

**BOB LAMB**

# These 'NASA' members are on a mission

**T**here they were, three men crammed into a tiny office not much larger than our nation's first outer-space capsule.

The men, all officers with NASA, spoke as one as they described the purpose, goal and future of their program.

**■ The goal of the North American Squirrel Association is to help disabled and elderly hunters in the Coulee Region.**

football coach and teacher, and the group's money chief.

"Yeah, but they won't let me touch the money," said Cayler, laughing.



**Bob Lamb /**  
Tribune Outdoors Editor

NASA — the North American Squirrel Association — is just getting off the ground but is gaining speed each minute.

"Carl dreamed up the name," said Tony Christnovich, pointing toward Carl Peterson, the group's vice president/secretary.

Christnovich, NASA president and longtime coach and teacher at Central High School, pointed to the other side of the cramped athletic office.

"Dave is our treasurer," Christnovich said, nodding toward Dave Cayler, Central

Seriously, NASA mightnot have much money yet, but you can bet it will in the very near future once people learn about the group's purpose. NASA, you see, wants to help disabled and elderly hunters in the Coulee Region.

"We're different from a lot of groups because 100 percent of our money will stay right here in the La Crosse area," Christnovich said.

"For many disabled and senior hunters, there's a will, but no way. We hope to change that," Christnovich said.

But how?

"Our first goal is to raise enough money to build two deer hunting stands for wheel-chaired access at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge," Christnovich said.

The group also hopes to generate a list of disabled or elderly hunters who would enjoy having a NASA member take them out hunting their favorite wild game.

Once the final legal documents are signed, sealed and delivered, NASA will be a nonprofit association. The group hopes to have a few hundred dollars left to buy lumber and begin work on the deer stands.

Money raised so far is the result of the North American Squirrel Derby, another name coined by Peterson.

"To be the North American champion is prestigious, don't you think?" said Peterson, chuckling and acknowledging that he won this year's derby with five squirrels.

While only five hunters participated in the unofficial derby one year ago, this year's hunt ballooned. After the derby, a banquet was held at the Rustic Valley Inn in Coon Valley, Wis., where 25 hunters became "official" NASA members.

Thanks to several local sponsors and membership fees, the group generated enough funds to launch their program.

"We're shooting for 50 members by this time next year," Christnovich said. "A lot of guys are saying it's a real good cause so, hopefully, it will grow."

For membership information, call Christnovich at (608) 781-3636 or Peterson at (608) 452-3393.

Disabled hunters or elderly hunters wishing to be placed on a list to be taken out hunting may write to Tony Christnovich, W7905 County Road ZB, Onalaska, WI 54650. They should include their name, phone number and the different types of wild game they enjoy hunting.



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Christnovich



Cayler



Peterson