

Official Publication for the members of the Professional Bowhunters Society

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE



UNITED WE ACT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BOWHUNTING
THE GREATEST OF SPORTS



Knowledge through Experience

PBS members are some of the world's most experienced bowhunters and our goal is to share our experience and knowledge. From Alaska to Africa, Mongolia to Montana, Australia to Hawaii or just in the back 40 our members have been there and are dedicated to helping make your next hunt a success.

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**United we act for
Preserving Bowhunting's
Traditional Values**

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THE GREATEST OF SPORTS



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THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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President's Message

by Jim Akenson
micaake@yahoo.com

Circling Back Around, To Who We Are

For starters, and as promised in St. Augustine, the 2018 Gathering site will be announced in this 2nd Quarter Magazine. The next Gathering will happen at the Madison Marriot West in Middleton, Wisconsin! This is the same site where the Wisconsin Traditional Archers have met for several years in succession. This facility and their staff are very accommodating; the site is conveniently located – to other restaurants and shopping, and it will be affordable. The negotiated room price is \$109.00 with a good chance for another \$10.00 per room reduction off of that through a tourism grant program. The facility is handy for parking – no cost, and there is a tram that runs into Madison for a wide variety of family activities. I have to extend a big thank you to Mike Theis for scouting out important information on the Madison area. A big thank you is also in order for Herb Higgins for scouting out several facilities in and around Indianapolis, Indiana.

Lately there has been more and more discussion about video products that carry the PBS brand – both from the recent past and ones currently being produced. So why does PBS invest in these? I'll use an example to answer this question. This past weekend I met with other bowhunting organization leaders at the Western States Traditional Shoot held in central Oregon. Combating the onslaught of crossbows was the primary discussion, along with other "technological creep." It was discussed that there needs to be a short, direct, product that defines bowhunting – truly a familiar concept! As most of you are aware, a few years ago we produced the Journey of Challenge (JOC) video. This was an effort led by Mark Baker and Tim Roberts which included a brochure to promote the video, and it defines bowhunting under the "umbrella of Fair-Chase." Mark and Tim have used JOC products heavily in Montana, and now Oregon

bowhunting leaders are agreeing that it has a valuable place to inform decision makers as crossbow manufacturers are lobbying hard to include crossbows as legal weapons in Oregon. The JOC is a great product to support our claim on the cover of every magazine that states: "United We Act for the Preservation of Bowhunting." Well done Mark and Tim, it shows that it has lasting quality as we circle back for another look!

As for new or upcoming PBS video/media products, the presentation delivered by Monty Browning in St. Augustine was a true classic of our organization. It is amazing how a combination of images and music – mixed with a little bit of dialogue, can capture the essence of the half century of PBS legacy on "Knowledge Through Experience." Both Monty and Wade Jobs (the actual techno-producer) deserve the equivalent of a PBS Emmy for their extraordinary volunteer efforts!

Finally, like the JOC with PBS financial backing, we are supporting another effort to show "who we are." This production is called "Ascent" and Clay Hayes and his Twisted Stave Company have used a float hunt for mule-deer in central Idaho to illustrate what the complete package of traditional values are all about! Clay nails the "who we are" part. His production is extra special for me as the setting is my old stomping grounds in the Salmon River Mountains – and pursuing my absolute favorite species to bowhunt – so nicely documented! Keep an eye peeled for this release which will be available very soon.

As a final note,

we need to expand our financial base beyond one major fund raiser per two years. In my remaining months as president I hope to lay the ground work for multiple Odd Year Gatherings which have a small, yet significant, fund raising component. We need to get together "regionally," shoot targets, hunt, have fun, and pitch in on a simple, modest, fundraiser. There will be more to follow on this OYG fund raising topic, but I want to end with a final "circling-back-thought" that is related. Four years ago, my friend and PBS mentor Vern Struble was in his last 3 months of life. Holly and I were visiting him and his wife Fran, filling him in on the Portland Gathering events from that March. I was excited to tell him about the membership meeting and the enthusiasm for the regional hunt concept – and expanding it across the country with distinct regions. Vern was frail, but he perked up and said, "Folks just don't get together like they should in a brotherhood, so that would be good – people need to get back to bowhunting together because it is fun to do, and fun to share." I might have one or two words off, but the gist is right on, and I feel – so is the concept!

Have a great summer!

~ Jim A.



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Vice President's Message

by Norm Johnson

norm@blacktailbows.com

My column for this issue will be brief. My fellow Councilmen have put together some great columns this issue. In their own way each has done an outstanding job of articulating not only the "what a big part of their life the PBS has been" but also "what a positive experience it has been."

On another topic I have asked chair of our publicity committee Ethan Rodrigue to write an informative article about bowhunting opportunity in his home state of Tennessee. This article will be the first of an ongoing feature that will become a regular part of our magazine. Season dates, control hunts, animal species, will be just part of the article. I am sure we will refine as we go and try to improve with each issue.

The end goal is to introduce a new state with each quarter. We will call on members from around the country to write an article featuring their home state.

Or maybe you have a neighboring state that you do the majority of your bowhunting in and you would like to share your knowledge of that state. It is my hope that members can find this part of the magazine a valuable resource that can be used and shared. It will also be a tool to help bring more member participation to the magazine as well.

If you are reading this and you want to volunteer to feature your home state or a state that you regularly hunt please feel free to contact Ethan, myself, or anyone on Council for assistance.

As fall quickly approaches I want to wish our members a safe and successful hunting season. If you are sharing a hunt with a non PBS member please take the time to sign them up or encourage them to join.

Sincerely,

~ Norm J.



PBS 2017 Elections

Three Council positions
will be open:

- President
- Vice President
- Three Year Councilman

If you or some other Regular member of PBS would like to be considered for a position, **please send your nominations to the PBS Home Office no later than July 31, 2016.** This nomination must indicate the position sought and must include signed endorsements by five other Regular members.

The nominations will be reviewed by the Nomination Committee and the final Candidates will be chosen to run for the Office.

Candidate profiles will appear in PBS Magazines' Fourth Quarter 2016 issue.

Regular Membership Candidate

We list the following names of members who have applied for regular membership in PBS. These individuals have completed a lengthy application and are currently under review by the Executive Council.

If you are a regular member and see any reason why any of these applicants should not be accepted, please send a signed letter stating your reasons to PBS Senior Councilman Matt Schuster, 1663 Ivey Road, Warrenton, GA 30828.

Please note, the Council can only take into consideration statements that can be defended. **FACTUAL STATEMENTS ONLY**, not hearsay or personal unfounded opinions, can be considered as reasons to reject any of these applicants.

PBS Officers and Council

Associates applying for Regular status:

Patrick Spivey – Benton, AR

Rob Patuto – Sand Point, ID

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July 20th for 3rd Qtr. 2016 issue
Oct. 20th for 4th Qtr 2016 issue
Jan. 20th for 1st Qtr. 2017 issue

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Senior Council's Report

by Matt Schuster

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I can't remember when I first became aware of the PBS, but I do remember wondering how there could be enough bowhunters making a living in the bowhunting business to have their own organization. I never considered joining and didn't investigate further because of the name, but a few years later when I was in my late twenties I started hunting with Wayne "Biggie" Hoffman who suggested that I belonged in PBS and would really enjoy the organization. He was right. Many of my closest friends and most frequent hunting partners I met through PBS. So for me, the most important feature of PBS has been, and continues to be, the opportunity to meet, befriend, and network with some of the best bowhunters and finest people on Earth. I think most of us that have been in PBS a long time and have attended numerous events feel the same way. My attraction and love of PBS is not JUST about equipment but my guess is that most of us, when describing PBS to a friend, do mention that PBS is made up almost entirely of traditional bowhunters. That is unlikely to change, and I hope this organization is still around and important to its members when I am long gone.

The reason I bring all this up is that despite a wonderful Gathering in March, PBS is at a crossroads. Like a lot of small organizations, the ease with which folks can network on the internet has made recruitment difficult, and if we don't begin to grow (we did grow in 2015, but stepped back in 2016) then we will eventually experience financial problems. We are doing some great things to attract new members, but the best thing we can do is to get our house in order. It is no secret that the discussions over the ID Statement and

whether or not PBS should define itself as a traditional bowhunting organization was heated, and it cost us some members. The vote on the ID Statement was unfortunate, failing to pass only because votes to abstain were, in essence, counted as no votes. It would have been better for it to have passed or to have lost in a much closer vote. Instead, some of the almost 66% of those voting to pass it feel cheated, and some of the rest feel like a marginalized minority. So how do we move forward? We (Council) have to acknowledge the voting pattern and will govern accordingly. Thus our marketing efforts will be toward the traditional community and those interested in becoming part of it. Of course, any bowhunter who agrees to abide by our By-Laws and Code-Of-Ethics is welcome to join as an associate. However it is obvious that our growth will come from the same place it has come from in the past - traditional bowhunters. What won't happen is the drawing of any line in the sand concerning modern archery equipment beyond what we put in our COE. Better anyway to spend our efforts promoting the things we love - woodsmanship, short-range bowhunting, and simple bows, and not to waste time telling folks that are uninterested in us that we don't like their equipment. They won't listen anyway. For those who simply cannot stay in an organization made up of 97% traditional bowhunters because it is not 100% traditional, they can move on. They will be missed and are welcome back when they realize that we will attract more traditional bowhunters by talking about the rich rewards of becoming a traditional bowhunter and not by bashing other equipment. I'll put my traditional bona fides up against anyone's, and have zero interest in modern equipment, but as obtuse as I can be, even I realize that most future longbow shooters are shooting compounds now. When a modern bowhunter is ready, we can show him a more rewarding way. Let's not alienate those that might come our way before they have a chance to hear our message.

In December 2014, ten PBS members hunted Blackbeard Island off the coast of Georgia. Out of 150 hunters camped out in a big field for the hunt, well over half were

shooting traditional equipment. An impressive number of these folks were under the age of forty and like good PBS members, we talked to quite a few of them. Without fail, these younger folks asked each of us what our handle was on the more popular traditional bowhunting internet sites. It was apparent that they do not read magazines, or feel attracted to many organizations, but do everything over the web. To attract and keep both younger members like these, as well as tech-savvy older bowhunters, we need to revamp our website and Facebook presence to make them more modern, more interactive, and more interesting, and we are working on that. Progress sometimes comes slowly in all volunteer organizations, but this will get done. Soon potential new members who hear about us at an event, through an ad in Traditional Bowhunter Magazine, or through our sponsorship of Clay Hayes' videos, will, with one click, be able to see what we are all about. And we hope a more interactive site will encourage members to post more pictures, videos, articles, etc and that the site will begin to grow organically. If, like me, you are not all that interested in this stuff, nothing will change. You can get your information the old fashioned way through the magazine.

As I said earlier, PBS needs to grow. PBS is not for everyone so we will always experience some attrition as people join and realize that they do not belong. That is ok. We have a distinct culture and attract members who have made bowhunting a priority in their lives. Because of this, the best way for us to grow is through you, our members, inviting in people that you think belong. We have a lot to offer - not just great fellowship, but the magazine, the hunts, the Gatherings, and in the near future, an exciting web presence. If just half of us recruit one good new member, we sure could experience some impressive growth and, if you believe in PBS, your recruit will thank you for introducing him to such a great organization.

Hope you are all getting ready for a great fall, and I hope to see you in the woods somewhere.

~ Matt S.

Council's Report

by Terry Receveur

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By the time you read this, summer will be almost over and many will be planning for some great fall adventures. I know that I have at least four more hunts planned with fellow PBS'rs. This will bring my 2016 total to 7 outings with my brothers of the bow. That, my friends, is why we belong to the PBS! We joined because we love bowhunting and felt we could learn a thing or two from some of the other members. We also felt like we might be able to share an experience or two and help out another hunting friend. That's what I love about the PBS. It's sharing our knowledge through experience. I know for a fact that my life has been enriched by belonging to the PBS. I have numerous fond memories of hunts and adventures I've shared with some of you. Let me just name a couple:

- 3 AM brain – Terry: "Hey Jeff, grab the gator by the back leg and I'll grab the other leg and we'll try to pull him out." Jeff: "Ok"! Terry: "Emily, put the boat in reverse and let's see if we can pull this alligator out of the bushes." Where else in the world can you meet a bowhunter that is as crazy as you are? Jeff Holchin never even hesitated about grabbing a 10' fully agitated alligator. We both reached our hands down into the dark tannin stained water and grabbed the gator by the leg and my daughter put the boat in reverse.

We are pretty fortunate that our ill-conceived plan didn't work. I've seen many alligators easily, and very quickly, flip back and bite something near its leg. On this same trip my daughter asked me "Why doesn't mom ever come?" I said she just hasn't shown much interest. A bit later I had a 9' alligator by the snout trying to hold it so Daniel Holchin could tape its mouth shut. I was on my knees, on the bow of the boat, and the gator decided to do a tail whip and death roll simultaneously. Let me tell you, you cannot hold onto a 9' alligator when it decides to roll! The roll and the tail whip caused it to break loose and lunge forward. I fell back and the gator's jaws snapped closed inches from my face. My daughter looked at me and said, "It's probably best that mom doesn't come along!"

- Dancing on the Hudson – Regular member Sean Bleakley and I were out bowfishing with a couple other guys on a Regional Hunt. We were bowfishing the Hudson River near Catskill, NY at night. We decided to try our luck up in Catskill Creek. As we were working our way into a shallow area and setting up for some action we were trolling by a local riverside restaurant. It was a beautiful summer night and the riverside deck was full of people and the music was playing. What's a guy to do? It was a beautiful night, the stars were shining, and the music was playing. I reached over and grabbed Sean by the hands and we had us a little waltz on the deck of my boat. Again, Sean never even hesitated. Sean is a big ole rough retired police officer, yet he waltzes like a prince. Ha! Again, where else can you meet guys like us?

- Moose Help – It took 11 years to draw a coveted Wyoming Shiras moose tag. As with most Western hunts the preparation and logistics can be difficult for us Eastern boys. However, due to the PBS, we had a significant advantage. Several PBSrs stepped up and really helped out. Nathan Fikkert, Jeff Holchin, and Vance Brewer provided vital scouting



information. My great friend Jeff even sacrificed valuable hunting days to join me on the hunt. Another logistical difficulty is the transporting of a comfortable camp across the US. Again, a PBS brother stepped up and volunteered his equipment for our use. Thanks to Craig Burris, we enjoyed a very comfortable wall tent, tent stove, terrific Camp Chef cooking gear (PBS'r Guy Perkins to thank for these), and some wonderful company! Craig drove nearly 4 hours from his Utah home just to deliver and set up the camp. Our hunting strategy was to call bulls into shooting range by having me positioned in front of the callers in hopes that they could pull the bull past me in close range. This was a great plan except Jeff and Tyler had never called moose before. Recently deceased PBS'r Larry Fischer to the rescue! Larry was as good as they get in calling Shiras moose. Several pre-hunt phone calls and even a mid-hunt phone call and Jeff and Tyler were ready for the hunt. Guys, this is what the PBS is about.

I could go on and on with great stories and memories made with my PBS brothers (ask Kevin Bahr about a porcupine climbing up his leg), but you get the point. I won't even pretend that the PBS is a perfect organization. Granted there are many things we need to work on, but I have to say there is one element of the PBS that just can't be beat. **Fraternalism!** The rest is just chaff in the wind.

Make plans now to get out and share a hunt with a PBS brother. Aim small and miss small!

~ Terry R.

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Contact PBS member Ron Tandy at:
ronsantandy@gmail.com
or (941) 697-8719 EST



Council's Report

by Rob Burnham

rob@burnhamphotography.com

and over. The overwhelming majority of our members are hunting with stickbows and we have a "Code of Ethics" in place that defines what PBS deems as proper equipment. Our Constitution and Bylaws refers to the Code of Ethics in the following Article.

