



MOUNTAIN ECHO

Newsletter of Nelson Branch NZDA September 2020



Southern Bell Frog – Paul Psychers
Winner of the “best overall” in the photographic competition.

Editorial

“We have never had it so good”.

Hunting opportunities for the kiwi hunter are the best in living memory and accessible to those who do it instead of dreaming it.

Lyal Mudford was our guest speaker last club night and left New Zealand after years of deer recovery when deer numbers were reduced to a level that saw hunters both recreational and commercial give up trying. Twenty years later he returned to something he never thought he would see again – deer in mobs on open tops.

Helicopter pilots are currently seeing animals on bush edges and open spaces in significant numbers and are emphatic that these sightings include DOC land and within several hours tramp from the road edge.

www.nzdanelson.co.nz

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Tuesday 29
September
Competition Cup
Presentation, and
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Reports this past year from RHAs typically include one of over 100 deer sighted on a 4 day trip off the Lewis highway. Similar numbers have been reported in the Molesworth and reports from the West Coast reference how neatly mown the road-side grass is.

When I started hunting 60 years ago in the Lewis and West Coast the numbers were enormous and in the early 70s I ran out of ammo most days culling in the Hope and Waiau valleys.

The meat recovery years that Lyal participated in, reduced numbers to the point that in the 80s I shot only a handful of animals and sometimes wondered why I persisted.

Today we have animals in numbers that are causing real concern not only for DOC but for serious hunters. Any farmer knows that the carrying capacity of the land is limited and if animal numbers increase without restraint the land suffers and the quality of the stock suffers as well.

So, there are two messages here. The first is that the animals are available, and hunters should get active and get out hunting. The second is that the animals need to be controlled so that the quality of the nation's herd is maintained without degradation to land and animals alike.

At the branch committee meeting last week there was an initial discussion following the survey asking for member expectations of NZDA and the Nelson branch.

Many members want group hunts and the committee will address this. However, given the availability of deer in our Nelson Marlborough area a more practical way of assisting members is to provide advice on where to hunt, access points, making application for ballots and general information on terrain, huts and tracks.

But when all is said and done the old adages about horses being led to water and the world is made up of doers and talkers definitely applies.

Don't moan about the thousands of hectares of 1080 and use that as an excuse. There are millions of hectares that are 1080 free.

Come to the branch meeting and find a hunting partner then talk to a committee member about opportunities. Bring a map and we will find someone who knows the area and can provide advice. And don't forget, every DOC regional office has a keen hunter in it. Call them, ask about and talk to them!

Your branch is a huge resource for hunting information that is shared with those who ask.

Bill O'Leary

Absolute Wilderness



Absolute Wilderness

Absolute Wilderness is a Nelson based company producing food packs for outdoor enthusiasts.

NZDA established a connection with Absolute Wilderness when the company became a sponsor for the HUNTS program at a national level.

Both Absolute Wilderness and HUNTS would like to see this relationship extend more widely within NZDA and we are working to progress this.

Absolute Wilderness products are available through its website and in several Nelson outlets.

Expect to hear more from this Nelson based company in the near future.



Winner of Native Bird Section – Paul Peychers
Winner of the “Native Bird Section” in the photographic competition

Tahr Management

NZ Game Animal Council
Media Statement
1 September 2020



Long-term outcomes should be priority in tahr management

The Game Animal Council welcomes greater involvement in the implementation of the 2020-21 Tahr Control Operational Plan outside Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland Tai Poutini National Parks and will engage constructively with DOC to balance conservation values with sensible game animal management.

However, the Council remains concerned that the decision to proceed with the full allocation of helicopter control hours combined with a target of zero density in the national parks is based on short-term population targets rather than longer-term management objectives.

“The current plan not only negatively impacts hunting, particularly in our national parks, but may not have the longer-term environmental benefits that could be achieved by taking a more nuanced approach to management,” says Game Animal Council General Manager Tim Gale.

Analysis of the 2020-21 Plan, detailed suggestions for effective long-term management and an examination of each management unit are explicitly set out in the Game Animal Council’s submission, available [here](#).

