

April 2019

The FL YER

Nevadawaterfowl.org



NEVADA
WATERFOWL
ASSOCIATION

**INTRODUCTIONS
WHAT IS A WING-BEE?
BEN SAYS GOODBYE**



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The FLYER

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The FLYER

The Flyer is the official newsletter publication of the Nevada Waterfowl Association and is published twice a year. Guest articles are welcome. Our classified section is also available for advertising

The articles and views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those shared by the NWA membership, its officers or board of directors.

MISSION STATEMENT

Nevada Waterfowl Association's mission is to protect, restore, and enhance Nevada's wetlands and the wildlife dependent upon them, especially Waterfowl and shorebirds. Nevada Waterfowl Association works closely with organizations such as the U.S. fish and wildlife service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Lahontan Wetlands coalition, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and other Conservation Organizations that share our goal of preserving Nevada's unique desert wetlands for future generations to enjoy. Nevada Waterfowl is a family oriented conservation organization that was created in October of 1987 as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit corporation by a group of individuals who were alarmed at the rate of loss of Nevada's unique desert wetlands. Nevada Waterfowl Association intends to become a statewide organization through the formation of local chapters throughout the state. Nevada Waterfowl Association is founded upon the principle that all monies raised in Nevada will be spent to help Nevada's own wetlands and wetland-dependent wildlife. All donations are tax deductible.

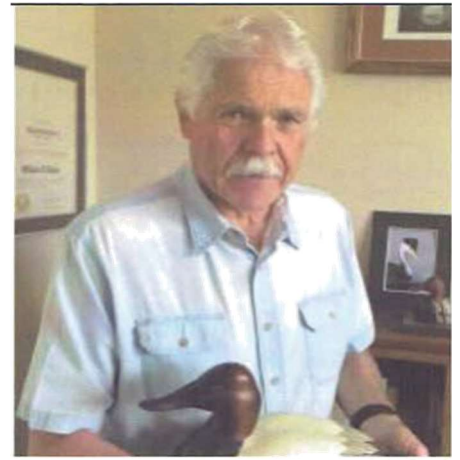
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By William Molini

The Nevada Waterfowl Association has embarked on a new approach for information distribution to our members in place of the previous use of the printed distribution of the FLYER. We have discussed at length how to more cost effectively communicate with our membership and decided to try this electronic distribution approach (see related notice hereafter). We would appreciate your feedback as to your thoughts on this approach.

I hope your 2018 waterfowl season was a good one. I have heard varying reports, but it seems that through mid-season, waterfowl hunting was good. The Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge supported the greatest number of waterfowl and apparently was the best place to hunt, although I heard of some people having good success at Carson Lake (Greenhead). Because of the substantial flooding at Carson Lake in the winter of 2016-17, there is considerable work that needs to be done there to dikes, roads and fencing. NWA provided \$3,000 to the Greenhead Club & TCID to purchase a culvert for installation at the "big dig" ditch so that a crossover of that ditch could be constructed to allow access the east side of the area. This project was completed early in the duck season. We are continuing discussion with NDOW, Greenhead Club and the Truckee Carson Irrigation District to determine the needs for rehabilitation of the area and potential funding sources. The past year (2018) was a busy one for NWA as we participated through



direct communication and/or funding in the following activities:

(1) The NWA has been working diligently with USFWS, including meetings with the Regional Office in Sacramento, to improve management on the Stillwater NWR. We were largely successful in this work and Stillwater provided habitat for the bulk of the waterfowl in western Nevada. Carl Lunderstadt was assigned as acting Refuge Manager last spring and he was recently appointed as the permanent Refuge Manager. We have established a very good working relationship with Carl and look forward to sound wetland and waterfowl habitat management in the area.

(2) We worked with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to try to ensure that the Toulon Unit at the Humboldt Wildlife Management Area would receive water on years when it is available. This work resulted in having some water in the Toulon Unit in 2018.

(3) We met with NDOW to discuss the future potential of rejuvenating the wetlands at the Fernley WMA. Discussions are ongoing and some work is likely in the future to enhance this area.