ARTICLE VIII - Code of Ethics
All members of the Professional Bowhunters Society shall observe and adhere to the Code of Ethics as adopted and amended by the Society

Now that I hopefully have your attention I'd like to say that we on Council are united and agree 110 percent that we move forward by showing others, that are curious or interested in our way, the path that is far more rewarding. We will catch far more fish by showing who and what we are in a positive way than we will by criticizing and looking down our noses at how they might be currently doing things. The opportunities are endless, it's just a matter of PBS seizing them.

Within the next year you will see a new PBS brochure, new updated website, the launching of the "Legacy Program" and many other projects that are in the works. Input from our membership is paramount in accomplishing the goals that we have set. As I mentioned above, this has to be a unified group effort if we are to succeed. If you have ideas that you would like to see come to life then you need to share them. I will promise that if you contact me, you will have my undivided attention. We can and we will make PBS the organization that it once was.

Summer is upon

us, fall is only a few months away as is elk season. Hopefully some of you have already or will soon be going afield for spring gobbler and black bear. Work has held me back this year along with a broken wrist thanks to an untimely fall. Don't ask! It does suck getting old, we just don't heal as fast and definitely are not as agile. On the flip side I have an elk hunt planned for late August and the cast on my left wrist is due off the first week of July. If I can't shoot my bow by August, looks like I will be helping pack out my PBS brother's elk instead of my own. I'll be on the hunt either way.

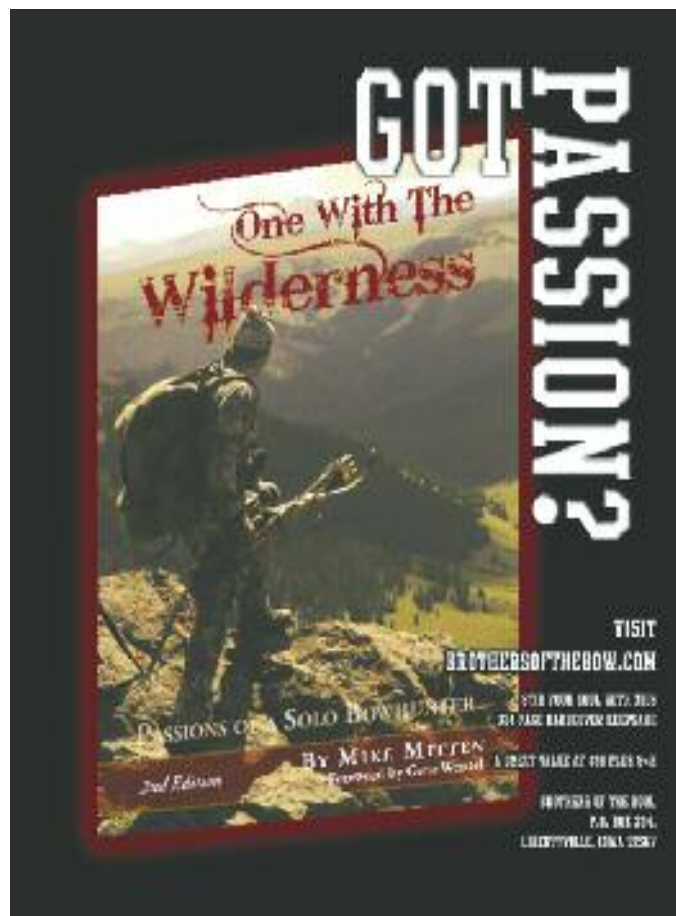
Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members that voted in the last election as well as Paul Ladner for stepping up at the last minute to run for office. I will do my absolute very best to fill these shoes, but I plan on having plenty of help from our membership, as this is a team effort.

~ Rob B.

Sipping on the morning's first cup of coffee while thinking back to St. Augustine, where did the time go? I've been on the Council for three months already and much has happened within PBS. We, fellow PBS members, have seen a lot of changes within our organization over the past few years. Although we may not like some of those changes as individuals, as a group I feel we will benefit from these decisions. Coming on board was totally unexpected, but I greatly appreciate the confidence bestowed in me and I will make it my mission to do everything within my ability to keep PBS moving forward.

Some of you will no doubt ask how certain decisions and outcomes could possibly help? Well for starters, I'm a "glass is half full" type of person. I believe that if you want something bad enough and are willing to put forth the effort that anything can be accomplished. Since PBS is made up of many members, I will start by saying the growth of our organization will hinge on the efforts of not any one person but the entire membership as a whole. Within PBS we have a wide range of what seems to be our most important qualities. One thing that we can't overlook is that no matter how it's presented, PBS is a traditional bowhunting group. Spin it any way you want, somewhere around 98% of us are hunting with traditional bows. So does equipment matter?

Our proposed Identity Statement failed to pass, but regardless we still have an identity. No one looks at PBS as an organization of bowhunters, they see us as the group that hunts with stick and string. Where am I going with this you ask? Well simply put, we need not rehash this over



Announcements – Second Quarter 2016

• Both the President and Vice President Office will be open for election Jan. 2017. Nominations will need 5 endorsing regular members (signatures). *Submit these to Home Office by August 1, 2016.*

• The Regional Hunt Program will be selling raffle tickets (\$20.00 each) for hunting opportunities in 4 regions. Site details to follow. Either visit the website for details or contact Jeff Holchin for more information.

• Clay Hayes's video titled "Ascent" is available to view at: www.twistedstave.com

• Before August 1, 2016 we will be holding an on-line auction. Proceeds will be used to help finance website improvements.

• Please review the Strategic Plan in this magazine. Email your comments to probowhunter@roadrunner.com, or comment on the website thread titled "Strategic Plan Comments."

PBS Publicity Committee Report

2nd Quarter, 2015 – By Ethan Rodrigue

The publicity committee is working with Council on putting together a new PBS brochure. We are attempting to put forth what PBS is all about in a positive light. We have many good things happening with PBS right now and we need to get the word out. Naturally it will contain our

mission statement, regional program, and a brief explanation of our organization, and new pictures of members. Anyone interested in helping out on our committee please contact me, we'd love all the help we can get!

We are also working on a few ideas that

we feel will better help us to get our message out. With approval from Council we'd like to make it easier for members to set up small booths at shoots and gatherings across the country. We have a fantastic large booth for major indoor events. However the logistics of shipping and setting up

a booth like this at outdoor shoots in various places and having to contend with weather, electrical hook ups, and multiple members to man the booth are somewhat cumbersome. For the past several years I have set up a booth at the Tennessee Classic with little more than a small table, some brochures, a laptop with a flash drive containing photos and videos pertaining to PBS, and a few shed antlers and some bows. This is quick and easy and gets the job done. Flash drives and brochures can be sent out quickly, easily, and at little expense. There are also regional banners for every region that can be displayed. Simply contact your regional representative to get ahold of your regions banner.

Advertising is another item we are looking into. This of course depends on our future budget. I'd like to find a way to interest younger members as well. We all know this is a major problem facing PBS. It's a difficult issue to tackle, and again, we welcome all input! ♣

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We Need Your Input!

The following display is a “dashboard” for the PBS Strategic Plan. This is a framework to put wording with our core principles and philosophies, and to help guide our organizational direction. Besides the basic statements of our mission, values, vision and who we are; there are 4 key goals and strategies identified. Each of these will have a set of action items – being developed, and hopefully including your input – which will help us reach those goals. The Performance Indicators listed will give us a measure of success moving forward. This document is in a draft form but we (Council) would really like to get more input before advancing this process further. So why do this exercise? Two reasons: 1) it helps us define our place in the ever changing world of bowhunters and bowhunting organizations, and 2) it is an important document when we go in pursuit of grants, bequests, or earmarked donations. Please look over this dashboard and communicate your ideas/thoughts/comments directly to me at: miccake@yahoo.com

Thank You!

Jim Akenson

MISSION

The Professional Bowhunters Society mission is to preserve bowhunting's values by **promoting the highest outdoor and bowhunting ethics** through continued education of bowhunters today and tomorrow, the promotion of wildlife conservation, and the preservation of traditional bowhunting seasons.

VALUES

- **PBS members are made up of respected leaders of bowhunting** and in all areas of our mission.
- We are an influential voice in promoting traditional bow seasons.
- We are a trusted partner with wildlife agencies.
- **We recognize that the young people of today are the bowhunters of tomorrow.**
- Volunteers are key to our accomplishments.
- **Experience is the backbone of our membership and applied to our leadership.**

WHO WE ARE

We demonstrate the highest standard of outdoor and hunting ethics when we go afield. **We show our respect and appreciation for the game we pursue by making our pursuit as challenging as humanly possible.**

We promote the heritage of bowhunting through our choice of simple, yet efficient, bowhunting equipment. We are always willing to show others the rewards of hunting the hard way.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

FRATERNALISM

- **Bring a group of like-minded bowhunters together** through our regional hunts, organizational gatherings, and current day communication tools, including: PBS Magazine, website, Facebook.
- We mentor young, old, and prospective members to share the enjoyment of our great sport.

BOWHUNTING HERITAGE

- **Demonstrate through actions afield the great tradition of hunting with a bow and arrow** and the rewards of making and using archery equipment.
- Strive to apply heritage as the foundation for establishing, or hallmarking, traditional bowhunting areas.
- Passing on bowhunting heritage is a key element of our identity.

CONSERVATION

- Promote healthy big game populations, and support the re-establishment of native wildlife species that could be hunted.
- **Embrace the North American Model for Wildlife Management** as our guiding principle of conservation.
- Promote habitat restoration and/or enhancement to help maintain healthy game populations and by proxy, non-game species can also thrive.

RECRUITMENT

- **Engage youth, new , and transitional bowhunters to join PBS**
 - Provide field opportunities and hunter education
 - Connect through social media
- Membership growth and retention
 - Use Biennial Gatherings, Odd Year Gatherings, and Regional Hunts to engage current and prospective members.
 - Conduct effective membership drives each year.

VISION

PBS is the model for ethical bowhunters across our nation. We convey our vision by “Knowledge Through Experience,” and adhere to codes of high honor and high challenge in bowhunting

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Measure	Target*
Regional Hunts Offered	15
Number of people participating in regional hunts	100
Funds spent on projects (media) that benefit bowhunting's future	\$10,000
Volunteer positions – PBS leadership (Council, Comm. Chairs Regional Reps)	34
Number of youth and new hunters participating in PBS activities	150
Number of PBS members participating in Biennial Gatherings & Odd Year Events (Revenue 2016-2018)	400 ea. (\$235k)
Increase in social media metrics (Facebook, website use)	300%
Fund raising income – outside of Biennial Gatherings	\$18,000
Funds secured through grant sources	\$10,000

CAMPING

Chaplain's Corner

by Gene Thorn

912 Kedron Rd., Tallmansville, WV 26237
(304) 472-5885 pethorn@hotmail.com

Two weeks ago, on the road into a West Virginia State Forest, we saw five big mature turkey gobblers and one hen cross the road in front of us. It is highly unusual to see gobblers in a large group like that here during breeding season. It was the third week of spring gobbler season. That got us charged up as we located the campground and picked a campsite. We were the only ones there. Yahoo! With rain threatening, I put my canopy up over the picnic table and quickly selected a spot and got the tent set up. After those were in place, I put my cot and sleeping bag in the tent and got all the camp kitchen gear and cooler out of the truck and under the canopy. I set up camp chairs and got the propane lantern set up with a new mantle. Dark would come soon but I was ready now. My buddy, David, was out working his way up the small stream we were camped beside with his fly rod after the brightly colored native brook trout that were resident there. It felt good when I had camp set up and arranged. I have been camping since I was a little boy and have acquired a skill set that has served me well on hundreds of camping trips that mostly have involved hunting and fishing. I had to laugh when David took photos of things I did in camp. He was not a camper as such. His idea of camping was sleeping in

his car and eating cold muffins in the morning if he couldn't find a motel nearby. Even making coffee in a camp setting was new to him. Now that is funny to me! By the time he got back from fishing, I had the camp stove set up and was preparing supper. Peppercorn encrusted butter seared venison tenderloin with boil/baked potatoes, a Greek chick pea salad with black olives, grape tomatoes and herbed goat cheese, lemon cake and strong dark bold coffee was on the menu. No cold junk food in my camp. Camping and camp cooking is high up on the list of skills needed for an outdoorsman to live well and comfortable away from home. The best places my bow and arrows have taken me were not near a Holiday Inn Express or Comfort Suites.

Numbers 10:29 Now
Moses said to Hobab the son
of Reuel the Midianite,
Moses' father-in-law,

"We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

³⁰*And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives."*

³¹*So Moses said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes."*

³²*"And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you."*

³³*So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.*

³⁴*And the cloud of the LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp.*

Moses knew how valuable his father-in-law would be because he had a camping skill set. They would follow the cloud of the Lord by day but someone had to pick the spot to camp and lay out and set up the camp. If you pick a low spot to set a tent and it rains, as any seasoned camper knows, you will wake up in the middle of the night wet and cold. Moses said that Hobab would be their eyes.

When it comes to Spiritual matters, the Bible is the source of our wisdom in life. We need to ask God to give us spiritual eyes to see as we read and hear God's Word. That is how we get the skill set to deal with all that life brings.

Psalm 119:10 *With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!*

¹¹*Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*

¹²*Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.*

¹³*With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth.*

¹⁴*I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.*

¹⁵*I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.*

¹⁶*I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.*

¹⁷*Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.*

¹⁸*Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.*

Let us dedicate ourselves to acquiring the spiritual skill set that will sustain us in life and provide the answers to all the situations that arise. This world is not our home, we are just camping here for a time. **Camping! ***



PBS – Regionally Speaking

By Jeff Holchin and Steve Hohensee
Second Quarter 2016

Early summer is here and that means bowfishing, bear hunting, 3-D shoots and planning those fall hunts. Some of the membership hunts are full already, although there are always cancellations. We need your current contact information – PLEASE email your regional representative with this information and get your state representative's contact information in return. We need to build our member database to more effectively communicate between members and representatives of each state and region. We need more activity within each state and region, such as gatherings, fundraisers and hunts. Check out "PBS Regional Program" and "PBS Membership Hunts" forums on our website – we need more activity. If you can host a membership hunt, no matter how small or short in duration, please do it. It does require some work and planning, but the rewards are great. Bowhunting – it's what we do, and it is even more fun with other PBSers!

Region	States
Pacific West	Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington
Rocky Mountain West	Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
North Central	Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
South Central	Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas
Great Lakes	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
Appalachian	Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
Southeast	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee
International	Australia, Canada, England, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, All Other Countries

The current Regional Representatives are as follows (note that Ron Herman is replacing Ethan Rodrique in the Southeast – thanks for your help Ethan):

Chairman - Jeff Holchin (jeffreyholchin@gmail.com)

Editor and Fact Checker - Steve Hohensee

(steveh.alaska@gmail.com)

Appalachian - Gene Thorn (pethorn@hotmail.com)

Great Lakes - Ron Lang (rlang46@gmail.com), Mike Vines (miklvines@gmail.com)

International - Richard Flett (deerhunter_4life@hotmail.com)

North Central - John Vargo (john1597@aol.com), Mark

Viehweg (mark@v-testequipment.com)

Northeast - Terry Receveur (Terrance.Receveur@taconic.com)

Pacific West - Tom Vanasche (tomvanasche@mac.com)

Rocky Mountain West - Dan Mathis (dml.mathis@yahoo.com)

South Central - Russell Lantier (russelllantier@bellsouth.net)

Southeast – Ron Herman (rchermanjr@hotmail.com)



Pacific West Report

(Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, Alaska, Hawaii)

by Tom Vanasche – Regional Representative

California, Washington, Nevada, Hawaii: no report

Alaska: Steve H. is planning another epic Kodiak Island membership hunt for 2016 – check the website for details, opportunities like this don't come along too often. It is already full and not planned for 2017 – an example of why you should be checking the PBS web site every day! Also, there were some changes in the requirements for a Bowhunter Education Certificate but are still fluid – if you are bowhunting in Alaska this year, be sure to check the most current hunting regulations.

Oregon: We lost the lighted nock issue here and now they will be allowed. We are still holding fast as the only state without any crossbow use. The attacks will keep coming so we are trying to still work with the game commission to keep them out of archery seasons. There is always the slippery slope of the "disabled" use which will come up. This will have to be narrowly defined.