“Strictly, the National Parks Act and the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan (HTCP) enable the removal of bulls from Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland Tai Poutini National Parks. However, from both an environmental and hunting perspective there is very little advantage in doing so.”

“Shooting a bull or a nanny has a very different impact on the future number of tahr. Removing a nanny effectively reduces the population by much more than one animal and has a significant impact on future herd numbers. Shooting mature bulls on the other hand has very little long-term benefit as tahr are highly polygynous animals.”

“Time spent culling mature bulls in national parks is an inefficient use of resources and causes needless aggravation of the hunting sector. If it also reduces the number of nannies controlled in higher density areas then that is counterproductive and an environmental opportunity lost,” Gale says.

“As our submission points out, a much more adaptive management approach should be adopted that includes highly targeted control work, ongoing monitoring and flexible adaptation using up-to-date data.”

“Control based on this method would recognise the future sustainability of alpine vegetation as well as local tahr densities and demographics while not risking over-culling. We look forward to providing the Department with that advice on a management unit level.”

As a basis for ongoing management the Game Animal Council proposes the following hierarchy be considered when deciding where to target control. In order of importance:

1. Places of particular environmental concern (which may not have high tahr numbers, but where the environment is particularly susceptible to tahr).
2. Areas of high tahr populations.
3. Inaccessible areas where it is difficult for hunters to harvest tahr.
4. Overall management unit density.

“Unfortunately, aspects of today’s decision prioritise short-term population reduction targets and extermination of non-breeding animals in areas where that is not necessary.”

The Game Animal Council’s submission supports increasing tahr control efforts outside the feral range, including an expansion of operations in the exclusion zones.

“If the Game Animal Council was accorded greater involvement in the initial development of the Plan a better result could have been achieved for both the perpetual protection of alpine vegetation and the preservation of a sustainable tahr resource,” Gale says.

The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation responsible for the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.

Contact:

Tim Gale, General Manager

Phone: 021688531

tim.gale@nzgac.org.nz



Little Fur Seal – Paul Peychers

3rd in “Certificate – Other Entries” in the photographic competition

2020 Photographic Competition

Wildlife Cup. Best Overall Photo. Paul Peychers . Green Frog	
Tantrum Cup. Wild Game Animals. 1st Paul Peychers Young Stewart Island Whitetail 2nd Cory Jones 3 Red Deer Spikers 3rd Paul Peychers, Group of 9 Fallow including a white doe Greenstone valley	Worsley Cup. Stalking Country 1st Paul Peychers very apt entry. Upper Worsley valley 2nd Bevan Walker, Alpine scene 3rd Bevan Walker, upper Godley valley
Livingston Cup / Native Birds. 1st Paul Peychers , Kotare (Kingfisher) on flax 2nd Cory Jones, Kea 3rd Paul Peychers, Falcon eating a Thrush	Hunting Memories 1st Bevan Walker, Pack raft Tahr hunting. 2nd Paul Peychers. Reflections Stewart Island 3rd Paul Peychers, Coastal Stewart Island
Certificate, Other Entries. Other wild life mammals. 1st Paul Peychers , Fur seal pup 2nd Paul Peychers Rabbit 3rd Paul Peychers Female Sealion playing in surf.	Flora 1st Bevan Walker. Moss rings on alpine rocks 2nd Paul Peychers . Perennial bracket fungus 3rd Paul Peychers Canopy sky view
Tex Stratford /Junior Cup. No Entries	Bob Baigent Memorial Trophy. Video / DVD Footage. No Entries



Group of Greenstone Valley Fallow – By Paul Peychers

3rd in “Tantrum Cup- Wild Game Animals” in the photographic competition

NZDA National Building Progress

This is to let you know today the building reached “Practical Completion” under our construction contract.

This means the work is done, subject to minor defects and tidy ups.

This is a big achievement.

On Saturday we also held our second external party room hire – we’ve now held the NZDA AGM, COLFO AGM and a Wellington Regional Council public consultation meeting, we’ve got booked a GAC Councillor meeting this month, AirSoft’s meeting (off the back of our COLFO meeting), and other parties are giving their expression of interest.

I also understand that the project is going to be put forward for an award.

The project also came in largely on budget.

Thanks to the building team.