(4) We met with NDOW in early September to register our concerns with how the late

summer botulism outbreak was handled at Carson Lake. NDOW is currently working on policies, programs and procedures to address any future botulism outbreaks.

(5) We continue to work with NDOW and Congressman Amodei to try to finally complete the transfer of Carson Lake & Pasture from the Bureau of Reclamation (federal agency) to NDOW. We are very hopeful that this will happen in 2019.

(6) We worked with Ducks Unlimited which is the lead at putting together the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant proposal to enhance water delivery and control at both Stillwater NWR and Carson Lake & Pasture. NWA agreed to provide \$15,000 as our contribution to this major project. The NAWCA national council has approved this grant proposal with a #1 national ranking, so the project should move forward in 2019.

Carl Lundestad

(7) The NWA sent letters to our Congressional delegation urging

their support for the long standing Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reauthorization. Over the past 40 years this fund has been especially important in providing money for wildlife habitat acquisition and management. The authorization for the fund expired at the end of 2018. There is currently a bill in Congress to reauthorize the LWCF, which has strong bipartisan support.

(8) NWA funded two aerial waterfowl surveys in 2018, one in October and one in November, for western Nevada wetlands. Board member Norm Saake conducted these flights.

(9) NWA provided funding for the junior duck stamp contest and for the Canvasback youth waterfowl hunt program.

On November 3, the Fallon Chapter held its annual fundraising dinner at the Fallon Convention Center. Our sincere thanks to Wendy Mello who was chair of the dinner committee, and to the Fallon Chapter members for their hard work to

make this a very successful event. Most importantly, thanks to our sponsors and to all of our members who attended the dinner. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the Reno Chapter dinner on April 27th, 2019 at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa.

On a final positive note, the way this winter is shaping up, it looks like we will have a very good water year and therefore good, if not great, waterfowl habitat year in 2019. I will look forward to seeing you at the April 27th Reno Dinner.





INTRODUCTIONS FIRST

By: Carl Lunderstadt

Seems like for my first article in the Flyer that perhaps an introduction might be appropriate. My name is Carl Lunderstadt and I am the new manager of the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex. I was born in northern Minnesota, but grew up in southwest Oregon in the little town of Riddle and enjoyed all the hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities that abound there. Mid high school, my family moved to the Seattle area where I met my wife Kristi and became a Seattle Seahawks fan. I ended up getting my first college degree in Business Administration at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA. After graduating, I bounced around for a few years, unsettled about what I wanted to do, but eventually realized I would enjoy a career in conservation much more than business. This resulted in Kristi dragging me to Alaska (that's a whole 'nother story) where I got my second degree in Wildlife Biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Alaska is also where my journey with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began. My first job was at the Tetlin NWR where as you might expect I did a little bit of everything as I learned my new trade. I helped with environmental education, neotropical bird migration banding, moose surveys, fish tagging, snow surveys, osprey banding,

etc., as well as all things refuge management from property inventories to payroll. I also got my start there as a Refuge Law Enforcement Officer and my initial wildland firefighter qualifications. When talking with family and friends about my job, Kristi would always remark, "Oh, he just plays in the woods". There might have been also memorable because that was when both of my children, Abigail and Austin were born and I got to start passing down my passion for hunting and fishing.

My next gig was at the 4.7 million acre Togiak NWR, and my Alaska dream really reached its peak. Southwest Alaska is a land of plenty – moose, caribou, bears, wolves and fish - lots, and lots of FISH! king, sockeye, coho, chum, and pink salmon, rainbow trout, arctic char, dolly varden, arctic grayling, and lake trout just to name a few. My work involved managing hunting and fishing guides, acquiring inholdings, taking care of refuge facilities, organizing field work and field crews, and working with four villages located in the refuge. There are not many roads in Dillingham, AK where the office is located, so I acquired some snowmobiles and a jet boat so we were able to take full advantage of the literally world class hunting and fishing that was in our backyard.