We are all getting excited as hunting season is just around the corner. May luck and skill go with all.

Rocky Mountain West Report

(Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho)

By Dan Mathis

Utah: Craig Burris is hosting an elk hunt in Utah this coming late August/early September and like most other membership hunts in a good area, it is full already, mostly with repeat hunters. Hunt results will be posted on the PBS web site. If you want to try this one in 2017, contact Craig now and get on the list of hunters ASAP.

Colorado: The 2016 PBS Colorado elk hunt will be held in September and is already full. Bill Kissner knows how to host a hunt and the area is very good – if this hunt is held again in 2017 and you want in, you should contact Bill now and let him know. Hunt results will be posted on the PBS web site.

Arizona: The January 2017 Arizona PBS Members Hunt is being planned by Rick Wildermuth and you don't want to miss this one. There is still room to join this hunt, just contact Rick. Check the PBS web site for details.

~ cont. on page 12

PBS Regionally Speaking

~ continued from page 11

Great Plains Central Report

(North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa)

by John Vargo (IA, TX, MN, OK) and Mark Viehweg (SD, ND, KS, NE) Regional Representatives

South Dakota: Prairie States Traditional Shoot will be July 30-31 in Platt, SD at the North Wheeler Recreational Area.

Nebraska: John Sanderlin III's Nebraska antelope hunt in August is quickly approaching - this hunt is also full but if it goes well, there might be openings for 2017. Another example of how you have to act quickly. Watch the PBS web site for hunt results.

Great Lakes Report

(Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri)

by Ron Lang

Illinois: There is an Illinois flying carp shoot hosted by Dr. Paul Ladner for August 20-22. Check the PBS web site for details.

Ohio: There is an Ohio deer hunt hosted by Jeff Holchin in November - this hunt is full already. Watch the PBS web site for details.

Northeastern Report

(New York, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut)

by Terry Receveur

Summer is in full swing in the NE and lots of spring bear hunts have taken place and some great bruins have been taken. We hope to see some stories coming from the successful hunters. We should also be hearing how the moose draws went this year fairly soon. I know I'm hopeful to have a moose tag this fall.

Bowfishing season is also upon us and I've heard of some nice fish being taken. Bill Terry Sr. is a bowfishing addict and has taken some nice CT fish. Speaking of bowfishing the Regional membership bowfishing trip for June 24th filled up with several current PBS members and a couple new guys that we hope will join. I'll give a report on the outing in the next regional report.

Sean Bleakly has also reported that his 3rd annual PBS regional membership hunt in NY's Catskill mountains is fully booked as well. However, if you still have interest let Sean know in case there is a cancellation. The hunt results will be posted on the PBS web site.

I hope you are having a great summer and if you have any Regional hunts or other NE information give me a call or shoot me an Email. Terrance.Receveur@Taconic.com, 518-755-9119.



Appalachia Report

(Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina)

by Gene Thorn - Regional Representative

It was good to see old friends and make new friends in St Augustine. What a great PBS Gathering! We have lots of hunts planned across all our regions. There will be another Rough Mountain Hunt in Virginia this fall. Put it on your calendar. You will have a great time!

Kentucky (No Rep Currently): We need a Regional Rep for Kentucky. If you are interested, please contact Gene Thorn pethorn@hotmail.com or (304)472-5885. Kentucky: There are rumors of a bowfishing trip being considered for Land-between-the-lakes in Kentucky. Watch the PBS web site for details.

Maryland (Tony Sanders): After spending several months obtaining and reviewing public input, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has selected regulation changes for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 hunting seasons. Highlights of the selected changes include: **Baiting:** Hunting black bears and wild turkeys with the aid of bait will remain illegal, however it will be legal in the fall season if the hunter and the game taken are at least 150 yards from a known bait source. **Black Bear:** The black bear hunting area will be extended to include all of Frederick and Washington counties. Hunting will be by special permit only, issued by the traditional lottery system. **Sika Deer:** Sika deer hunting is no longer restricted to Caroline, Dorchester, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

The Maryland DNR has updated its management approach for chronic wasting disease after discovering that five white-tailed deer tested positive last winter in Allegany County. One of the positive deer was harvested near Cumberland, approximately 10 miles west of all previous cases, marking the first documented case outside of the original Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area. In response to this finding, the management area has been expanded to include all of Allegany County and the western portion of Washington County. "Since discovering chronic wasting disease in West Virginia a decade ago, we have learned a significant amount about the disease and how hunters respond to it," Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Paul Peditto said. "With this data, we have elected to modify our response by lifting the ban on baiting or feeding deer within the area to ensure hunting remains popular in the region and adequate harvest levels are maintained." "Hunters are an essential part of combating the disease as they help keep deer numbers in check, slow its spread, and provide us with additional data collection and points," Peditto said. "The presence of this naturally-occurring disease should not concern or stop hunters from enjoying the season or any venison they may acquire or consume." A total of 11 deer have tested positive for the disease in Maryland since 2010, all within Allegany County. Chronic wasting disease is a fatal neurological disease in deer, elk and moose, and there is no evidence that humans are susceptible to it.

Virginia (Randy Brookshier): Virginia's deer herd escaped a major outbreak of deadly hemorrhagic disease last fall, after taking a heavy hit the previous year, according to Matt Knox, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries deer biologist. 2014 saw a major outbreak of HD in several sections of the state and the overall deer kill dropped 21 percent, largely attributed to HD. Several areas, including Caroline, King and Queen, King William, Essex and King George, were hard hit in 2012 and again in 2014, resulting in a significant decline in the deer herd. It typically takes a deer herd two to three years to recover from a significant HD event. If there was any HD activity at all in Virginia last year it was minor and confined to Southampton county and those counties east and

south of Richmond.

West Virginia (Gene Thorn): The WV Legislature failed in making Sunday hunting legal in all 55 Counties. The bill was killed in committee. Once again shortsighted legislators are looking at raiding DNR Wildlife coffers to try to balance the state budget. These monies are constitutionally protected but that is something that some would like to change. It is a continual fight for sportsmen to guard their interests.

Southeast Report

(Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia,
South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee)

by Ron Herman – Regional Representative

South Carolina: Two young South Carolina women won awards at the National Archery in Schools national tournament in Louisville, Kentucky, May 12-14. There were 245 archers present from South Carolina. Riverlee Weaver of Socastee shot a score of 297 in the Bulls-Eye tournament after a three way tie for first place in high school division where she ended up third overall. She won a \$10,000 scholarship for her efforts and earned a spot on the All Star team and will travel to South Africa in July to compete. Tabitha Way of Duncan placed second in the lady's high school division in the IBO 3-D Challenge. <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/education/archery/index.html>

BOWHUNT 2016 IN WYOMING!

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Feral swine are causing problems by interfering with prescribed burns. The wallows and rooting prevent fire from carrying through continuously in otherwise dense undergrowth. This allows sweetgum, red maple and other undesirable hardwoods to then grow up in unburned patches and further degrade the wildlife habitat. Increased opportunities are in place to include night hunting on a limited basis to help deter their presence.

Georgia: Hunters are encouraged to review proposed hunting regulations for the 2016-2017 season at the new Buck Shoals Wildlife Management Area and make plans to attend a scheduled public hearing. The plan is to operate it as the state's first youth-focused wildlife management area and are seeking comments on proposed hunting reg-

ulations for the area. This will include deer, turkey, dove, and squirrel youth hunts. Some will be HUNT & LEARN events designed for the novice hunter, while others will be adult-child quota hunts. The public notice and synopsis are available at www.go-huntgeorgia.com/Hunting/Regulations. It seems far away but Matt Schuster is planning a membership hunt at the famous Blackbeard Island in Georgia for December. This coastal island has a lot of history and quite a few PBSers have left boot tracks there – check the PBS web site for details.

Tennessee: The state's 2016-17 hunting seasons have been approved at the May meeting held at Arnold AFB. The definitions of antlered and antlerless deer changed...previously, a deer with antlers less than three inches in length were considered antlerless. With the change, an antlerless deer is now any deer with no antler protruding above the hairline, and antlered deer are any male or female deer with antlers protruding above the hairline. From now on, a deer killed with any antler above the hairline will count toward the statewide antlered deer limit of two.

Fall turkey bag limits have been changed to one for all counties currently open for fall turkey hunting. A hunter may kill a turkey in each open county. The Young Sportsman hunt was also changed from one bird for 2-day hunt to one bird per day.

Alabama: At the March 26 meeting, numerous changes were made to hunting regulations in the state. Gun deer season will now run continuously from Nov 19- Feb 10--provided that the Game Check harvest reporting system makes it through the legislative review process.

Recommended mandatory reporting of deer and turkey harvests via the Game Check system

Archery season in the South Zone would be bucks only from Oct 15- Oct 24.

Reduced doe seasons in portions or all of select north Alabama counties

Florida: A Florida panther was released back into the wild at Big Cypress National Preserve after watching its behavior and finding evidence that pets and feral domestic cats in the neighborhood had frequently been preyed upon.

Restoration projects will close CREW Wildlife Environmental Area from Feb 2016 for up to 18 months.

FWC moves forward with a comprehensive draft on bear management rules for the state. They will address a wide variety of tools to manage bear populations and help reduce human-bear conflicts. This will include depredation permits to authorize a landowner to remove bears if causing property damage if electric fencing or other measures have failed or are not feasible, etc. This proposal would also allow limited hunting of black bears in four of the state's seven bear management units.

Mississippi: No report (We need a state rep – contact Ron Herman if interested.)

South Central Report

(Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas)

by Russell Lantier – Regional Representative

No report.

International Report

(Australia, Canada, England, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, All Other Countries)

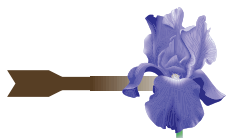
by Richard Flett – Regional Representative

No report. *

Regional Profile

We are starting a new segment to the magazine titled "REGIONAL PROFILE". In this segment we will highlight one state and give a brief explanation of species available to hunt, out of state license fees, public land opportunities, and any other information that might be helpful to fellow members interested in taking advantage of that state's hunting opportunities. This addition will probably be an evolving process so any suggestions or comments are welcome!

Ideally, we would like to select a state in one region then move to another region altogether and continue the cycle until we have eventually covered all states. So please give some thought to contributing to the magazine in this small way for upcoming issues. I will start the ball rolling with an overview of the opportunities to be had here in Tennessee.



Tennessee



by Ethan Rodrique

Tennessee is divided into three distinct regions: East, Middle and West. Eastern Tennessee is mountainous and rugged with dense vegetation. The middle portion of the state can vary from gentle rolling hills to steep valleys to farmland, while the western region is predominantly flat, fertile farmland with river bottoms. Naturally, game populations and diversity vary quite a bit within these regions.

Whitetails: The size of our whitetails as well as the population densities generally increase the farther west you travel in our state. In recent years there have been some very nice bucks taken in West Tenn. A little secret most people don't know is what's called "President's Island". It has been rated as one of the top places in the country to take a P&Y class buck on public land. It is a 7,500 acre island located in the Mississippi River that is literally in downtown Memphis. The area has three, three day draw only archery hunts that are strictly managed. The first two are doe only but the last hunt, usually held in December is buck only and a buck must have a minimum of 9 points. Odds of drawing are surprisingly not bad, and once drawn you will definitely see some real bruisers and stand good odds of putting a tag on one. A hunter's education card from your home state is required, but a bowhunters education card is not.

The state is divided county-by-county in "units" A, B or L. These sometimes change year to year so this is something you need to check into before planning a trip. But "L" units are extremely liberal in harvest numbers due to the high popula-



tions. In these counties it is legal to take three does a day from the opening of bow season to the close of rifle season. (That is not a typo!!) Bow season typically begins the third weekend in September and it is legal to bowhunt throughout the general weapons season which usually ends the first weekend of January. But please note there are "youth only" seasons set aside a weekend or two during the season and these vary from year to year.

Bear: East Tenn. has a fantastic population of bears. Our bear numbers have been exploding over the last few decades with numerous counties seeing new bear seasons in recent years. The very eastern counties of Tenn. have long standing traditions of bear hunting with dogs, not good news for the bowhunter. But counties on the Cumberland Plateau with bear season allow no hounds to hunt bear. The down side to this is because the country is so dense, and food so abundant the odds of getting a bear in range are a crap shoot at best. On the Cumberland Plateau bear season runs the same days as archery whitetail. However, depending on which zone you hunt in the far eastern counties, opening dates vary greatly and are set on a year to year basis. You must check with state game officials for particular areas.



Turkey: Depending on which region you are in turkey populations are considered anywhere from being healthy to being a "nuisance." Many counties have a fall season that is bow only, and either sex is legal. A turkey with a bow is never an easy task, but most of the



turkeys here in Tenn. have been pressured enough to be highly educated in the ways of hunters. Many times setting up a decoy is a perfect way to ensure you get plenty of quiet time in the woods because our birds will not bite!

Turkey seasons vary from year to year but usually begin the first weekend in April and run until the mid to late March.

Elk: The elk reintroduction program here in Tennessee has been a huge success. Unfortunately, the tags are few and the chances of getting drawn are pretty low. The deadline to enter for the elk permit is midnight, July 23 and you can apply as early as June 11. There is a non-refundable \$10.00 application fee and successful draw hunters will have to buy an elk tag, \$300.00 for nonresident and \$27.00 for a resident.



Small game: Like most states, small game is abundant here. There is great bowfishing to be had throughout the state from large water sheds, to the river bottoms in West Tenn. With the exception of grouse, small game populations are strong throughout the state and offer ample opportunity to loose arrows!

Out of state license fees are reasonably priced. Depending on what and where you want to hunt, a nonresident can expect to pay roughly between \$225 to \$300 for various tags, including fishing. I know this is a very broad overview of our seasons and if anyone has any questions I'd be glad to answer any I can.

Good luck!
Ethan



ART

of the stalk

Getting “Cougar Close” Part I

By Clay Hayes

Big game like deer and elk are sharp. Whereas we're only part time predators, they're full time prey, and they're good at what they do. They've evolved to evade close range killers, wolves & cougars mainly, and they've developed keen senses and fast reflexes to do it. Their senses are also more finely tuned the closer you get to them. Moving around and getting into position is relatively easy up to about the 50 yard mark, even on whitetails, but past that things start to get exponentially more difficult. Once you hit the 15 to 20 yard range (which is about the distance when a cougar becomes a real threat), any misstep, shifty breeze, clothing noise, or even the slight hiss of an arrow being drawn can give you away. A few million years of being culled by tooth and fang does a pretty damn good job of weeding out the inattentive.

When it comes to getting close to game, one thing that is very important but often overlooked is our mindset. I once watched a spider spin a web from scratch. She completed it amazingly fast and once she was done she took up her stand at the center, waiting on some hapless damselfly to come by. I was playing by a creek at the time, catching crayfish and turning over logs like young boys used to do, so I soon lost close track of the spider. But every so often I'd glance over and see her still sitting in ambush, waiting motionless, each of her eight legs rested gently on a radial filament and attuned to the slightest vibration. It must have been several hours after she'd took up

her position that I saw she'd moved. By the time I noticed, she was already in the process of mummifying her catch in a silk cocoon. She had set her trap in a likely spot and waited with the single minded purpose of catching lunch. And that is where she and I differ so often. She was undistracted, focused solely on the task at hand. She had no commitments, no schedule; her entire world reduced to the slight disruptions in the filaments of her web.

We live fast paced lives these days, relatively speaking. We're all busy, we all have calendars with pressing dates and deadlines, and we all have any number of things that constantly draw our attention to some other time or place. Distractions make us inattentive, schedules make us impatient, both of which reduce our sensitivity to the filaments that connect all things in the woods. Our tendency to think ahead is both our blessing and our curse but if we expect to get cougar close to big game with any level of consistency, we have to let go of these things, at least for the time being. One way I've found to help with this, letting go of distractions and time, is to spend a few minutes clearing my mind before starting a hunt. Meditation works well for me. I'll find a quiet place and sit on a log or lie on the ground, imagining myself sinking into the forest floor a little with every breath. Maybe that works for you, maybe it doesn't. Point is that we need to be as free as we can of anything that distracts us from perceiving and interpreting

what surrounds us. Sometimes it's the slightest of hints that gives away an animal's presence or intentions. Some of you might think this is overkill, and it likely is if you're satisfied with 50 yards. But when you're trying to penetrate the hypersensitive bubble that every big game animal carries with it, there's no room for error and every little bit helps.