Gwyn Thurlow

Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel



3 Collina Terrace, Thorndon, Wellington 6011

P: +64 (04) 499 6163

M: +64 (027) 4060 060

E: gwyn.thurlow@deerstalkers.org.nz

The Pheasant the Died of Shame

By Philip Bianchi



Just like Star Wars, this story is set in a place far away and long ago (well, in England about 35 years ago which is far enough away and long enough ago to qualify).

The two people mentioned in this story are both dead so names are actual names, and this is (as far as memory permits) a true story and barely covers the frankly bizzare behaviour and incidents described.

Rudi Seiber was a firearms dealer in an outlying suburb in my home town of Newcastle upon Tyne. NOTHING, and I do stress, NOTHING, about Rudi was normal.

Rudi had arrived in the UK courtesy of the Luftwaffe and a local anti aircraft battery. He was a rear gunner on a Junkers JU 88 bomber that was shot down over Tyneside in 1942 while trying to bomb the shipyards. Originally from Pomerania, (now part of Poland and a long way behind what was to become the border between East and West Germany) he knew what the Russians had in store for the place. He never went back.

He was put to work on Lord Gort's estates and farms in County Durham as a P.O.W. and would have been released in 1946 or 1947 at most. He always spoke of Lord Gort and his time there with affection.

After the War, he stayed in England and took up hairdressing. By the time I got to know him in the early 1980's he was still practicing his craft. I have to categorically state that even after 40 years of practicing hairdressing, he was the worst barber in the whole of Tyneside.

I could have done better with a knife and fork.

At that time, condoms were not as widely available as they are now. One reliable source was your friendly local barber shop. After the haircut, the barber would lean close to your ear and ask discreetly "Something for the weekend, Sir?" meaning "Do you need condoms"? You could spot the sex maniacs a mile off - they all had crew cuts.

Rudi operated a firearms dealership from his home but took deliveries at his barber shop. Something for the weekend at Rudi's Hair Chopping Emporium took on a whole new meaning. If you were mad enough to enter the shop, you were in grave danger of barking your shins on boxes of ammunition, clay pigeons, crates containing military surplus rifles and other assorted paraphernalia. The crates formed a sort of table and the reading material consisted of gun magazines and catalogues. Ladies, understandably, did not visit his shop. People of a nervous disposition did not visit his shop. Children were mentally scarred for life and needed years of counselling if the parents were daft enough to take them for a haircut. The long haired hippies spotted wandering the streets of Tyneside can be blamed on Rudi. After their first haircut, they never went near a hairdressers again for the next 25-odd years.

He was undoubtedly one of the most budget minded people I have ever known though this did work in your favour if you didn't have a lot of cash and wanted to buy shooting supplies at the lowest possible price.

To give an example, he owned a Reliant Robin Mark 2 van. If you aren't English, then an explanation is in order. Due to the oddball vehicle taxation laws, vans did not attract purchase tax on them and a three wheeled vehicle was classed as a motorcycle sidecar combination provided it was under 8 CWT (or about 450 Kg). A motorcycle vehicle road tax (Rego) was less than half that of a four wheeled car or van. I will leave you to thrill at the exquisite pleasure of Googling pictures and descriptions of the Reliant Robin Mark 2. As it was lightweight (436 Kg), it got by with an all alloy 750cc engine, later upgraded to 850cc which in this version pumped out a less than exhilarating 39 BHP. Del Boy Trotter (Only Fools and Horses fame) had a Reliant Regal, not a Robin but the design and concept was essentially the same.

To save money he used to travel down to Hull Cartridge Company (in Hull, surprisingly enough) about 100 miles away and fill the van from floor to ceiling with cases of shotgun shells. As you can imagine due to the weight of the ammunition and the low powered engine, performance and top speed wasn't sparkling. To add to the fun, the one wheel front steering setup (never the best) was raised by the weight in the back until the front tyre was JUST kissing the road. Rudi loaded the passenger seat and footwell with cases of shells both to restore some steering control and to maximise the amount he could carry. I suppose that this Kamikaze behaviour was less stressful than being shot at by British 3.7 inch Anti Aircraft artillery but I'd prefer to avoid either option. He usually waited until 2AM to set out for home and miss any traffic, arriving before dawn to unload the van. What the neighbours thought, Heaven knows ...

