

## History of Blackhawk Archers Inc.

### **In the Beginning**

In the 1960's an archery club (Heart of Wisconsin Archers) existed. They had an outdoor range on the property south of Patch Street and east of the Plover River in Stevens Point, WI. The club terminated near 1970. Several of their members along with a group of people from, at that time, "Point Sporting Goods", wanted to get involved in competitive shooting. Thus they formed the Blackhawk Bowhunters Club. In applying for incorporation in 1973, the state of Wisconsin informed them that there was a club by that name. Thus the name was changed to Blackhawk Archers Inc.

### **The Struggle**

To compete in, at that time, the Evergreen League (a traveling scratch spot league of various central WI cities) an indoor shooting facility was needed. With basically no treasury, Father Piekarsky of Saint Stanislaus Parish was approached for permission to use part of an unused portion of the school basement. Permission was granted and the club was there for two years. The one limitation the facility had was that only eight shooters could shoot at one time. The Evergreen League consisted of eight host shooters, and eight visiting shooters. A larger facility was sought and thus Starlight Ballroom was agreeable to let the club use their building. From 1975 until the present building was constructed (25 years), Starlight Ballroom was used by the club for indoor shooting.

In 1974, the Blackhawk Archers joined the CWFAL (Central Wisconsin Field Archery League). This was an inner city traveling league using an outdoor 28 target deer silhouette range. The club now needed property outdoors to construct a 28 target range. The average year-end checkbook balance for the first seven years of existence was about \$435. Land purchase was out of the question. It took 20 years before the club was financially sound enough to purchase land. A 28 target range as constructed on some private property. This lasted for 2-3 years, and for various reasons, the club was asked to remove the range. In searching for another property to construct an outdoor range, the Portage County Parks Department agreed to let the club build a range at Standing Rocks Park off County Highway B. The range had to be open to the general public. The Parks Department agreed to let the club put up a donation box to offset the cost of maintaining the range. Very little, to no money was left in the donation box. At one point, the cross country ski organization made their trail through the archery range and knocked down a number of the bunkers on the range. After that, the desire to purchase property and construct a range on the club's own property became very strong. For a couple of years the club ran a food stand at what was called "Polonia Days". In 1980 a dance and raffle fundraiser was started and continued for years. The treasury was growing. Excess operational money was invested to help the treasury grow. Finally in 1992, the opportunity to purchase land became a reality. The third outdoor range the club built was now on their property.

### **The Success**

One more goal of the club was to have its own indoor shooting facility. It took 20 years to build up the treasury large enough to purchase land (\$20,000), how long would it take to accumulate \$100,000 or more to construct a building? The Board of Directors did not want to borrow money to construct the building.

In 1994, several members initiated the club's present raffle. The raffle was so successful, that in four years, phase one of the building began. Thousands of volunteer hours by members and non-members

got the concrete work in place, framed up, insulated, roofed, and enclosed the building. With insulation installed, and heat running, the building was used for indoor shooting. Each year, for three years, as money from the raffle became available, more work was done on the building until its completion.

### **Thanks to Many**

The Blackhawk Archers Club now has facilities that its members can be proud of. This could only have happened through volunteers who donated their time and talent unselfishly. They kept the club's success, and not their personal agendas in mind. Since the club's inception, tens of thousands of volunteer hours were donated to get the club where it is today. Since around 1980, the Board of Directors recognized that without volunteers, the club could not exist, and so A Volunteer Thank-You Program was initiated.

Since the beginning, the Blackhawk Archers Club has provided both an indoor and outdoor shooting facility for its members to perfect their archery skills. The club remains a private non-profit club for its members only to enjoy. Hopefully, the membership respects the benefits of belonging to the club.