Being in the right state of mind is the foundation and it helps me recognize many other things but it's still only the start. This is the first article in a series on getting close to big game. Future posts will appear in the blog at twistedstave.com where we'll cover other important topics in the future – things like wind, movement, quiet clothing, cover and lighting, reading an animal's body language, and understanding their ecology. Until then, take a lesson from a spider. Clear your mind, be fully present, keep your finger on the pulse of the woods and you'll have much better feel for the slight vibrations your prey creates in the web you're sitting in. ♣

Clay Hayes is a wildlife biologist and film maker living in north Idaho. He's currently working on his next film which will follow three hunters as they chase rutting muleys around the Idaho backcountry with stick and string. You can check out his current and past projects at www.twistedstave.com and be sure to sign up for the newsletter to stay up to date on what's going on.



The Bow God

By Matt Schuster

This is the story of two of my hunting buddies, Ray Hammond and Dudley McGarity. Although there is some question, especially in Dudley's mind, as to the veracity of this story, it is my story and I say it is absolutely true even though I happen not to have witnessed all of the events personally. I do, however, know both participants well enough to know, or at least correctly infer the real scoop on the events described.

"Ray, I was almost you, but I choked," said Dudley in a voice laden with self-loathing.

"What? Who is this anyway?" said the real Ray Hammond, putting his phone a little closer to his ear.

"I was almost you Ray, but I choked, as usual. This is Dudley, aka The Bow God."

Dudley calls himself The Bow God. The rest of us call him Dudley.

Ray laughed, "Oh, hey Dud, so you got a shot out in Montana did you?"

"Yep, got a shot at a monster herd bull, but it just didn't work out," Dudley said with a sigh. "But I had the chance at immortality; and I guess getting a chance is better than getting nothing."

"Oh, no!" Ray said, "You didn't doink again did you? I thought you'd outgrown that."

"Well," replied Dudley, "I may have beaten it on yearling whitetails, but on record class bull elk, apparently not!"

Let me give you the back story. Dudley has been one of my most reliable hunting partners for a lot of years now. He and I began shooting stickbows in the early 1980s, without any instruction and developed a technique we affectionately call

"the southern short draw." You see, we both read G. Fred Asbell's book on instinctive shooting, but the part about releasing the arrow as soon as you reach full draw was obviously not fully comprehended. However, our original style still seems to be very popular because I see guys using it at shoots and in hunt camps all the time.

The southern short draw involves never drawing the bow back any farther than one's brain deems necessary to get the job done. Unfortunately, the arrow must reach its target for the hunter to achieve his goal. The thinking, or lack thereof, is simple: Why waste valuable energy pulling a bow back all the way if your target is close and as small as a whitetail deer? After all, so we rationalized, it's best to conserve energy that you may need later to fire a fully powered arrow at a charging grizzly, or more likely an enraged Georgia swamp rooter. Of course, this system has its drawbacks, such as the lack of a consistent anchor point, which leads the sufferers of the southern short draw to develop a sort of panicky, out-of-control feeling when they attempt a shot at living creatures – especially unusually large living creatures. Dudley's reputation for doinking was earned when numerous bowhunting buddies witnessed his arrows not quite reaching blithely grazing critters who were hardly bothered by his feebly shot arrows.

And so it seems that this cruel syndrome remained dormant in Dudley's subconscious, even after years of hunting success on whitetails and small hogs, and more than a few western critters because when presented with a shot opportunity at a Montana monster 7x6 bull, standing broadside at eight yards, his arrow only made it the first seven. It didn't help that his guide, we'll call him Jed since that is his real

name, crouching right behind Dudley as the bull approached, was whispering such calming words of encouragement as, "Don't blow this son. This elk is a state record for sure." To give my buddy some benefit of the doubt, hearing this at so critical a time might have messed up Dud's timing, and caused him to release an inch or two early. Well, okay, maybe 26 inches early. Let's face it, you have to release pretty darn early for an arrow to only travel 7 yards out of a 65 pound longbow. So, with this untimely case of brain fade, Dudley almost became Ray Hammond that year, but (his draw length) came up a little bit short.

Here's how Dudley began to aspire to become the next Ray Hammond. You see, the year before, Ray had killed a huge bull elk in the Gila National Forest of New Mexico. Ray, unlike me and Dudley, is a conformist who actually achieves full draw every time he shoots, no matter what he is shooting at, a squirrel, a rabbit, or A HUGE TROPHY ELK! It just does not matter. All of Ray's hunting stories are good ones, and that can really get on your nerves, but he's just too nice a guy to totally despise. And, thank goodness, Ray is not perfect at everything, which serves to temper the annoyance factor. Most of us, for example, don't particularly envy his looks. He is kind of a big boy, and not all that fun to look at, at least not to me. But he does have an awfully pretty wife, so he must have talents of which I am happily unaware. You've got to admire him, because he did get into a smaller version of round to get after his elk, hunted hard, and in the very last hour of his hunt managed to send an arrow through the chest of a huge bull. The picture, which Ray now uses as his avatar on the internet, makes the bull look mon-



Ray Hammond with a huge bull elk he killed in the Gila National Forest of New Mexico.

strous. For sure, Ray knows how to take flattering trophy shots that make the animal look huge. His secret, obviously, is to start with a huge animal.

So, that was what led to the phone call to Ray, from a dejected Dudley, who almost had a picture of his own, but alas, ended up with only the confidence-sapping

the string all the way back to full-draw, because that would violate my life-long policy of never doing more than the absolute minimum amount of work in any endeavor, but because I have been working out with a vengeance, and have just become so darn strong that the string seems to come back by itself.

memory of another doink shot, his dreams of emulating Ray mere dust in the wind.

The southern short draw can, with hard work, be overcome. Eventually, I was able to give it up. It is not so much that I actually want to expend the unnecessary energy to pull

Dudley had given it up too, or so he thought. A few years after his phone call to Ray, Dudley and I headed to Montana to chase mule deer. Dudley got lucky and drew an elk tag as well. While in camp, Dudley pounded arrow after arrow into the kill zone of a foam deer, achieving full draw every time, even with witnesses present, and impressing everyone with his archery skills. Then, on the third day of the hunt, while three of us watched, adding to an already tense situation, Dudley made a beautiful stalk, followed by a perfect double lung shot on a bedded mule deer buck, thus obliterating all memories of his past tendency to doink.

Back at camp that evening, Dud walked out of the cook tent, beer in hand, and said, "Yep, The Bow God is back and now it is time for elk. If there is one bull on this mountain, I will find it, and I will kill it."

Dudley is a bipolar bowhunter, he is either The Bow God or The Doink King. Up or down. There is no in-between. Sometimes it is more fun to be around The Doink King because The Bow God can be sort of full of himself – as one might expect of anyone calling themselves The Bow God. Anyway, with two days left in the hunt, Dudley, and our buddy Chad Shearer, who just happens to

~ cont. on page 18 ~

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The Bow God continued

~ continued from page 17

be a former world champion elk caller (and the source of much of Dudley's confidence on this hunt) got seriously after the elk.

They had several close calls and near misses, and then on the last morning, they found a group of bulls who would answer their calls. Unfortunately, it was early in the season and the big boys showed no interest in fighting with small bulls or coming after single cows. As the bulls faded into some heavy timber a mile from Dudley and Chad, Chad told Dudley that he knew where they were headed, and asked if he wanted to try and put on a sneak. Needless to say, The Bow God was game, and they took off at a dead run. Minutes later, as they exited the timber and entered a treeless part that dropped steeply away into a deep draw, both heard a footfall below them and saw a huge rack just over the ridge and coming their way fast. The drop off was so steep that only the bull's antlers were visible until he topped out at twelve yards to the right of the hunters. Dudley hit the ground and nocked an arrow as Chad, who is a big guy, crouched in front him, serving as a human blind. The big six by six, totally unaware that the hunters existed, walked slowly parallel to the hill and his vitals came into view at only eighteen steps. Dudley picked a spot, pulled his bowstring back and gently lobbed an arrow into the ground at the bull's feet. As the bull jumped away, Chad, who has hunted all over the world with Dudley, started laughing out loud, not realizing that the bull had stopped to look back from thirty yards out. Dudley hushed Chad as he tried to extract a second arrow and get it on the string, an action that Chad later de-

scribed as identical to Barney Fife fumbling with the one bullet that Sheriff Andy let him carry. Dudley, not in such good humor after the miss, whispered to Chad that he needed to act like a professional guide and call the bull back in. Chad cow-called softly, and the monarch cupped his ears and once again turned broadside. As Chad hissed, "Full draw," Dudley shot again and this time he got all of it. The arrow smacked the bull a little high, but an instant splash of blood indicated an artery hit and The Bow God was back again.

Two days later back in Atlanta, Ray Hammond, the real one, picked up the phone again.

"Yep, it's me, The Bow God, and I get to be Ray Hammond this year" and this time Ray didn't have to ask who it was.

This story is true as I remember the details other than the fact that I, like Dudley, might not really come to full draw all the time... 🏹

Dudley McGarity, The Bow God, finally got his elusive Elk.



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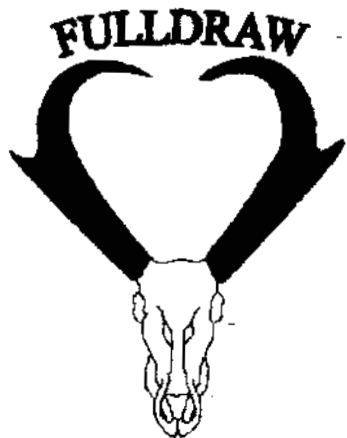
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Squirrels will go to Hale!

By Bud "Spudley" Hall

1953 was the beginning of a long journey into hunting one of my favorite game animals. I was ten years old, and this was a special day. I was invited by my Uncle Carl Pilcher to join him at my Grandpa Pilcher's farm just down the road from Otterville, Iowa. Otterville was just a little settlement on Otter Creek with a handful of houses and a general store. The store is gone now but there are still several families that inhabit the area. Mom and Dad made sure I got to the farm in time to head out on my first squirrel hunt.

Uncle Carl was using Grandma's .22 single shot that stayed in the corner of the kitchen behind all the coats. It always had that certain "farm" smell. I was told that Grandma was a good shot, but never saw her touch that gun.

Before my uncle loaded the little 22, he lit a cigarette, blaming the need for it on the mosquitoes. We both sat with our backs to the same tree. As the sun started coming up, my heart was thumping so loud I was afraid Uncle Carl would hear it. If he did, he never said so. It didn't take long to see a flash of reddish fur coming down a tree fifteen yards in front of us. It stayed on the back side most of the time. Then NOTHING. Uncle Carl said, it hit the ground and ran the other way. Wow! I thought, this is "Keen!", we hadn't heard of "cool" yet. This was a close encounter! I have since learned that close, can be just as fun as taking a critter home. The best part is, you don't have to skin a close encounter! I have hunted squirrels ever since, except for 1962 and 1963 when I spent almost two years at sea with the U.S. Navy including Cuba in October of 1962 (another close encounter).

Moving on to approximately 2005, I met up with a group of bowhunters from several different states. All were members of the old ATHA organization and many

are PBS members now. It was not a large group, maybe 15 or so, but we were all fired up because we were there to hunt squirrels. We couldn't wait to strap our quivers on. It was suggested by a member that we meet at Greene-Sullivan State Forest in southern Indiana. It's a great campground with lots of free hunting area and full of squirrels!!

I had made plans to share my canvas wall tent with my ole buddy Dean Torges. Now for those that don't know Dean, let me assure you, there is never a dull moment with Dean in camp. Dean is what I would classify as a VERY serious squirrel hunter and remains so today. He has had some wonderful squirrel dogs too. Dean is very proficient with stick and string but I have never understood why he thinks he has to wear sunglasses in the woods to hunt squirrels. Dean has been wearing those sunglasses ever since he was in a squirrel hunting video, I think it's a Hollywood thing!

First morning out one of our PBS members got a young grey. We were laughing about the prospect of skinning and dividing the meat between 15 hungry hunters.

Thanks to PJ, who happens to be a wonderful cook, we had a very nice lunch of goose breasts, sausage, roasted ears of corn in the husks and some potato chips. The stories around the campfire were varied between Alaskan moose, South Carolina hogs and of course the ever popular grey vs. fox squirrel debate. The Illinois hunters told stories about one of the greatest squirrel hunters ever, Jerry Pierce. Jerry favored the greys. It was not uncommon for him to bring home a limit with his Choctaw recurve. I was lucky to know Jerry and got to hunt with him before he passed.

Around noon the chatter slowed, the eyes got drowsy and the brave hunters started for their cots. "The hunting is better in the evening," was the general consensus of opinion. Now I was stuck listening to all of Dean's stories, and believe me, he has some dandies! The ones about successful hunts, well, you'd have to judge for yourself! Just when I thought about a nap, a small Toyota truck pulled up. Being the gentleman that I am, I slowly walked over to greet the stranger in our midst. The truck door opened and a short, stocky man said, "Is this where all the squirrel hunters are?" "Yep, that's us, some are napping now,"

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I replied.

He informed me, that he was John Hale and was looking for Dean Torges. I directed him to Dean who was still enjoying some leftovers from lunch. One thing I noticed about John was the dashboard of his truck. It was hidden from view by photographs of his family, mostly grandkids. I knew right then that I was going to like this guy! We offered John some coffee but had no food left, Dean had seen to that. The conversation soon turned to squirrels. Then I remembered hearing about John at Cloverdale and that he had a reputation for taking several big bucks. John started telling us in no uncertain terms that he shoots a lot of squirrels with his old Bear takedown. Many limits, greys and fox, and most are taken within eight feet of his location all because he has learned how to call them into range. Ok, call me a skeptic, but I've sat around many campfires. Enough to hear some pretty far fetched tales along with some outright lies and you have too! But I just let him ramble on about his abilities in the squirrel woods. I was biting my lip to say the least. I've not been known for being socially correct in certain situations. Now, I had only known John for an hour or so but it was obvious that he had been around the horn a few times and I think he picked up on my skepticism in the conversation. I also think Dean was oblivious to any possible exaggeration that might have inadvertently worked it's way to the campfire discussion. He loves a

squirrel story, no matter what. Then the words came thru the wood smoke like an arrow from Hell! "Hey Dean, you wanna go huntin' and I'll call you up a squirrel?" This was noonish and not usually considered prime squirrel time. Dean's answer is unprintable so we'll settle for "yes!"

Oh my God, I thought, this is where the rubber meets the road!!! "JOHN, I almost screamed, can I go with you guys? I'll take the video camera in case something happens." That's when John gave me the eagle eye! "Uh-oh!" He thinks I'm a non-believer and I admit, that's close to the truth.

We loaded up and off we went to some private property that John hunts. We walked a short distance in and John commenced to tell us where to stand about four yards part. He pulled a lanyard out of his short sleeved blue western shirt and displayed a silver whistle. It was circular with a hole in the center. He started blowing out and then sucking in. All of a sudden right in front of us a big fox squirrel came firing down an old oak! That ole boy was within twelve feet of us but disappeared into the weeds. We didn't know where he went, but who cares!? John Hale just called us up a squirrel! We laughed and joked about not getting a shot. At this point, I'm planning on roasted crow for supper.

"Let's get down the road a piece," John said with urgency in his voice. He was just starting to get fired up. We set up again and John started calling. As before, in about 40 seconds we all spotted movement in the weeds, coming straight at us. I kicked the video camera on and John pointed to the squirrel. This little red bolt of lightning ran up to Dean! Dean came to full draw and pinwheeled the critter! We got some great video! I got to watch a master squirrel caller work and a great archer ply his trade with one of his beautiful bows. "An ole worn out steel guitar player" was humbled to say the least.