Buying anything from him was a pantomime in itself. He operated from his home which was a terraced upstairs flat in North Shields. He was only "open" on a Friday evening and a visit to his place was entertainment in itself saving you the price of admission to the Cinema. Rudi was no cripple tongue though he spoke like a cartoon German with a pronounced accent, his extensive vocabulary of English swear words was encyclopaedic. To maintain

his proficiency, just about every second or third word was a swear word. He'd have made a drunken ship's stoker blush like a virgin bride.

Most British flats are the same design - two main doors side by side, the left one leading to the upstairs flat landing with a small bedroom over the front doors. Rudi had this room as his office and it was kitted out with a desk. You had to queue up the stairs and across the landing and wait your turn to enter the presence of His Imperial Highness King Rudi 1st of North Shields where he would smoke cigars of eye watering strength and pungency, drink whisky (despite a heart condition) and bark out commands, swear words and advice like Hitler addressing a pre-war Nuremberg Torchlit Rally of the Party Faithful.

It was part circus, part socialising and part wondering what you'd come away with in exchange for your money. You went in for 8mm Mauser surplus ammunition and came out with a Lee Shotshell reloading setup and a box of clays or you ended up with a box of large rifle primers when you only owned a .38 special revolver. Rudi considered it all part of the service and there was no need to thank him. He was, indeed, a sad loss to the Diplomatic Corps.

Afterwards we would retire to the local pub for strong drink to steady our nerves and socialise. Usually Rudi would join us for a drink in due course. He was actually very good company and had a load of stories to amuse you which he delivered with a twinkle in his eye. After cross checking, most of his wild tales proved to be true! The rest we couldn't prove or disprove either way.

My friend Bill Richardson was in his early 60's at the time the following incident took place (about 1982 or 1983) and I had known him for a long while from the gun clubs we belonged to. He was a steady, reliable shooting companion and had the shooting rights on a farm near Otterburn.

Otterburn is on the edge of the Northumberland National Park and is the base for one of the largest military training areas in Britain. It is a lonely, bleak, windswept area of moorland, little changed from the last ice age and consists of drumlins (rounded hills left by the glaciers) covered in peat bog and heather and dissected by streams. It is so remote and empty that when a TV Drama programme about AIDS needed a remote camp to send AIDS sufferers as an isolation containment base, they selected Otterburn for the role.

One November, Bill invited me to go for a days rough shooting on the farm on a Saturday. There wasn't much there - a few rabbits, wood pigeons and some pheasants if we were lucky - but it did have a big L shaped wood on the property. The wood had a belt of laurel bushes planted a few metres in from the edge of the wood which provided some protection from the wind for pheasants and made the woods a little less cold. The wood pigeons and pheasants roosted in the wood during the (northern) winter so towards the end of the day we could look forward to trying to pot a few pigeons and the occasional pheasant as they came in to roost.

We made the pilgrimage to Rudi's home on the Friday to pick up a box or two of no. 4 shot ammunition and a pint afterwards. I made my purchases (accompanied by the usual gratuitous advice and swearing) and when Bill asked for shotshells, Rudi asked him what he was after. "Clays or game?" Bill said game and Rudi reached under the desk and gave him a box of reloaded shotshells. "These are special game loads. You try them". Bill tried to

find out information about the the shotshells such as what shot size? What was the wadding? etc. This was met with a tirade of abuse and the assurances that they were Special loads, assembled by Rudi himself and that he should try them.

In the pub afterwards, Bill placed the box of shotgun shells on the table and we discussed why Rudi, who was so stingy that he kept waking up in the middle of the night to check if he had lost any sleep, had given away free, gratis and for nothing a box of shotshells. The debate raged back and forth and one of the company reminded Bill that Rudi had pressed a box of shotshells on one lad who used them in a clay pigeon competition. Three of the 25 shells were filled completely with black powder - no wad, no shot, just black powder - which cost him the competition. We didn't believe that Rudi hadn't played a similar trick so the shotshells were examined minutely by everyone present. The witness marks on the brass bases showed that they had been resized and sensitive fingers confirmed that here was a plastic wad in each of them. Crimps were good and all primers present and correct. The jury still was out when we went home.

