

ED ZERN

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Ed Zern, author, conservationist, and outdoorsman, died on Friday, March 25, 1994, at Stamford Hospital in Stamford, Connecticut. Cause of death was Parkinson's disease. Mr. Zern, who had been living in the Courtland Gardens Nursing Home in Stamford, was 83.

Best known for his, "Exit Laughing" column, which appeared in *Field & Stream* magazine for over thirty years, beginning in November 1958, Mr. Zern brought a fine sense of irreverence to the hunting and fishing scene. He created a special world where nothing was sacred and everything was good for a laugh. With a straight face that was sometimes misinterpreted, Mr. Zern introduced his readers to a strange mixture of saints, fools, liars ("Fishermen are born honest, but they get over it," he noted), and befuddled souls who marched to the beat of some very odd drums - such as the hat salesman who insisted that the "L" and "M" labels sewn in hats stood for "Lady's" and "Men's," and when asked what the "S" in some of them stood for, declared that since the hats were quite small, it probably stood for "Schoolboy."

Nothing in the world according

to Zern was what it seemed. In one column, Mr. Zern proved that Izaak Walton did not exist, and his book, The Compleat Angler, had nothing to do with fishing, but was actually a political allegory meant to praise Charles II and condemn the forces of Oliver Cromwell.

Although Mr. Zern was best known by fishermen and hunters throughout the world, his fame was also widespread in non-sporting circles,

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thanks in part to his much-quoted review of D.H. Lawrence's, Lady Chatterly's Lover. In his best deadpan manner, Mr. Zern wrote that though the book "contains many passages on pheasant raising, the apprehending of poachers, ways of controlling vermin, and other chores of the professional gamekeeper, one is obliged to wade through many pages of extraneous material in order to discover and savor these sidelights...and in this reviewer's opinion this book cannot take the place of J.R. Miller's, Practical Gamekeeping."

Mr. Zern was born in West Virginia and grew up in Pennsylvania. He graduated from Penn State in 1932, and after a year in Paris "working on a novel," he joined an advertising agency in Philadelphia, and later in New York City,



where he originated and created a famous series of pun-filled ads for Nash cars, illustrated with his unique drawings, which also appeared with his "Exit Laughing" columns.

In 1965, Mr. Zern decided to devote himself full-time to fishing, hunting, traveling, and writing, including the Fishing Department of *Field & Stream*, which he wrote from 1975 to 1982.

Mr. Zern was a member of many sportsman's and conservation groups, including Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, where he was past president, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and the Boone and Crockett Club. He was a Professional member of the Boone and Crockett Club beginning in 1967 until 1975 when he became a Regular member. Mr. Zern maintained his membership with the Club throughout the years and eventually was voted an Emeritus member in 1993.

In 1954, he founded a major conservation award program, first sponsored by American Motors and later by Chevron, and by Chevron in conjunction with the Times Mirror Magazines Conservation Council.

In addition to *Field & Stream*, Mr. Zern wrote for many magazines, including *Audubon* and *Sports Illustrated*, and published seven books, including To Hell With Fishing, To Hell With Hunting, How to Tell Fish From Fisherman, Are Fisherman People, A Fine Kettle of Fish Stories, and Hunting and Fishing from A to Zern.

Mr. Zern is survived by his long-time companion, Sandra Weiner; daughter, Erica; son, Brook; daughter-in-law, Kristin; granddaughters, Francesca and Jennifer; and brother, Gordon.

IN THE OCTOBER 1963 ISSUE OF *FIELD & STREAM*, MR. ZERN WROTE ABOUT AN "INTRODUCTION OF A NEW AND DIFFERENT VARIETY OF STUD POKER" CALLED "HI-MIDDLE-LO MOOSE," CREATED BY MR. DAVID BASCOM. MR. ZERN WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THE WACKY RULES, ONE OF WHICH DESCRIBED HOW ANY PLAYER WHO WAS DEALT A RED QUEEN, FACE-UP WOULD HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE A SAID AMOUNT OF MONEY TO THE POT AND THEN PROCEED OUTSIDE TO LOOK FOR A MOOSE.

HOW TO PLAY POKER

