tributary to Black Earth Creek, flowed through our farm providing excellent trout fishing. A frequent fisherman was Andrew Sampson, our local conservation warden at the time. Through his urging, my dad and a couple of neighbors built two holding ponds at the headwaters spring. When completed and inspected by Warden Sampson, a truckload of fingerling trout arrived. I fed them a mixture of pellets and ground meat scraps every day and after they attained legal length they were released into the stream. By the way, the meat scraps were donated by former DNR Secretary Matt Frank's dad and uncle who owned the meat market in Cross Plains. I think this experience nurtured my interest in conservation and which was fulfilled years later.

It was at Mt. Horeb High School where I joined a camera club and where I first became interested in photography. My first camera had a hole in the bellows and needed to be taped to produce a usable negative. I shared a windowless room in the basement with the furnace for a darkroom. There was something about



capturing and preserving a moment in time.

My first photographic job was with Commonwealth Telephone Company of Wisconsin, headquartered in Madison, shooting pictures, writing articles, and pasting-up copy for offset printing two company magazines each month. Many of our scenic cover photos came from the WCD files. Loved the work, but was asked to take an all-expense trip to Japan where I did photography for the Army Corps of Engineers.

Looking for a job upon returning home, I had heard about an opening for a photographer at WCD and was fortunate to be accepted into what was then the Bureau of Information & Education, Photo Section. We not only produced photos for departmental use, but also 16mm movies that were used by many schools and conservation clubs around the state.





Shooting synchronous sound movies in extremely cold weather required keeping the camera and audio recorder under a plastic "tent", heated from below by a Coleman heater. No heat for photographers.

When 16mm film became passe, it was decided the way to continue getting the DNR message to the public was through television, so Wilbur Stites, Staber Reese and I produced the DNR television show "Wisconsin Outdoors". Twenty-six half hour shows a year, shown on thirteen stations in Wisconsin and one in Texas. After five years the show was ordered cancelled with no explanation. The stations played the tapes free on public service time providing one of the cheapest and most popular means of getting the message out to the public.



That's me up there shooting an interview in the cabin of a Forest Protection fire tower. A platform was built outside the cabin to provide enough space for the camera by shooting in through a window. 110 feet above the ground without a parachute, not even hazardous pay.

During the last few years we produced training tapes and specific requests from other bureaus.

I retired in 1987 after 37 years of interesting but many challenging times in beautiful Wisconsin. I couldn't have been luckier.

I have been married to Lois for 62 yrs and we have two sons and seven grandchildren. We live in Mt. Horeb, but have a second home in Door County where we spend as much time as possible.



Dean and Lois in Door County