The next morning I picked Bill up and we headed off for the shoot. Bill favoured a Mossberg 500 pump and I had my side-by-side Sabel. It had been snowing off and on for the past week and the snow was well compressed; not deep and the going was good. We strolled around the place and we got a few rabbits each, a careless crow fell to me and Bill managed to shoot a snipe - no mean feat as they are fast, small and manoeuvrable. Bill began to have some confidence in Rudi's special reloads.

As the sun began to set around three o'clock in the afternoon, we took positions on the edge of the wood to try to bag a few pigeons coming into roost. As the pigeons came in, we realised that we weren't in the best position - the wind was wrong - so I shouted across to Bill that we should move positions to our right about 75 metres. I was to the left and therefore would be the rear man so I unloaded my shotgun, broke it to carry it across my shoulder and followed Bill at a distance of about 10 metres. As we were walking along the farm track that separated the wood from the field, a pheasant must have been hiding in the long grass on the field side of the track and it took off with the usual clatter of wings, startling Bill. He managed to get a shot off and winged the pheasant. It fell to the ground in the field and started to run along the long grass that bordered the farm track. Of course, I was unable to get a shot in because my gun was unloaded and I was unprepared.

Bill racked the slide on his shotgun and set off in pursuit. I paused to pick up the empty cartridge while Bill was gaining on the pheasant until he paused, aimed and shot.

To our surprise and astonishment, a cloud of wedding confetti shot out of the muzzle of Bills gun and fluttered to the ground. After Bills initial shock, he cursed Rudi's heritage, questioning whether Rudi's parents were joined in Holy Matrimony prior to his birth. After his outburst he looked back at me with a resigned look on his face. I then looked at the pheasant. The pheasant in turn looked at the confetti and promptly keeled over dead. I can only think that it must have thought that it was involved in some kind of "shotgun wedding" and the shock and humiliation was too much for it.

"Bill" I said, much more in sorrow than in anger, "Bill, you were told!". Which on Tyneside is quite severe criticism enough.

By tacit, unspoken agreement, we resolved on the spot to keep this episode a secret and the drive back home was made in gloomy silence. Neither Bill or I ever spoke of the incident nor reported back to Rudi on the effectiveness of his “special” reloads and as far as I am aware, Rudi never asked. I think that this would actually add to the pleasure Rudi derived from the practical joke.

Rudi died in 1993. I liked him a lot. He was one of the true eccentrics who attacked life with gusto and was determined to live and enjoy it to the full. He truly is worthy of all the legends that are (still!) told about him.

Thirty five years later, I've broken that agreement but I'm certain that in whatever part of Valhalla that is reserved for Luftwaffe machine gunners and demented hairdressers, Rudi will be laughing his socks off with the usual twinkle in his eye.

Prost! Rudi. Have one of your awful cigars and a whisky to celebrate your prank being told to a new audience, wherever you are.



Young Stewart Island Whitetail – Paul Psychers
1st in “Tantrum Cup Wild Game Animals” in the photographic competition

Nelson Lakes – Toxin Notification



06 September 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

ST ARNAUD PREDATOR CONTROL OPERATION - TOXIN NOTIFICATION

Vector Free Marlborough Limited (VFML) wishes to advise landowners and other interested parties that it will be commencing aerial application of the toxin Sodium fluoroacetate (1080) to the St Arnaud predator control project area from dawn on **8/09/2020**.

The aerial application of toxin is expected to take up to two days to complete subject to weather. Should weather conditions prove unsuitable, work will begin on the first fine day thereafter. Further notification will be provided in the event of an extended delay occurring.

Huts and other accommodation facilities will be excluded from toxin application, but all walking tracks and DOC managed roads in the control area will have toxin aerially applied to them. Access to these sites will be restricted while the operation is carried out and afterwards until facilities have been inspected and cleared of most 1080 baits. Closures will be in place from late afternoon on 7/09/2020 and will be identified using signage and barrier tape. People intending to enter the control area during this period are encouraged to contact VFML or Department of Conservation offices for up-to-date advice.