A couple of years went by and the three of us were invited to be in a new video produced by the Tradgang folks. We did the

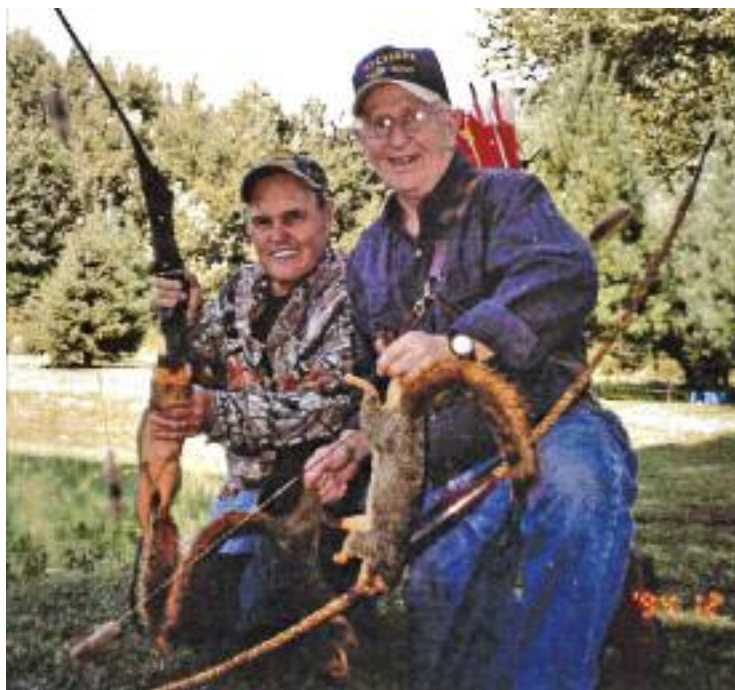
squirrel hunting portion and had a ball doing it. I believe the cameraman was a fellow named Tom. The first day we took Tom to a favorite spot John and I had hunted before and knew there were some squirrels around. John told Tom to stand at the end of this one particular log. He explained that the squirrel would come down that tree, pointing to a Pin Oak, then down this log, and right to us. We won't shoot until he gets to us. At this point I'm thinking, "WOW JOHN!" I think we're the ones out on a limb!

John called for about thirty seconds and there it was. A head, looking at us from behind the tree. A spotted squirrel no less. He came, nice and easy, stop and go. He got real close, sat up and looked at me. I anchored. My arrow looked like it rubbed the top of his head! He jumped the string! Just like deer do, and was gone!

Tom got lots of video but hollered over, "too bad, that would have been a great trophy." My undiplomatic response was, "Tom, if you did your job, we will have our great trophy!" Which he did!

If there were ever any doubts about John Hale being a top notch outdoorsman and squirrel caller deluxe, they ended there! John and I have hunted together when we can for several years now and I have learned a lot from him. Hunting is very important to John, as it is to most of us, but God, family and friends come first. John and his beautiful bride of 52 years, Sue, are log cabin dwellers. They live in the middle of a forest, close to three kids, ten grandkids, and seven great grandkids.

Don't forget – "Squirrels will go to Hale!" ♣



A chance encounter and an afternoon hunt with John Hale (left) showed Bud Hall (right) that Hale was a top notch outdoorsman and squirrel caller deluxe.

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Revenge is a beautiful thing. Although most liberals wouldn't dare admit it, there is a lot to be said for the personal satisfaction of vengeance. Whoever came up with that "forgive and forget" theory needs some

redneck counseling. Actually, if scientists and doctors dug deep enough into the recesses of the human mind, I think they'd discover that revenge is not only normal, but very healthy. I'm convinced there is a special place set aside deep in the human brain for retribution. I'm not saying optometrists and dentists ought to be practicing "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" philosophy but....

There are different degrees of severity when dealing with human nature. Human scumbags try to screw us over regularly. If you happen to live in New York, Florida or New Jersey, you will discover you are intended prey on a daily basis because it's the lifestyle of the environment.

Although most of us hate to admit it, we've probably each been screwed over hundreds of times. Getting even without going to jail can become a sport or challenge in and of itself. Ancient Chinese wisdom says, "Revenge is a dish best served cold." Don't ever be too hasty or anxious. Put some thought into the timing of your repayment.

If and when you get urinated off (polit-

REVENGE

By Gene & Barry Wensel

ically correct terminology), retaliation can be fun although the ideas I'm about to relate to you are not practical jokes. Vengeance is serious business even though it can be downright entertaining. Try to keep it fun without using explosives, projectiles or poison. We thought we'd share with you some of our great ways to get even. Kids.... don't try these at home! Here goes....

One time I got really upset with a guy who owned a laundromat so I decided to put a couple large pizzas with extra cheese in several of his fancy commercial clothes dryers. The sad fact we ate both pizzas on the way over to the laundromat messed up the results but it was the thought that counted.

A shotgun shell (with the pellets removed) shoved up a tailpipe until it drops into the muffler will eventually explode. By substituting a shotgun shell with a butane lighter, the blast supposedly equals a stick of dynamite. Best not try that one. Everyone knows sugar or sand in a gas tank will ruin an engine but that routine can be traced. Don't leave tracks. Moth balls work just as well and leave absolutely no trace. Drain-o dumped into a radiator will completely eat up a vehicle's cooling system in no time.

Skunk musk can be purchased from trapper supply websites. Great stuff that lasts a very long time. You can always blame it on a skunk. Buy oil based skunk musk that won't evaporate easily. Poured into the defroster vents of any vehicle will void Bluebook trade-in value. There are dozens of great ways to use skunk juice. It will ruin homes, schools, clothing, carpets, heaters and is especially effective in stores, airports or any business that has public traffic. And if you get caught, you aren't really breaking any law as far as I know. Just don't use my name....

Scent or paint/dye "grenades" can be easily made from raw eggs. Put a small hole in each end of an egg and blow the contents out. Seal one end with glue, then fill the egg with skunk musk, paint, fabric dye, etc. using a syringe. Seal it up and you're ready to heave your specialty grenade. Bombs away!

Many grocery stores sell a product called "Magic Shell," which is made to coat ice cream. It will harden to a glaze on anything cold. Squirted on the windshield of your victim's car guarantees several

hours of clean up.

Additives are fun. Syrup of Ipecac can be purchased from any drug store. It's used as an emetic agent to induce instant vomiting in cases of accidental poisoning. Great stuff. When mixed with food or drink in smaller amounts, results will be prolonged for up to half an hour to allow a clean get away. I prefer to mix it with spaghetti sauce or pizza for colorful projectile vomiting beyond compare. Needless to say, this sort of stuff will clear a room fast.

Mineral oil used in salad dressing will really get things moving. Beer and urine are easily interchanged. Super glue added to Preparation H is an interesting idea for someone else to try. Most southern bait shops sell live crickets. A quart jar of these set free in a home, store, restaurant or other business will bring attention. Crickets visually pass as cockroaches for extra special appeal in restaurants.

Running a magnet all over a television screen screws up the color particles permanently and leaves no traces. Your mark will soon find out how expensive a big screen TV can really be!

One guy I disliked got parking tickets regularly. Three times I removed his parking ticket, wrote a juicy profanity on it concerning the local police and then mailed it off to the courthouse for him. By the way, parking meters can be rendered useless all winter by simply squirting a shot of water in the coin slot to freeze them up. Paying to park is for chumps.

Magazine subscription cards are avenging, especially the ones where they bill you later. Sign your mark up for a couple years of unwanted subscriptions. Better yet, sign him up for a subscription to a porn magazine or gay rights newsletter, then have it mailed to his next door neighbor's address.

We gutted a deer in a motel bath tub once to get even with a motel manager who expected us to pay extra for heat in November.

You might want to involve your mark's wife or girlfriend as a special touch. No pun intended. Make their social road bumpy by leaving their phone number on the walls of a public restrooms. Just don't get carried away. Literally.... ☛



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Beating the Winter Blues

and Scratching the Springtime Itch

the Mercer County Way

By Tim Denial

First, a little history. The Mercer County Bowbenders started in late 2002 as an inspiration by the late Bull Dawson with the help of George Hvozda.

In the beginning, a small advertisement was placed in a local newspaper with the hopes of gaining 25 traditional shooters from the Mercer County, PA area. Since that time the club has grown to an excess of 130 members, with at least ten of us being PBS members.

Based primarily in the Pennsylvania counties of Mercer, Crawford and a large group from Erie, we also have members in Ohio, Texas, North Carolina and Iowa. The membership is diverse and includes competitors, hunters, bowyers and other enthusiastic supporters of traditional archery.

Membership cost started out at ten dollars for a lifetime membership, at present time it is \$25 for a lifetime. Our first "Nuge" shoot was held at an archery shop that had a course set up and gave us a break on the price, knowing that we would bring 20 plus shooters. On top of that we would add a dollar or two for our kitty and everyone would show up with a dish of food to share. Over the course of ten plus years that we have been in existence, we have raffled off a bow, sold some t-shirts, hats and such for a slightly elevated cost so we always have some monies in the till.

We have no land, buildings or targets to maintain or work details to squabble about. We stay in touch through the proverbial grapevine and our free website. (mercercountybowbenders.com)

At the present time our two formal shoots are held at my house. Years ago, I had some shoots and procured about thirty targets over time which we still use. We got a new deer target donated by Calvin Smock, a charter member who just happened to have an arrow land in the right spot at the right time at the coveted Eagle Eye shoot at Denton Hill. (He really is an accomplished shooter.)

Here is where beating the winter blues really starts. The holidays are over, late archery season has come to a close and small game season has ended with trapping season running its course. With all of this

going on you wouldn't think that cabin fever would be so prevalent, but by mid-February the itching and scratching is taking place, (must be the wool long johns), combined with the fact we have been in a deep freeze for about eight weeks.

Our Snowshoe Shoot takes place mid-February at the author's farm, though the work begins well before if we have a typical snow year. Most of the targets have to be hand carried out back. Nothing a bigger tractor wouldn't fix but that's another story. The weekend is chosen, members are notified and food is bought. This year chili was made and I found out that making chili for 40 people can be a task and it helps to have a good wife in the background making the proper adjustments as it took two days to make. This past year we had Watcha caught stew, some of the ingredients: woodchuck, beaver, turtle, venison and something unidentified from the freezer.

The day of the shoot can be a little busy for all involved with a lot of the members having over an hour's drive and the host needs to be up bright and early getting the fire going in the cabin. With the help of fellow member Gary Wolf, the coffee is made using knee high stockings and course ground coffee, all with great precision and a watchful eye.

Shooters start showing up about 8:30 a.m. Watching people put snowshoes on for the first time could be fodder for America's Funniest Home Videos! Once saddled up, names are put into a hat so that groups can be paired with different people each year, growing the opportunity to become more acquainted with each other. Also with each shoot we hold, newbies either new to archery or potential converts from compounds are always welcome at no charge. We welcome them to this affliction with open arms always encouraging them to shoot each other's bows and before you know it they are in up to their eyeballs and



having a great time. If you come more than a couple of times we ask you to join.

In 2013, we had no snow on the ground and in 2014 we had more than we cared for. The day started out at negative six degrees and warmed to a balmy 19 above zero. The 2015 shoot was negative 14 and shot up to a high of -5. The shooters ranged in age from 10 to 74 with a few taking a spill or two coming down a hill or forgetting that stepping back had to be done with some thought in mind.

I set up the course and, believe it or not, try not to be too devious in target placement when two feet of snow is on the ground. I'm not sure all would agree with me though for in the spring I seem to have a lot of cedar planted yet it never takes root.

In the early spring with snow still on the ground at times we hold another shoot called the "Nuge." This was our founder's creation and the prize is a coveted trophy not unlike the Stanley Cup but maybe not quite as well known. Though it comes with some drawbacks if not properly cared for, examples being placed in a lead vault buried below frost line and such.

The recipient of this trophy not heeding these precautions upon arriving home might discover in the weeks to follow that



The Mercer County Bowbenders annual Snowshoe Shoot take place mid-February at the Denial farm. In 2013 they had no snow, 2014 had more snow then they cared for and 2015 they had below zero temps.

his dog has contracted the mange, all of his wife's plants have wilted and nervous twitches have become the norm. These are the two shoots we hold each year along with getting together for a week of deer hunting in late October and seeing each other at local and out of state shoots. No matter the weather, everyone has a good time with the chili to feed us and the coffee and cocoa to warm us up.

This gets us through until trout season, turkey season and then to embrace summer and the anticipation of the upcoming hunting season. If interested in traditional archery come join us. For more info contact Tim at the e-mail listed below.

The Bowbenders keep in touch via our website www.mercercountybowbenders.com and you can contact Tim Denial, President at: zebdenial@gmail.com

Tim and his wife Cindy are now retired and live in NW Pennsylvania.

*Tim is a member of MCBB, Professional Bowhunters Society, Compton Traditional Archers, Presque Isle Archery, PA. Bow Hunters Assoc. and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. Tim has hunted in numerous states across the country and actually hopes to bring something home someday. **



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Alaskan Solitude

By Mike Mitten

I asked myself, “What’s wrong with trying to connect with ancient man?” Bowhunting takes us back to a historic time in man’s existence. The purity of human predator versus prey is no better exemplified than on a solo bow-hunt in Alaska’s remote wilderness. The moose knows its role as prey, and I knew mine as predator. Lacking fangs and claws, I intended to let my bow and arrows do the blood letting should I get close enough.

I romanticized about ancient ancestors who would move to and live near their food source, but alas; I live in a fast paced modern world. A world with game laws that require the removal of all meat from the field, thereby limiting the distance I can travel from an appropriate pick-up location. While floating downriver on a raft, access points may seem endless, but doing battle with currents that force the raft against multiple and unforgiving blown down trees threatening to sweep a man into the ice flow deserves hard consideration. Landing a small plane on a secluded air strip limits the extraction points to only one or maybe two if there is a secondary access within packing distance. Taking into consideration all these limitations, I chose to hire a pilot with a float plane to drop me on the southern most lake in a cluster of three. Each lake was about a mile long and within one-and-a-

half miles of each other. This configuration greatly expanded my huntable range and gave me confidence in packing out meat if moose were encountered. My camp site was selected at the end of the lake where a great ridge-line rose a thousand feet above its shore. Visibility and vocalized calling are the most important keys to hunting moose, so the accommodating topography of “the lookout” was the primary reason for this site selection. The DeHavilland Beaver lifted off from the lake it dropped me at, signaling I would be alone for the next 15 days.

My picturesque lake home on this hunting trip found me outfitted with a raft to traverse my aqueous highway, and better reach moose habitat. There were multiple such lakes in the area I could hike to that also would provide extensive shorelines

creating a huge advantage should I have to pack out meat. Soon after pitching my tent, I glassed the face of the look-out in hopes of charting an easier ascending path through the alders and dwarf birch. The visualization would have to wait to be tested, since I couldn’t hunt the same day airborne.

Inflating my raft, I loaded up and rowed around the lake catching northern pike by tricking them to strike at flashing spoons that resembled distressed minnows. I watched them disappear with a quick snap of their tails as soon as their pointy heads broke the mirrored surface of the lake. I felt great about releasing them, knowing that a source of meat was close at hand. Exploring the shoreline, I noticed grey sticks woven in the lofty branches of a dead spruce tree. The nest appeared lifeless on this Sep-

tember evening, but was a symbol of life’s renewal only a few months earlier as it cradled osprey fledglings. The young had since taken flight in search of their own fish. As I drifted past the ghostlike nest, I realized it too was a symbol of hope for the returning adults next spring. Suddenly an osprey soared over my raft and landed in the top of a higher tree overlooking the nest. It stretched out its long wings and tucked them in. We watched each other momentarily before she again spread her



wings and pushed off on air. I took delight in briefly sharing the world with the fish-hawk.