So now you're asking yourself why would you ever leave Alaska and come to the Stillwater NWR. Well, I promised Kristi we would live

somewhere she could have a horse someday and I thought it might be career enhancing. So, here we are! Kristi has a horse and I have learned a ton about managing a waterfowl refuge. I have done a bunch of the same refuge management stuff here that happens at every refuge, and as the Assistant Refuge Manager here for over ten years, I managed water and water rights, maintenance projects, special use permits, and hunting. I really enjoy prescribed burning at Stillwater, and yes, if you see a big column of smoke out our way, it's probably me.

I have been with the USFWS for over 23 years now, on three different refuges, and in two very different regions; I have worked with fisheries managers in Russia and trained protected area managers in Saudi Arabia; and I have worked with a ton of different people on a bunch of different issues. I pursued a career in conservation so that I could have a part in ensuring that my children, and maybe someday grandchildren, could enjoy hunting and fishing as I did. I am super happy, and also humbled, to have been selected as the new Refuge Manager for the Stillwater Refuge Complex, and greatly appreciate NWA's support these past few years. I look forward to working for, and with you, to make Stillwater NWR a great place to hunt and enjoy wildlife. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to give me a call at 775-423-5128 x235 or email me at carl_lunderstadt@fws.gov.

SO WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A “WING-BEE”?

By Norm Saake

In late January through the end of February, professional waterfowl biologists from around the nation gather together in each of the four flyways to conduct a survey to determine the makeup of the previous waterfowl season's harvest, by examining a sample of duck and goose wings sent in by hunters. This portion of the Parts Collection Survey is affectionately referred to by those who participate as a “Wing-Bee”. The size of the annual survey varies slightly from year to year, but usually contains somewhere around 90,000 duck wings and additional 20,000 goose wing tips and tail feathers. This year in the Pacific Flyway that sample contained slightly more than 28,000 duck wings and goose wing tips and tail feathers. This survey was started in 1961 and has been conducted in all four flyways since 1964 and is probably the most precise wildlife survey of its kind in the world.



Each year, prior to the start of the hunting season, a random number of waterfowl hunters from each state are requested to send in one wing from each duck and the wing tips and tail feathers from each goose that they harvest, in a special envelope. The location and date of harvest for each bird is recorded on each envelope along with any band information they may obtain. Throughout the fall these wings are sorted by species and stored in large freezers until the biologists arrive at the “Wing-Bee” to analyze each wing envelope.

At each flyway, the number professional biologists run between 25 to 40+ participants. Of this number there are waterfowl biologists from almost every state and between 5 to 6 certified checkers that review and double check each wing's identification classified by the biologists. Nationwide there are less than 30 qualified biologists who are certified to act as wing checkers. This year, at the Pacific Flyway event held at the Coleman National Fish Hatchery, there were 30 biologists and 6 checkers present. In addition there were groups of students on field trips or interested individuals who came out to watch the process. There is a YouTube video available under Pacific Flyway Wing Bee or you can go to the link at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9KqfuqKXW4> if you would like to see how this is conducted.

Because there are subtle differences in the molt patterns,

the way old feathers are replaced in duck and goose wings; it is possible to separate young of the year from older aged birds. Also there are subtle difference between males and females which allows the sexes to be separated. So by using these characteristics it is possible to tell the difference between adult males (AM) and juvenile males (IM) and between adult females (AF) and juvenile females (IF) and males from females. It is also possible to separate all the species of ducks, except blue-wing from cinnamon teal, by their wing patterns and all species of geese by their tail feathers.



The Fish and Wildlife Service put out a manual on how to determining the age, sex, and species of ducks a number of years ago, but sadly it has gone out of print. For those interested in learning how this is done, there is a digital copy of that manual at: <https://digitalmedia.fws.gov/digital/collection/document/id/1407/>

Continued on Page 7...

IT'S BEEN FUN NEVADA; YOU HAVE BEEN GOOD TO ME!

By Ben Sedinger

In 2002 I was 18 years old and I moved from Fairbanks, Alaska, where I grew up, to attend college at the University of Nevada – Reno. Given the proximity of Alaska to the rest of the United States, I had not spent much time in the lower-48 and had never been to Nevada. I wasn't sure what to think of Reno when I first got here, other than I knew it was HOT and there were no trees! I now call this great state home and have come to love the basin and range topography, great fishing, long waterfowl seasons and other amazing hunting and outdoor opportunities that abound.