The public are reminded that warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may be present in baits or animals. Game animals should not be sold or taken for eating from within or adjacent to the control area until it is declared clear of pesticides. When signs are removed, this means you can resume normal activities in the area. Please report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs to VFML or the nearest Department of Conservation office.

The St Arnaud operation is being carried out on behalf of the Department of Conservation as part of its Tiakina Ngā Manu programme to control a range of introduced predators threatening vulnerable native species. These species include kea, roroa (great spotted kiwi), whio and pekapeka (long-tailed bats). Additional information and maps of the project area may be obtained from the DOC and VFML websites or by contacting VFML per the details below.

Operation Controller – St Arnaud

Vector Free Marlborough Limited

PO Box 5171, Springlands, Blenheim 7241

Free phone: 0508 548 008

Email: communications@vectorfree.co.nz

Web: <http://www.vectorfree.co.nz/current-aerial-operations.html>

Vector Free Marlborough Limited (VFML) is proud to work alongside the Department of Conservation to deliver the 2020 St Arnaud project. To learn more about our work please visit the VFML website.

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NELSON MARLBOROUGH FISH & GAME REPORT



SHOVELER COUNTS COMPLETED - Fish and Game New Zealand conducted a national count of kuruwhengi, shoveler duck on 3 August 2020. This is the 21st annual count (2000 – 2020) to monitor change in the New Zealand population. Over the 21 years the population at these sites appears to be stable. This year, a total of 11,325 shoveler duck were counted at 240 sites, nationwide. In Nelson Marlborough region 2,346 shoveler were counted, with the majority of these residing in the Wairau Lagoons.

NEW FISHING SEASON STARTING - The new fishing season is starting on October 1, and there is no better time to grab a licence and head to the hills. The trout have had a relatively stable winter and should be in great condition. Further to this, our fabled backcountry fisheries will have far less angling pressure due to covid curtailing overseas travel, meaning there will be virtually nil non-resident anglers on our rivers. Fish & Game will be releasing trout throughout the summer into popular waterways, with Lake Argyle, Waimea Park Junior Fishing ponds and the Branch/Leatham receiving fish.

FISH AND GAME REVIEW - The Minister of Conservation has announced an independent review of Fish & Game, and the organisation is currently working with the panel on the review. This review offers the chance to reflect on thirty years of Fish & Game's work and to ensure we are best placed to maximise the opportunities for game bird hunters and freshwater anglers in the coming years. The review panel wants to hear from interested parties who can provide insights into:

- what has been working well
- what might not have been working so well
- what are the opportunities to ensure that Fish & Game NZ is aligned to support sport fishers and game bird hunters for the next 30 years.

Send in your comments to the review panel by 31 August.
Email: fgreview@doc.govt.nz



Shoveler counts are carried out by all Fish & Game regions on the same day.

Red Deer Lodge

Information on costs and bookings of the Red Deer Lodge at Lake Rotoiti

Contact the Calders: info@starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Use the website at www.starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Saying you are a member

2020 Committee

Committee:

President: Greg Couper terminatorproducts@xtra.co.nz

Vice President: Richard Wells richardw@nzdanelson.co.nz

Secretary: Warren Plum plumstone@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: Aaron Shields aarons@nzdanelson.co.nz

Members: Bill O'Leary, Graeme Smith, Graeme Ching, Mike DeGray, Neill Cliffe, John Noakes, Mike Grant, David Haynes, Carina Jackson.

Range Committee:

Convener: Graeme Ching, graeme-doreen@xtra.co.nz

Members: Graeme Smith, Graeme Ching, Bill O'Leary

Hazard or Incident Reporting: website email (nelson.nzda@gmail.com) or contact member of Range Committee

Access, Rules and Safety: see website <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/range.html> and check your emails for updates or changes to range opening times

Branch Hunts and Activities:

Convener: Mike DeGray miked@nzdanelson.co.nz

Hunts Courses:

Website: <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/hunts.html>

Convener: Bill O'Leary b.f.oleary@xtra.co.nz

Members: Lawson Davey, Alistair Ching

New members:

email nelsonnzda@gmail.com or go to webpage <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/index.html>

The Mountain Echo

Bill O'Leary and Richard Wells