On my first hunting day, I woke to dense fog that would have to lift before I could take full advantage of the lookout. Since I keep a low intrusive camp, I walked out about a hundred yards to a grassy slough and summoned with a cow-in-heat call as I quite often do at the start of the day. Imagine my disbelief when the soft grunt of a bull moose cut the fog as my last note faded. His subsequent and confirmatory grunts sounded five or six hundred yards up the drainage between the lookout peak and a lesser hill. I quickly moved to the north about 70 yards to keep the slight air currents in my favor. The bull grunted at least a dozen more times, but gave no indications he was coming to me. I was hunting very early in the season and the rut seemed a long way off. The fog hung heavy and the alder brush was so thick at the base of the draw, I was left with little chance to sneak up on the bull, so I waited for his next move. Disappointed in not getting a chance to view him, I was not surprised when this first encounter of the hunt ended with a puzzled outcome of simple disappearance.

There were other small bluffs I could reach at the north east portion of the lake to further increase my visual and calling range - so the highest lookout would have to wait. Ascending through the alders and then climbing on spongy sphagnum moss side hills of dwarf birch, I reached a portion of the hill climb that got extremely steep and required tugging at the bushes and limbs to pull myself up on top. Just as my head cleared the crest, I was shocked by an instinctive and uncontrolled startled fear as my eyes met a grizzly bear cub eight feet in front of my face. It took a moment for my brain to decipher the visual data be-

fore I realized that the grizzled silver tipped form was not that of a bear, but a porcupine. My

nerves calmed a bit while allowing the porky to waddle off about ten yards before I climbed the rest of the way and stood upright on the bluff. I investigated the porcupine more closely before searching out the new terrain. I could not believe how long it took for the fog to lift, and its blanket robbed both my morning and early afternoon scouting.

Back at camp that evening, I walked the one hundred yards in fading light from my tent to the lakeshore to fetch water with a canteen in my left hand and clenched a big bore revolver in my right. I laid the pistol on a tuft of moss at waters edge as I bent down and pumped lake water through a filter into the canteen. Funny how fear creeps into ones mind with the darkness, but once reaching the security of my tent, fear retreated behind a thin layer of nylon. Like historic man, our homes of cave, tipi, hut, lean-to, or cabin can assuage fear. The instinct of most animals is to fear man, but I guess with darkness comes a chance for mistaken identity, or by its nature another class of predator. I fell asleep with a smile, thinking of that scary ol' porky.

Tigers have patience, cunning, and stealth, while lions and wolves use the experience and team work of the pride and pack to know when to corral and when to strike at their prey. By calling out into the wilderness with the mournful deceit of a cow moose in heat, I too used wisdom and skill to capitalize on a bull's most primal instinct to breed. Longing for an appropriate suitor, my sham was more enticing when used in combination with soft grunts of an inadequate bull. Convincing my opponent that there was another male in the area would open the door for me to use antler raking and limb busting, which may help drive the unsuspecting bull into a rut crazed trance to lure him closer to me. Sometimes it takes a little patience to trigger this response, so at



first light I often return to the same calling location I used the previous evening in hopes of catching a suitor bull that was slow to make up his mind.

The distant lookouts were never off-limits because animals seen from the high perches built my confidence for the entire area. While forcing each step up the mountain's face, I felt relief as the grade softened ever so slightly, indicating the peak was slowly giving up its un-attainability. This high summit became the launching pad for what I referred to as the Pied-Piper technique. Since it is very difficult to pack out a moose over great distance, I would use the cow-in-heat call to try and bring moose to this location in the evening, and then back out to call from a second setup closer to camp or a better pick up spot. I much prefer to bring the bull to my camp under his own power than packing out his quarters on my back.

The saddle of the lookout hill closest to camp is where I saw my first bull. He was about a half mile away and responded to my calling. I heard his antler raking and response grunts to my calling before making the visual. While continuing my cow and bull calls, he started coming in my direction, locking up at 600 yards. It took me the rest of the morning to coax him to the base of my hill. While trying to keep tabs on the bull and gain more visibility, I climbed from the saddle up to the peak, but the bull went silent.

All afternoon I waited and glassed; the bull's sporadic grunts held my attention for hours. Around 4 PM, I could hear increased grunting and antler raking from the spruce thickets below. Knowing the bull was awake from his nap, I increased my calling frequency and intensity. Realizing he was climbing up toward me, I dropped down off from the peak back to the saddle to meet him half way. Two-hundred yards from my ambush spot, I could see he was at least 50 inches wide, but had weak palms. He could be legal, but his antlers and body mass told of an older bull with poor quality antlers that I could not definitively say was wide enough. I watched him thrash a willow bush attempting to convey his worthiness to

~ cont. on page 28



Alaskan Solitude *continued*

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the cow when I noticed he had four points to his left brow and was in fact legal. However, because of his weak palms and the hope to find a bigger bull, I decided not to shoot, but instead continued to call him near for good videography. He eventually climbed up to me, where I had positioned myself for a good cross wind. He broke through the last of the alder brush and passed my position in the open at less than 20 yards. I let the unsuspecting bull pass me, and then I grunted him back to look for me. He responded with grunts of his own, antler raking, and a nose that wouldn't stop running. I could see this old bull had many epithelial tumors or virus induced polyp warts on the skin of his side and hindquarters. These are usually benign and don't affect the meat at all. I could see his ears lay back; obviously a sign of frustration building. I remained silent now, for safety reasons. He eventually found my form standing 15 yards away, and his active tongue licking his nostrils told of his efforts to catch my scent. He became very nervous and turned to slip away. Only after retreating slowly for 30 yards, did he break into a run and trot down the opposite hillside and disappear. I can still see the look in his eyes when he realized after catching my scent, that this was not the reason he came the long distance and climbed up the hill for!

During the next five days I saw only one

more small bull and two cows, but was also entertained by fourteen ravens that flew up to the peak to investigate me. Some of them would play and bump into each other by diving and grabbing each other in flight and go into a kind of free fall before separating, gaining loft, and flying up before doing it all over again. The audible sounds these birds made were so different from what I had ever heard them make before. I still didn't feel alone after the flock left because I could see and hear loons down on the lake and watch trumpeter swans swim in circles while preparing for their migration south. A huge hawk the size of an eagle soared high above me then folded into a power dive pulling up parallel to me, turning its head to me as it flew past. I watched with binoculars as it flew to the horizon and disappear into the clouds. Canadian jays lit on rocks next to me when I opened my trail mix or jerky. While enjoying their fearless antics, I always wonder how they knew it was lunch time for this moose hunter.

My *modus operandi* consisted of calling from the lookout late in the evening, returning first thing in the morning in hopes of catching the attention of any bulls that



may have committed to my calling from the previous day. Today it worked! I watched another bull leave his smaller bull companion and come to my calling. He ran toward me at times only to stop and rake his antlers through willow brush. This commotion spooked a caribou bull which had been feeding nearby. The caribou got out of the way of this rut crazed beast as he freight-trained up toward me. The rapidly approaching bull had a long hanging dewlap, indicating a younger moose. His antlers had more tines than the older bull I called in earlier, but his antler width of only around 50 inches also left me less than confident about legality. The closer he approached, the more I realized I had to once again release the grip on my bow and focus the video camera on this would-be prey. I again had to hold back as this bull also passed at close range. He looked magnificent as his muscles bulged and defined the borders of his shoulder blade. I focused momentarily on the low flat spot just behind the shoulder where my arrow should have struck. Seeing this animal through the camera's viewfinder was not natural, and several times I found myself pulling away and taking in the sight with my own eyes. Once the bull passed me uphill, the wind caught his nose, and my scent carrying on it put him at full alert. Briefly looking at

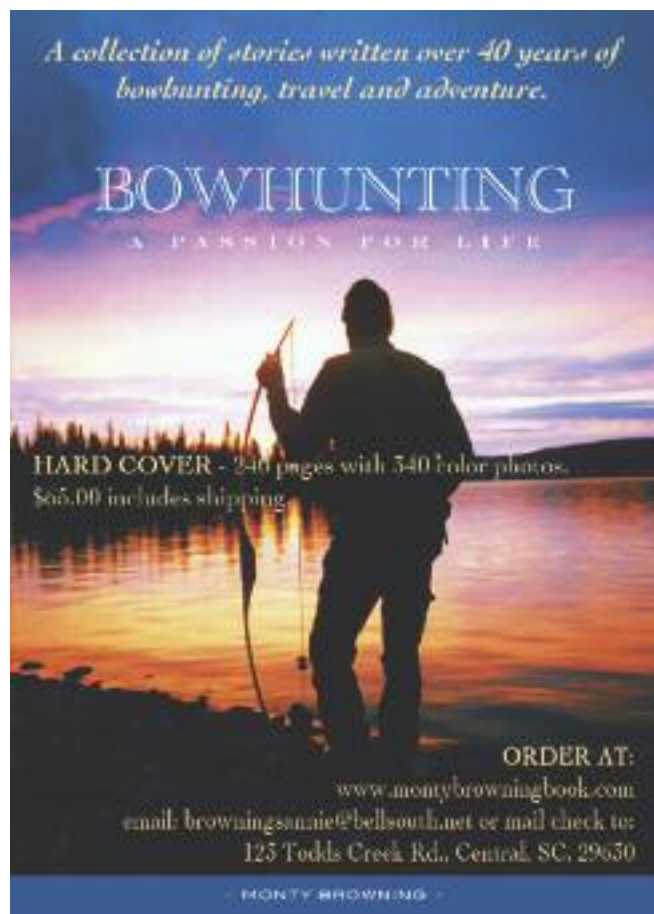


me, he turned and ran away, tracing the escape route taken by the older bull a few days earlier.

These two close encounters defined my hunt. I was modern man reaching out to my ancestors while experiencing rain and wind nearly every-day. With hypothermia ever looming, a solo hunt in Alaska's wilderness is a true test of one's mettle. It matters not if you are the lord of a manor house in Old Europe who dares not mingle with servants confined to a lower level, or a migrant worker whose life's savings paid for a hunting license and airfare, the wild places of the Great North do not discriminate. Raw and untamed country can humble the ill-prepared, and at times force the experienced to prayer. Look closely though; beneath the harshness of the landscape and the unpredictable threat of foul weather, lies the beauty, accolades, and uplifting of human spirit that can only be felt through surviving and hunting in solitude. Having fewer moose sightings than I hoped, I left my Alaskan home never seeing another human, with a feeling of maximum effort given, and rewards received other than fresh meat.

Mike Mitten is the author of One with the Wilderness (Passions of a Solo Bowhunter), and co-producer of the films, Primal Dreams and Essential Encounters. www.brothersofthebow.com

*Equipment note: The author used a Tall Tines recurve at 67 pounds pull to shoot his 2219 aluminum arrows mounted with Tuff Head broadheads. Total arrow weight was 790 gr. **



Flinging sticks at



By John Vargo, Iowa

It's a long drive (1000+ miles or 15+ hours of road time) from Birch River, Manitoba to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Mile after mile of driving on straight roads traversing flat ground with the monotony only broken by the obligatory Tim Horton's, A&W Root Beer, and Dairy Queens located in each small town that you pass through. Of course the long, grueling drive goes a little easier when there is bear meat in your cooler!

This hunt started in December 2015 when I received an email forwarded to me by Uncle Barry. Jon Bahre, a fellow bowhunter and friend of Barry's from Connecticut, had sent him an email inviting him to take the place of a member of his four-man group that was planning to bowhunt black bears at Stickflingers in western Manitoba in late May, 2016. Barry was not able to go but forwarded the email to several friends. A quick phone call to Jon and I was invited to join their group. A real coup on my part considering that Stickflingers is fully booked on their bear hunts through 2020.

Ryan Derlanger, a traditional bowhunter from Winnipeg, Manitoba, began outfitting for bears a few years back and has quickly earned the reputation as the place to go if you want to: (1) see lots of bears, (2) see/shoot a color phase bear (about 30% are color phase), and (3) shoot a large, mature boar. Ryan had previously worked as a guide for several other outfitters and thought it was time to purchase a concession

and start his own operation. Ryan runs three six-day hunts each spring with a maximum of six hunters in each camp. He hunts the Porcupine Mountain region just north of Swan River. Much of his area is untouched due to the vastness and remoteness of the area. Hunters stay in a very comfortable tent camp with heated showers, a trailer converted into a kitchen/cooking area, and conveniences such as refrigerators and freezers to freeze bear hides and meat. Ryan uses a mixture of trail mix nuts to feed the bears. Ryan sets his stands up about 12-15 yards from the bait barrel, using primarily ladder stands that are not set very high.

The use of ATV's in hunting often initiates spirited discussion. I have always been somewhat neutral on their use, recognizing that it is the person operating the vehicle and not the vehicle itself that is the problem. Stickflingers probably could not operate without the use of ATVs which are not only used to ferry the hunters from gravel roads to the remote bait locations but also used to haul bait, bring out killed bears, and to check trail cameras for bear activity. Some of the bait locations that were hunted during my stay at Stickflingers were in excess of five miles from where we had to park the truck.

Other hunters in camp included Sean and Donovan, friends of Jon's from Connecticut, along with Daryl Kempher of Michigan and Brian Wessel from Iowa. Brian is the owner/bowyer of Tall Tines traditional bows. Both Brian and Daryl have hunted several times in the past at Stickflingers. With the exception of Sean, all of the hunters in camp were using traditional bows.

We all arrived in camp mid-day on Sunday and quickly assembled bows and gear for that evening's hunt. My first sit was in the "Vinni" stand, a ladder stand in a spruce tree near Vinni Lake over-

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Flinging Sticks continued

~ continued from page 29

looking a bait barrel full of trail mix at 15 yards distance. Mosquitoes quickly descended on me and I struggled with my Thermacell for nearly 20 minutes before finally getting it lit. Relief! While mosquitoes are not quite the problem that they are during bear hunts in the eastern Canadian provinces, they can be fairly thick in the brush and some sort of protection is necessary.

About an hour into my sit, I looked up and saw a black bear coming off the hillside and walking into the bait. It was a decent-sized bear with a lush, glossy coat with a white chest blaze and no rub marks. A great Thursday or Friday bear, but I wanted to hold out a day or two waiting for a color-phase bear. I turned my video camera on as the bear laid on his belly and scarfed down nuts for ten minutes before leaving. The rest of the evening was uneventful although the bear did return a little while later for another quick snack. Back at camp, all other hunters reported seeing bears with the exception of Brian who got skunked. Ryan commented that it was unusual for a hunter to sit a bait and not see a bear, something Brian was to repeat on his day 2 sit. Ryan indicated that the bear that I had seen was wounded the previous week by another hunter who shot it in the brisket area.

Day 2 started with a flurry of practice shooting at the 3-D bear and deer targets followed by a big lunch. We would typically leave camp about 2 pm each day with dark coming about 10 pm, making for a long day. It was usually around midnight before we were back in camp following the evening hunt.

The second evening began with Manuel

taking Brian, Daryl, and myself back on the same road that Brian and Daryl had hunted on the first evening. Not having much experience riding an ATV, the ride down the road and through two river crossings generated a much higher pucker factor than a close encounter with the bear.

Manuel stopped to check one bait very close to the trail and came back with a smile on his face and said that the bait had been hit really hard and that he wanted me to sit there. Who was I to argue! We walked in about 200 yards from the trail and there was my stand, a ladder stand with only one section of ladder under it with the platform only four feet off the ground leaning back against a spruce tree. I must have looked a little skeptical of the set up as he told me that this was where Steve Osminski had killed a really nice bear during a past bear season. I climbed the three steps onto the platform and waved goodbye as Manuel left. First order of business was to organize all of my gear on nearby tree branches. As I was facing the tree trying to screw in the support for my video camera tripod, I heard Manuel fire up his ATV and head down the road to take Brian to his stand. For some reason I turned and looked back at the bait some 10 yards behind me and there was a medium-sized black bear sitting in the trail mix enjoying a snack! For the next 10 minutes I slowly assembled my video gear and hung packs on nearby tree branches while the bear (who was facing me) continued to enjoy his snack. He hung around eating for nearly 45 minutes while I took a lot of video footage. When he finally left,

I quickly snuck out of the stand and snipped some brush close to the bait barrel that was blocking video and which could perhaps deflect a shot.