Not long after starting in the wildlife program at UNR I began working in a lab studying mercury emission and deposition across Nevada and Utah. I was incredibly lucky to get paid to travel to remote parts of the state, and it was during these trips that I started to find gems hidden among the dry playas and hot desert heat. One of the beauties about this type of field work was that the equipment was mostly automated; as soon as I got everything up and running I had down time to explore long-abandoned old mines and hot springs and to see plenty of wildlife along the way. I got really lost on the way from one of my first trips to Paradise Valley because I was so excited to continue exploring I decided to take the backroads home and knew I had made a mistake when the road I was on slowly petered

out into a sandy wash. The sun was going down and I realized, that being from Alaska where the sun does weird things, I didn't know if it set in the east or the west. Somehow I made it home and bought a Nevada Gazetteer the next day.

During the summers and after graduating I worked all sorts of temporary wildlife-technician jobs. I spent many months working on goose projects up in Alaska on the Yukon Kuskokwim River Delta. I studied songbirds in Tahoe and shorebirds along the Missouri River. I worked on greater sage grouse near Mammoth Lakes, California and Gunnison sage grouse in Colorado. I spent some time working for the National Park Service in Alaska doing monitoring and inventory work in national parks that are only accessible by airplane, boat or on foot. These experiences are part of the reason I chose this field and while I have some catching up to do (or growing up?), I would not trade this life for anything!

In 2011 I was wrapping up a morning hunt at Stillwater NWR. It had been a little slow on the west side of the marsh but we did have a few goldeneyes in the bag. After spending some time with a warden and his bird ID book, we were packing up when Chris Nicolai and his graduate student, Steve Olson drove by. Long story short my buddy had afternoon obligations and had to get back to town so I hunted with Chris and Steve and learned Chris was looking for a new graduate student to run his wood duck project in Fallon. Some months went by

and I decided to call Nicolai to find out more about the project and the rest is history.

My introduction to the wood duck project started at 4am on a beautiful February day in 2012. Chris is never late, ever, but he overslept that day or was testing me, I'm still not sure which. Either way, we headed out to Fallon so he could introduce me to folks and show me the lay of the land. Between the early wakeup, nerves and some bad takeout the night before, I was having a bit of gastrointestinal discomfort which had no place in the plans Nicolai had for us that day; We did stop by the field house just long enough to find out that the toilet was already clogged. We toured most of the 26 properties that made up the study area and I got a good taste of what was to come. Fallon is a unique place and wood ducks are unique ducks and I could not wait to learn more about both.

Over the next six years I spent 20 months in Fallon collecting data for my PhD. The bulk of my work involved catching and banding wood ducks and monitoring nest boxes but we also banded good numbers of mallards. We were always working and a huge part of the project was organizing and managing volunteers to help get the work done. We spent time with elementary, high school, college students, and parents. We took out hunters who had shot wood ducks and we took out folks who were against hunting. Regardless of background, we all handled living ducks and talked about why we band them. It turns out

that people like ducks and they like spending time outside. For me, this was one of the most fulfilling parts of this project.

The landowners were also a great part of the project I was not necessarily expecting. In addition to opening up their properties to us, many also became friends. They offered meals when I had been working all day, and cold beverages, and great conversation. There were times when I had so much work to do I dreaded going to certain properties because I knew it was going to hinder my progress for the day but I always left in better condition than I had arrived in. Life gets busy and stressful, if there is anything I learned in Fallon, it is that a deep breath; cold beer and good company can solve many of our woes.