Shortly thereafter the bear returned and it was followed by a second black bear that was slightly bigger. This bear was some splotches of chocolate hair on its rear quarters but otherwise had a nice, unrubbed pelt. The first bear left after a few



Daryl Kempher and Brian Wessel relax at camp.

minutes, no doubt full from its first visit to the bait site. The second bear hung around for nearly 30 minutes before leaving. More video time. Not too long after this bear departed a new bear approached the bait from a different trail. A decent-sized chocolate bear! My excitement quickly diminished as I saw a small chocolate-colored cub scampering behind her. She came into the bait and fed for about 30 minutes while junior played in the distance. At one point she became very alert and I noticed a very large all black bear approaching from the other trail. We are talking jumbo sized bear here! The sow woofed at her cub to climb a tree and she started yelling really loud at the boar to leave. The boar eventually decided that mama was in no mood to party and he left. Unfortunately, he never presented a good shot so he escaped unscathed.

About 7 pm a medium-sized all-black bear came in to feed. It laid down and enjoyed the trail mix while I took video and looked the bear over with my binoculars. The bear had a very nice, unrubbed pelt. I started doing some really serious thinking about what I wanted to do about it. On the one hand, here was a nice bear with a glossy, unrubbed pelt only 10 yards away but on the other hand it was not the color-phase bear that I coveted. I had four sits left after tonight but rain was predicted for day 3 as well as the final day of the hunt. After much deliberation I decided that a bear in the hand was worth two in the bush and decided to take the bear when it offered a good shooting angle. Most of the time the bear was either facing me or quartering towards me. Each time the bear would move to a broadside position I would reach over and turn the video camera on only to have the bear quickly move back into a "don't shoot" position. Finally, after several false starts, the bear settled into a broadside position. I turned the video camera on and began the draw on my A&H Archery ACS hybrid longbow. The next thing I remember the arrow was gone and the bear let out a roar as the arrow hit home and turned a flip in the air, biting at whatever it was that had stung its side. The bear ran off and was quickly swallowed by the



First night's visitor.

thick, lush brush. I thought the shot looked very good but never heard the death moan which raised a little concern. I waited 15 minutes and got down and walked over to where the bear was standing when I shot to assess the situation. There was blood sprayed on the ground immediately upon the impact of the arrow and I walked out about 15 yards of the blood trail, marked it with flagging tape, and left to get my guide Manuel for tracking as we had been requested to do if a bear was shot.

The ride out on the ATV did not seem quite so harrowing as it did on the ride in. Manuel showed up at dark with the pickup and ATV trailer. I told him about the hit and showed him the video. He thought the hit was pretty good but a little forward so it was decided to leave the bear overnight and look the next morning. When Ryan saw the video back in camp he was in agreement with that decision. Needless to say sleep did not come easy as the next morning we



John and guide, Manuel, pose with his bear.

would quickly find out whether it was going to be "the thrill of victory, or the agony of defeat!"

stuck again. I got down on hands and knees and found where the bear had left the trail and plowed through heavy brush. Manuel took the lead and a few steps later yelled out, "There's your bear!" The bear had traveled about 75 yards from where he was shot. It was a teenage male that Manuel estimated to be 3-5 years old. My Abowyer single bevel broad-head entered the left front shoulder and exited just below the arm pit on the off side. Both Manuel and I remarked that we had never seen an exit wound as devastating as this. You could shove your fist through the exit hole. A short time later the bear was loaded into the ATV cart and back to camp we went.

Day 3 was a flurry of action with all hunters, including Brian, seeing bears. Donovan and Sean both shot bears that night. Donovan shot a really big all-black bear

which was recovered less than 100 yards from where it was shot. Sean's bear was not found. Ryan said he thought the bear was shot too high and that Sean had taken a risky slightly quartering forward shot. Wounding is a problem at Stickflingers and as a result they have adopted a very rigid wounding policy, as have many Canadian outfitters. Shoot a bear and it is yours whether found or not. No mulligans. No do-overs. Something you think about and hopefully restrains the hunter from taking a shot that is too far or a risky shot angle. You pay a hefty penalty for a bad decision and poor shot execution.

I spent the next day fishing for pike and walleye at a nearby lake. I pretty much had the place to myself. I caught the world's smallest northern pike...about six inches long as well as his 10 inch brother. The highlight of the evening was hooking and landing a 21.5" walleye, my first walleye ever. My excitement of the catch was diminished somewhat upon measuring the fish and realizing that it fell in the slot limit of fish that you cannot keep so back to the lake it went.

No bears were shot on Day 4 and I decided the next day that it was time to pack my truck and head home a few days early to spend time at home. Hopefully, Jon, Darryl, and Brian had luck the final two evenings. And yes, I did stop at DQ on the way home! *

Manuel and I hitched a cart to the ATV the next morning and headed out to look for the bear. We had light rain overnight so it was a hands and knees search as small red blood drops on dark green foliage with an overnight rain does not show up very well. We got side-tracked momentarily on the wrong bear trail. I looked over at the main trail and noticed an out of place white stick that looked a lot like the fletch end of my arrow. Yes, it was the last 5 inches of my arrow and the fletching and shaft were soaked with blood. For the first time I was confident that the bear would be mine. We followed the trail another 10 yards or so and then got



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Trail Cam Tidbits...

Big Ones That Got Away

By J L Coppen

In November 2012, I bowhunted deer in Nicholasville, KY. I was given walking directions to a recently hung tree stand, after being told a huge mature buck sporting over 200 inches of antler with 17 points frequented that area. I was told to pass the first old stand on the path and set up on that newer second stand.

I wish I had climbed the first stand! That evening, I watched the monarch walk up out of the timber behind me to within 5 yards of the old tree stand to inspect a scrape there. After he finished, he walked across the path I had walked in on while he approached two does ahead of him. I loosed my arrow at 35 yards and it sailed just slightly over his back. I had been afflicted with a back spasm all week and probably should have cancelled that hunt...but it was November! I think I failed to lean into the shot due to the excrutiaintg pain. After the shot, the buck trotted a few steps and went back to a leisurly walk toward the does. He inspected both does, but they were less interested in him than he was in me!



By Gene Wensel



I wheezed in this big 5x4. He walked right under my tree but I let him go. The following season he grew into a B&C class buck but I never got a shot at him that year.



We had an extended antlerless-only season one year that started on Jan. 11 for a week. This guy walked right past me at 15 yards the day after buck season closed!



One of the prettiest bucks I've ever hunted. Came sooooo close to getting him. If only I could shoot better at 25 yards :>





Editor's Note:

Our regular column Trail Cam Tidbits has seemingly morphed into a feature of "Big One's That Got Away". Its always fascinating to see how many big bucks, boars and bulls live right under our noses in undeniable existence, allowing us to play our little games that seldom interrupt their daily routines as much as some people think.

PBS members are encouraged to participate in this new feature by sending in photos of big ones that slipped through our fingers. Include a few sentences about each animal, close encounters with them and other interesting information. Send photos to our magazine editor, Jack Smith at probowhunters@roadrunner.com



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One of those Days in the Elk Woods

By Norm Johnson

Living on the Oregon coast has blessed me with the opportunity to hunt elk with my bow for the last 36 consecutive years. In those years I have had the privilege to hunt both the Roosevelt elk (in my back yard) as well as the Rocky Mountain elk on the east side of the state. The diverse habitat of each side of Oregon creates its own set of challenges. In 2013 I had drawn a coveted tag in the Northern Blue Mountains of Northeast Oregon in a unit managed for older age class bulls. Also drawing tags were my long time hunting partner and close friend, David Brinker, and my good friend, Jeremy DePiero.

Dave and I made a weekend scouting trip in early August just a few weeks before the season opener. It was to be my first experience to hunt this elk unit. Mentally I was not prepared for just how steep, and rugged the canyons were; dropping more than one thousand feet in elevation in less than a half mile. The road system was sparse with most roads following the higher elevation ridge tops.

After fulfilling some business obligations I was packed and on the road September 7th for the 9 hour drive across the state. Dave and Jeremy would join me the following day. Other than the fact we were hunting an area where we anticipated seeing some mature bulls, I fully expected an elk hunt very similar to many hunts I had experienced over the last 36 years. As the events of the next 10 days unfolded, it was an elk hunt that ended far differently than I had ever anticipated.

The first week of the hunt was simply fantastic. I did not see the numbers of elk I had expected but there were certainly some good quality bulls in the area that were vocal. We had all experienced some close encounters but had yet to close the deal.

Beginning the second week of the hunt another mutual friend, Brent Ericksen, came over from the Oregon coast to enjoy the fun atmosphere and do some calling for anyone that could use his expertise. Brent is one of the best Roosevelt elk hunters with a longbow I have ever met. My wife joined Brent for the ride over to join me for the last week of the hunt. Her good cooking was certainly a welcome addition!

On the morning of the 10th day the weather began to change. Clouds moved in, and distant rumblings soon turned into a heavy dose of thunder and lightning, followed by buckets of rain. By midday we were all back at camp. The wood stove was burning hot, drying our wet clothes, and boots. It was a good time in the tent to reflect on the previous week, have a hot meal, and enjoy each other's company. The next morning the alarm went off at the usual 5:00 am. The storm had moved through but a look outside at what was left of the night time sky still showed no stars and some prevailing wind gusts through the tall pines persisted. In terms of weather it was going to be a cleanup day before more stable conditions were scheduled to return the following day.

It was difficult to get enthused leaving the comfort of my cot and warmth of the wood stove as the current conditions were going to make it extremely difficult to get within bow range of an elk. With our morning routine set, we all managed to make the best of the morning and head for the elk woods. Brent, Jeremy, and Dave decided to hunt the area where I had the close encounter with the 6X7 a few days prior. I had decided to go it alone to an area just a few miles from camp on a small steep mountain surrounded by deep canyons. With daylight beginning to show on the horizon I drove to the end of the road only to encounter two other vehicles. With plenty of other options I quickly decided to hunt a main ridge a short distance back toward camp. I had seen a true monster on this particular ridge the week before and several other younger bulls. On one occasion, Dave and I had an encounter with a wolf which does not sit well with the elk in the area.

Arriving at what had become plan B a few minutes after good light, I made my way up the spine of a steep ridge for about a ¼ mile. The previous day's rain had all but erased the older elk tracks, the ground was now soft and quiet. I looked down as I climbed in elevation and there in the soft rain soaked dirt was a very large and extremely fresh bull elk track. He was headed from my right to my left over the spine of

the ridge into a large cluster of tag alder. I had seen cows in this particular stand of tag alders just days prior and with the rut now in full swing this bull was looking for female companionship. I took up his track and headed deep into the tag alder. The tracks guided me on a side hill elk trail through the tangled mass of tag alders. A few hundred yards later the track exited into a tall timbered draw. The trail now revealed multiple sets of smaller tracks. I quickly assessed them to be two cows and a calf.

As I entered the timber I was surprised to hear my first bugle of the day amongst the lingering wind gusts. It was straight ahead and no more than a hundred yards away. I had no intention of making a sound by calling and letting the elk know I was in the area. I crept slowly ahead as the bull bugled several more times. I was confused as to why I could not see him and then I spotted movement in my binoculars. The bull was bedded directly ahead of me on a small elevated bench at 60 yards. All that was visible were the tips of his antlers. A downed log and some sparse waist high ground vegetation did a good job of concealing him from my view.

I quickly spotted more movement above me and to my right. I could see two cow elk feeding in the tall foliage. I was kneeling in an open area under the canopy with unfavorable wind and nowhere to go without being spotted. Soon thereafter the cows winded me and headed uphill toward the top of the ridge. I turned my focus back to the bull and to my surprise, he was already gone. I stayed put for a few moments and gave them time to clear out of my wind. I got up to my feet and quickly climbed back to the spine of the ridge. The bull bugled several times from beneath me in the canyon below as they made their way east toward the ridge across from me. It was my hope they would cross the opposing ridgetop in an open area where I could see them.

It had gone quiet for about 10 minutes when the bull bugled again. This time he sounded much higher near the peak of the ridge. I began glassing with my binoculars and soon spotted the cows and calf passing

through a small grassy opening at about 400 yards. The cows appeared to have settled back to their feeding routine as they crossed the opening before breaking over the top of the ridge headed into the next canyon. The bull crossed quickly after the cows, only giving me a glimpse.

With the elk now completely out of sight I descended quickly into the canyon below headed to the far side hoping to find tracks where I had last seen them. As I approached the small grassy opening from below, I soon found their tracks in some of the soft dirt areas as they broke over the top of the ridge. The conditions for tracking were as good as they ever get.

Over the next half mile they side hilled crossing the head of two small draws and a couple of small natural open meadows. The tracking was very slow at times with grassy and rocky areas leaving no trace. I had lost them numerous times but with persistence was able to find them in softer areas where they would leave a slight indentation on the side hill. It was about an hour into the tracking and I could see the light of an open meadow as I peered out through the trees. I could see the bull feeding 80 yards ahead of me in the meadow. It was my first good look at the bull. There was no doubt he was a heavy antlered mature bull.

He fed another 10 minutes then turned his focus downhill and walked slowly disappearing into the timber below. I waited until I could see no movement in the timber before I ventured across the meadow. It was now approaching 9:00 am and I knew it was likely that he was looking for a place to bed for the day.

I took my time moving very slowly following his tracks in soft duff under the timber as they began to drop in elevation. At one point I lost the tracks for about 15 minutes as the elk made a 90 degree turn in direction. I was able to locate a fresh track. However, with the direction change, I could only hope this was the same elk. The ground turned grassy and hard and I found no more tracks but I maintained my side hill line as I approach another timbered draw. I was focused and staring intently at the ground trying to find another track... when a very faint bugle broke the silence.

This was the first bugle I had heard since I began tracking the elk earlier in the morning. I quickly jerked my head up trying to get a direction. I could immediately tell it was not a distant bugle that carried in from afar. It was a close bugle that was barely audible and it came from the timber somewhere below me. I eased downhill just inside the shadows of the timber with my head up scanning through a plethora of dead low hanging branches. There he was!

Seventy yards below, bedded on a small bench with his back toward me, his blonde hide laying in the black duff in dim light was easy to see. I slowly pulled my binoculars to my eyes and spent the next few minutes glassing all of the area around him trying to locate the two cows and the calf. They were nowhere to be found. Luck was still moving in my favor.

Could I stalk this bull and kill him in his bed? I certainly had done it with mule deer. If the wind stayed good to me with the fact that he was bedded alone, made me start to like my odds. The weather had improved by the hour but still had a lot of high clouds

moving through creating unstable winds. I speculated the intermittent presence of the late morning sun warming the face of the steep ridge was helping to prevent down drafts. When I began to closely study the path of the stalk and the sheer amount of dead low hanging low branches, it was apparent I would have to close the distance to 25 yards or less to have a chance. I slowly eased my pack to the ground and slipped out of my hunting boots. I had one blow down log directly in front of me and a lot of dead crunchy debris to navigate my way to bow range. The previous night's rain had little impact under the dense canopy.

Deer and elk are no different than domestic livestock in the fact they go through the digestive process of rumination or what we refer to as "chewing their cud". The jaw movement of deer and elk chewing their cud creates a slight rocking motion with their antlers. This is the secret clue that they are relaxed. As I began slowly inching my way down toward the bull, I could see from behind he was chewing his cud and relaxed. If he stopped chewing, I stopped moving. At times the wind would come to a complete stop as well. I stood motionless until it would gradually begin to pick up. I relied on the mild noise of the wind in the pines to mask the simple sounds of my clothes and my sock feet slowly settling on the pine duff. In just under an hour I was knelt behind the bull, with him facing away, at 25 yards with a basketball size opening through the dead branches. The problem I now had was a poor shot angle. I needed the bull to roll up on his belly and off his side. I did not want to risk a spine hit

~ cont. on page 36



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One of those Days *continued*

~ continued from page 35

or a single lung hit.