Like most careers, the wildlife profession has a series of steps to climb before actually becoming a card-carrying biologist. Working as a field technician is one of these and if you are lucky, the position will offer some pay and housing in exchange for dedicating your entire life to the project for a few months. This can be difficult to explain to non-biologists, “You work 80 hours a week but don’t get paid overtime?” or “you lived in a tent for three months?” or “why can’t you just take the weekend off?” Over the years I worked with four great people that we hired to help me in Fallon: Justin Duke, Andrew Bouton, Walker Price and Catrina Terry. When we hired them, these folks were all fresh out of undergraduate programs from across the country and full

of enthusiasm. Not one of them complained about the work schedule or living conditions. The only complaint I could count on, usually sometime in July, was how HOT it was! Our only access to air conditioning was in the trucks so we just worked more, at a little slower pace on account of the heat.

My graduate research was focused on three questions: 1) how does hunting affect the number of wood ducks we will have next year, 2) how does hunting affect wood duck survival rates, and 3) how can wood duck hens affect the survival of their ducklings (think good versus bad parenting). I have thoroughly enjoyed working on this project and I believe the findings are an important contribution to waterfowl science.

I found that hunting does not affect change in abundance, from one year to the next, or survival because of something we call compensation. The idea is that resources, like food and nest sites, are limiting so when some individuals are removed through hunting, there is more to go around for the ducks that survived, and they survive at a higher rate. Also, just like humans, individual ducks are all different and we think that hunters tend (unintentionally) to shoot the ducks that are less likely to survive and reproduce, even in the absence of hunting. So by removing them, we and natural processes, are both taking the individuals that, “would have died anyways” and that would have not contributed to the population in the future. Along the lines that all ducks are

different, I also found that wood duck moms can affect the survival of their offspring based on when they start nesting, how much energy they invest in each egg (size of eggs), and where they take their broods after they hatch.

Now I am 35 years old and just landed a job as the Kennedy-Grohne Chair in Waterfowl and Wetlands ecology at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point where I will be doing cool waterfowl research and teaching courses in waterfowl ecology and wildlife techniques. I plan to continue working on wood ducks and harvest dynamics and I hope to expand my research to include other species like long-tailed ducks and ring-necked ducks. I have friends from high school that are halfway to retirement and I just got my first ‘real’ job, but the path to get here has sure been lots of fun. And, once again, I find myself cautiously optimistic to move to a new state and start the whole process of finding the ‘goods’ all over again but the journey is half the fun!

This project was truly a community effort. I need to thank the following people and organizations for their support. NDOW – Duck stamp and Heritage funds. NWA – Money and grant administration. CWA – Dennis Raveling Scholarship. Delta Waterfowl – Research funding. Delta Waterfowl and Ducks Unlimited Canada - Dave Ankney and Sandi Johnson waterfowl scholarship. CABNR - Jay Dow Sr. Scholarship. UNR GSA – Travel grants. Nevada Record Book. USDA. USFWS –

Region 8 migratory birds, Stillwater NWR, and the Reno Field Office. NBU scholarship. Four Flyways Outfitters. My mentors and graduate committee: Chris Nicolai, Kelley Stewart, Dave Koons, Paul Hurtado, and Angela Smilanich. Landowners: Albaugh, Bell, Dillon, Frey, Ghetto, Gill, Goin, Hancock, Harriman, Hauk, Huckins, Lattin, McArthur, Mill, Mogg, Mori, O'Connor, Ogden, O'Shaughnessey, Perazzo, Rechel, Spencer, Twe, Venturacci, Wolf, Flowertree. Previous technicians and students: Naomi Baucom, Curt Kleist, Tailor Sponcey and Steve Olson. Bill Henry. Steve Davis.

... Continued from page 4

At the wing-bee, biologists open each envelope, and based upon the criteria for each species, it is possible for them to determine the sex, age, and species of each wing. After the biologists have made their determination and marked the appropriate box, they pass the wing and envelope to the end of the table where it is checked by the checker and any corrections are made. Every wing in the survey is worked by a biologist and a checker at least three times before the data is ready to be entered into the computer file.

Data from this survey is used to determine how well the separate breeding species reproduced during the nesting season. If the duck breeding pair survey, conducted in May, showed that the breeding population is at a high level, but there are fewer than average number of immature birds

recorded in this survey, then managers know the birds were not as successful in raising their broods the previous summer and that they can expect the next year's breeding population to probably decline. We can also tell which species were able to reproduce better under the Differing conditions the previous summer.

This survey also gives indications of the size and makeup of the harvest. It gives waterfowl managers an idea of what the percentage and the size that each species makes up in the previous year's harvest. As an example, if we estimate that the harvest in the Pacific Flyway, based upon the HIP survey and questionnaires, is approximately 2,000,000 ducks and 8% of the wings submitted to the survey are from pintails, then we can estimate that about 160,000 pintails were harvested that year in the Pacific Flyway.

All in all, the wing-bee survey is an important tool in the management of the nation's waterfowl resource.



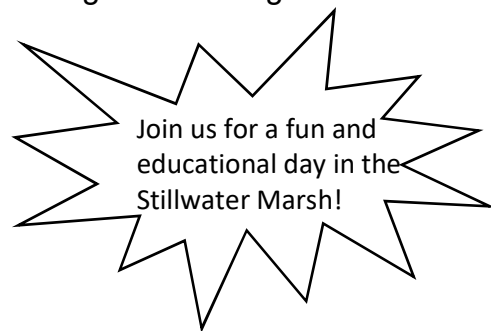
2019 Nevada Youth Waterfowl Day

Presented by: Canvasback Gun Club • Nevada Ducks Unlimited • Nevada Waterfowl Association

WHO: Anyone under 15 years old. Please feel free to pass this form along to your friends! (Parents are welcome to accompany their children, or we can always use a few more volunteers.)

WHAT: This event is put on each year to educate young people about waterfowl, the importance of marsh habitat, conservation, and activities associated with the duck and goose hunting as well as other healthy outdoor activities.

✓ Bird banding ✓ Gun dog demo ✓ Boat ride in the marsh
✓ Clay target shooting ✓ Archery ✓ Duck calling ✓ Decoy painting
✓ Games and art ✓ Raffle prizes ✓ Lunch...and more!



WHEN: Saturday, June 15, 2019, 8:15am - 1:30pm

WHERE: Canvasback Gun Club – approximately 20 miles east of Fallon, NV

COST: FREE!!! However, we do require pre-registration and are limited to the first 100 kids! (There is a \$5 charge for each adult lunch - cash collected at the event.)

RSVP: Please complete the registration form below and email it to nvwaterfowlkids@gmail.com no later than JUNE 8th, 2019.

PLEASE PRINT – EACH PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE A DUCKS UNLIMITED SUBSCRIPTION

▪ Full Name _____	Birthdate _____
Address _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
▪ Full Name _____	Birthdate _____
Address _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
▪ Full Name _____	Birthdate _____
Address _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
▪ Full Name _____	Birthdate _____
Address _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
▪ Parent/Guardian/Volunteer email: _____	
▪ Total number of participants: _____	▪ Total number of adults eating lunch: _____
▪ Volunteer names: _____	

THANK YOU TO OUR MANY GENEROUS DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE!

Nevada Waterfowl Association

*Waterfowl have
been decoyed
in Nevada for
1000's of years.....*



*Nevada Waterfowl
Association works
hard to keep
it that way*

Dinner and Fundraiser

Please join us and meet with other Waterfowl enthusiasts!

April 27, 2019

at the *ATLANTIS CASINO RESORT SPA*

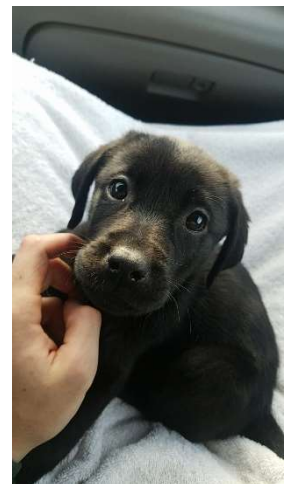
3800 S VIRGINIA STREET, RENO, NV 89502

Doors Open 5:30 p.m., Dinner at 7:00

At the Auction this year we will have:

2019 Nevada Heritage Antelope Tag

Female Black lab Puppy



Visit us for more information
www.nevadawaterfowl.org

Tickets are ready
Contact Susan Merideth for
tickets (775) 853-8331
or Daryl Harwell (775) 240-5682