My initial plan was to come to full draw, anchor, and follow with a cow call from the diaphragm in my mouth to draw enough attention for him to roll up or even stand up. As I slowly began to draw my bow the bull rolled part way up on his belly all on his own. I quickly picked a spot and released the arrow. In a flash it was buried to the feathers behind the shoulder blade angling down and forward into the bottom of the chest. The bull just twitched and lay in his bed and had no clue what had just happened. He was supposed to get up and run!

By now the effects of adrenaline had slowed my thinking process to a crawl. He did not react as expected and it seemed like an eternity for me to realize it was OK to shoot again. I glanced down to quickly grab another arrow from my quiver and as I did he was on his feet and within seconds was over the edge of the bench and out of sight. I sat back and listened to what sounded like a runaway train aggressively angling downhill off the mountain. The sound of breaking branches and running hooves quickly stopped followed by a pause of silence then a faint crash.

I sat quiet for a few seconds trying to gather my thoughts. I put the second arrow back in my quiver and rose to my dirty sock feet. Surely he didn't go down that quickly? Or did he?

There certainly was that moment of disbelief. I sat back down and simply could not believe how the entire morning had unfolded. It was now some time after 10:30 a.m. It had all started with just a single large track in the dirt at daylight, two ridges

and several miles behind me. Through all the highs and lows, I realized as well, I had not blown a single elk call all morning.

I climbed back up the ridge behind me to retrieve my pack and boots. I sat again and had a long drink of water and a granola bar. I decided to pull my phone out of my pack and see if I had enough elevation to pick up any kind of cell signal. One bar! I called my wife in camp and told her I had just shot a 7X7 in his bed. I sent Dave a teaser text, "Bull hit," I had no idea when he would get my message as the area he was hunting was lower elevation with no signal.

I knew I should wait a little longer before taking up tracks and blood but the cu-

riosity and anticipation was starting to kill me. With my boots back on, and pack shouldered, I made my way back down to the bed and stepped over his first tracks. I scanned downhill in the distance through the gaps in the trees and spotted a big blonde lump at about 100 yards. I quickly put my binoculars on the blonde lump and confirmed he was down.

The words to describe the moment of seeing fallen prey evade me but those who bowhunt know the feelings all too well. It is the epitome of why we accept the challenge! As I approached the downed bull I could see the arrow had angled downward into his heart. It was just one of those days in the elk woods I will never forget. I could not wait to share the moment with my wife, and my friends and thank God for the opportunity and the blessing of filling the freezer for another year with elk meat. ♣



I Raised a Bowhunter!

By Stanley Rodrigue

From the time he was old enough to pull it back, my son has had a bow in his hands. When he was about six years old I started taking him along on bow fishing trips into the swamps of Southern Louisiana with a little Ben Pearson Bronco recurve. A friend of my wife's asked her, "How can you let him go into those swamps with all the gators and snakes? He is so young!" She told her she did not like it and it worried her but I had grown up doing the same things with my father so she figured it was unavoidable!

The first thing he ever shot was on one of those trips; it was a small copperhead. He must have shot at that snake five or six

times before he hit it, but boy was he excited when he finally connected! Most of the garfish he shot at were pretty safe those first few years. He could not pull his bow back to full draw yet and often he would hit the fish but the arrow would bounce off harmlessly and the fish would swim away. I remember the

first day he made it happen, he got four that day. He was very proud, but I think I was more so than he!

One day we were bowfishing in Point la Hache, Louisiana. We were easing down a small ditch between the swamp and a fresh water marsh. We were in pirogues (small wooden canoes about 14' long, 30" wide and about 12 to 14" deep) and there were four of us in all. My buddy Larry was alone in his pirogue and my son, nephew, and myself were in ours. Larry was a little ways ahead of us and shot at a large alligator gar but missed. He turned and shouted there was a big one swimming our way. I eased the pirogue over to the side of the ditch and my nephew held us in place by grabbing a

couple hand fulls of marsh grass with my son in the middle of the boat. The gar came by us and I put an arrow through him. He swam about ten yards farther and stopped so I put another arrow through him. He then departed for parts unknown, and in a big hurry! I sat down in the boat as quickly as I could and held fast to the string as the gar began pulling us with him. My sudden movement to get seated made the little pirogue rock pretty hard and some water came in over the side. When the string couldn't take it any longer it snapped and the last we saw of that gar was my arrow cutting through the murky swamp water. The ditch was only a few feet deep but in the midst of the chaos my son hollered, "Let him go daddy, he's gonna turn us over!" We still laugh about that day!

I bought him a Bear Mini-mag compound bow for Christmas one year. He was so excited at first, but started crying when he couldn't pull it back. That bow hung in the den for about a year before he managed to get it to full draw. Every week or two he'd get it down and try as hard as he could to draw it until one day, he finally did!

As the years came and went we made many bow fishing trips and hunts together until the day came when he graduated high school and joined the military. Four years later he was married and living in Tennessee, starting a career as a machinist. I made him a bow and he got to where he enjoyed shooting traditional bows very much. I gave him a copy of "Bows of the Little Delta" and he was soon calling me saying he wanted to build his own bow. I was



still living and working in South Louisiana at the time. We ordered the materials and he came south one weekend and we built his first long bow together. I thought to myself, maybe I did raise a bowhunter!

I've long since retired and we now both live in East Tennessee on the Cumberland Plateau. He's still making beautiful longbows and recurves and hunts with traditional bows exclusively. He strives to be the most ethical hunter he can be and works hard at it. He had a great season a couple of years back and took a nice 8 pointer and 4 big mature does. I now know that I did in fact raise a bowhunter and that "he gets it"! I remember well the first deer I got a shot at with a bow many years ago. I was so excited

~ cont. on page 39 ~



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Paul Speral with a spring 2016 Minnesota turkey.



Mike Dhaemers with a South Dakota bird.

Member Photos



Mark Wang with his Illinois spring gobbler.



Apparently, Kevin Bahr doesn't smell that bad after all.

The company of fellow hunters made for a great time two days before the St. Augustine Gathering.

Left to right: Michael McMahon, Gene and Barry Wensel, Ron Tandy, Marty McMahon with his daughter Sarah and his grandson Matthew, and Rick Grooms.



I Raised a Bowhunter! continued

~ continued from page 37

to have gotten a shot that I didn't care that I had missed! I never thought that someday I would have a son that would share the same passion and excitement I have for bowhunting!

We had a really special hunt a few years ago. We were both hunting the edge of Reelfoot Lake in northwest Tennessee, with bows that each of us had made ourselves. I took a real nice doe with my longbow. The back water was out pretty high and my son heard the arrow hit and the deer take off through the water. He radioed that he would come down in about thirty minutes and help me find her. He had to be at work early the next morning and we were a long way in. About 45 minutes had passed and he hadn't shown so I got down and went to where he was. When

I got there he was looking at an arrow sticking up through the muddy water with good blood on it! He shot a good doe as well minutes before I walked up so we went to look for mine first. Two short blood trails later we were relishing in the excitement of two clean kills with homemade bows on the same afternoon. It was a long night getting those two deer out of the swamp and back to the truck, but it was a real father and son moment that neither of us will ever forget.

He has always been a good kid and has had a love of the outdoors all of his life. His mother has had a lot more to do with that than I. She always made sure he was in church and she tried to teach him to do the right thing. Much of the man he is today



is because of her efforts. He has a great job that he loves, and a wonderful family. His wife, Trena, is a school teacher and they have two beautiful girls, Kaylee is 15 and Claire is 12. I am now 69 years old and my son is 40. I think a lot of you in PBS know him as Ethan!

I want to thank all of you in PBS for being part of my son's and my life. I would also like to thank my bowhunting pals back in Louisiana (you know who you are!). You have all had a hand in the future of bowhunting in shaping my son, as well as many other sons and daughters through the years.

Thanks again! ♣

“Grizzled”

Veteran of the Bow

By Doug Borland

In 1969, on my first moose hunt in Alaska, fear got the better of valor, so I backed off a huge Kenai Peninsula grizzly bear, in spite of the fact that I had stalked within bow range, and I did have my brother and a rather inadequate 30-06 as support. I had never seen a grizzly before, and the extreme adrenaline rush from the sight of the beast at thirty yards was overwhelming. He did not see us; and I figured that maybe it was best to keep it that way, so we watched him amble over the ridge and out of our vision as our knees turned to jelly. Although the fifty-eight pound Wing recurve might have been adequate, my mind and body were not prepared, so in spite of many other youthful indiscretions, I didn't screw up this time! A few days later, after shooting over the back of a much smaller black bear, I knew for sure that I had made the right decision!

Bowhunting for me has always been a series of important decisions – what equipment to choose, where to go, who to take as a companion, and most importantly when to loose an arrow. Over the last thirty-eight or so years that I have bowhunted, I have found that “if and when” to shoot has lately become an almost sacred decision, and I find that I am not releasing an arrow towards an animal nearly as often. Yet I am in the woods as often as I can, and the realization has grown that I have many reasons for hunting with the bow that really do not involve killing at all.

Between that first grizzly bear stalk, and my most recent one last fall on Kodiak Island, there have been many bears. There was the time when my brother Bobby and I were packing caribou meat and met a grizzly in a narrow canyon with steep rocky cliffs on both sides. It was not bear season, and we had only our bows, not exactly great weapons for protection. He was determined to have the trail, we had nowhere to go, so we dropped our packs and backed away. In this case, the scent of sweated-up backpacks must have overridden the smell of fresh meat, because he “woofed”, reared up for a look at us, and turned and ran back down the trail.

Or consider the time that the grizzly destroyed our camp; or the time one stole Jay's sheep meat! I was even charged by one once, but I think that he had just mistaken me for a caribou or something. At least he veered off at the last minute. At any rate, grizzlies to me are like sharks in the ocean, they add something inexplicably good to the experience of being in such an environment – maybe it is seeing just what occupies the top rung of the food chain!

For me, a grizzly bear has always been an “incidental species”, not specifically hunted but usually I have a tag, and if they are in the area I am quite aware that I may always get into a situation where I have shifted my full attention from moose, deer or sheep and I am hunting grizzly! On one such occasion, on a wilderness Alaskan river float, we had found a 50” bull moose killed and covered by what was obviously a huge grizzly bear. He had been living near the kill – a vast area was trampled, he had several “nests” where it appeared that he had been laying up during the heat of the day. The sand bar was covered with tracks indicating that he was a very large bear. We floated on, and camped three miles downriver near a series of beaver ponds that looked like a prime area for moose. As my two companions were non-residents and not licensed for bear, they dismissed the bear kill as an interesting experience; but that night I could not stop thinking about it! In Alaska it is illegal to artificially bait a grizzly bear, but hunting near a “natural” kill was both legal and met my personal standard of fair chase. So at dawn, I went upriver, not specifically bear hunting, but having it in mind to check out the kill site just in case! When I got to the hill overlooking the site, I assessed the situation.

First of all, the kill was in a heavy stand of willow, much of it too thick to see through much less sneak through. Second, there was little or no wind, which would make it very hard to move without some noise from the gravel bar or from the brush. Then, his primary “nest”, where I thought he might be (as it was now midmorning), was about forty yards off the river, up against a cut-bank with only one feasible

way in or out! Finally, unless I am hunting on Kodiak, I have never packed a firearm while bowhunting. So, I sat on the ridge awhile, and made the only decision that I could: “What the heck, let's go bear hunting.”

Across a small creek, I eased through a side-channel of the river, and within thirty minutes or so I was able to start the serious stalk. I stepped up the high bank, into the birch and spruce, and let my eyes adjust for a moment to the darkened understudy of the forest floor. Now, if you have never inadvertently or purposefully put yourself into close proximity of an animal that can kill you, let me say here that it is a singular experience. Those hairs really can stand up! I was still about forty yards from his suspected lair, but I found that every brown spot looked suspiciously like bear hide! The strong odor of bear musk hung in the air like some rotted perfume, and somehow I just knew he was there. I moved forward, an arrow on the string on my longbow, and was surprised to find that the damp earth beneath my feet was noiseless. When I saw the bear I had to make a very serious decision. All I could see at twenty-five yards was a “mound” of bear, shapeless silvertip with no discernible head or tail. He was lying down, and I was inside of his comfort zone. A bear, if surprised, at this range can instinctively charge and strike; and a bear with a kill to protect can be especially aggressive. I backed away after only a minute or so, keeping my bow at the ready in case he heard or smelled me and stood. The bright sunlight on the gravel bar brought a sense of relief and a release of nervous energy. Flight had won out over fight. Yet, I guess I had just about done it – all except draw and shoot – and for sure I had experienced about as much close quarter grizzly hunting as I could stand!

Last fall, on Kodiak Island, I seriously hunted the biggest bears in Alaska for about ten days. I stalked five bears to under one hundred yards, two to under thirty yards, and again never loosed an arrow. I also found out that grizzly will respond to a mouse-squeaker, if you are dumb enough to use it! My hunting buddy got “treed”, and we sank our boat crossing a tidal stream, and otherwise had a great time!

As I grown more experienced, and earn these graying hairs, I think many “non-shooting” trophies such as the bear on the moose kill are some of my finest! I've been “backup” gun on many grizzly stalks in Russia, when I was privileged to have guided bowhunts there, and some of those encounters had to be better than if I was the hunter myself! Maybe these grizzlies are now just markers in my memory, and con-

tributors to the gray hairs that have somehow infiltrated the top of my head, but I am looking forward to a few more encounters before the old yew gets too tough for the elbows, the hand and the eye.

For you see, all of these years that I have hunted in grizzly country, in the back of my mind I have had a feeling that I wanted to shoot one on my own terms. To me, that means on the ground, with no backup gun, no sidearm, preferably alone, one-on-one. Nothing “macho” here; instead something intensely personal sprung from hunting over thirty years in grizzly country. This is perhaps why I have yet to loose an arrow at a grizzly – the situation to my mind must be absolutely perfect. I can envision an elevated stalk, perhaps along a creek where the sound of the water acts as a noise cover-up. Perhaps a mature board, feeding with his head down, in a steady but not too strong cross wind. I will intercept him at under twenty-five yards, and the first thing he will sense will be the sting of the feathered shaft as it touches the spot behind the shoulder. He will fight the arrow for a moment, then blindly burst away, then lie still as I cautiously approach.

I know better than to think that I will get this perfect chance anytime soon, but it may come. If it doesn't, I have had more than my share of perfect days in the field, and I am sure that ninety percent of them did not involve letting an arrow go towards an animal. The people with whom I hunt agree that you should earn your trophies, and I am still paying my dues, still learning every time I step into the woods. God willing, I would love to have another thirty years or so to try and get it done! ♣

Ruminations

By G. Fred Asbell

One of my finest bowhunting memories is an extended bowhunting trip to Alaska way back in the mid-60's. Bob Pitt and I did a drop camp sort of thing south, and some east of Mt. McKinley. We had an arrangement with a now defunct guide who said we could come for one week, or for three months, for the same price, and he didn't care which. He would furnish us a tent and grub, and would move us a couple of times if need be. Three months seemed like a better deal to us, and so that was what we did.

It was quite an adventure. We were pretty green back then, and we spent most of two years planning it. In looking back at it, there is no question that the planning of the adventure was one of the best parts of it. I am quite sure of it. And, hey...there's nothing wrong with a three month bowhunt, for sure. But two years of anticipation, two years of dreaming and planning, and two years of getting up each morning knowing that you were one day close to Alaska was quite a thing. There wasn't anyone in Indiana who had ever been to Alaska bowhunting, and the only people I had ever heard of who had done it were Fred Bear and Glenn S. Charles, although I'm sure there were others. I was a member of Pope and Young Club even then, and I guess I figured that gave me some sort of priority on Glenn St. Charles, because I must have called him two dozen times. Glenn wasn't much of a planner I guess, at least not like me, because about the only advise he would offer was to wear wool, and to cut your pants off right at the top of your boots like the loggers do in Washington state.

Pitt and I spent hundred of hours together planning every detail, what arrows should we take? Someone told us that we needed at least twelve dozen arrows, and so we gave a lot of thought to the cost of that, American Archery made one of the finest wood arrows there has ever been, and I could get them for \$2.20 dozen...dipped, full length, but unfletched. We shot woodies all one year, and then got afraid of the warpage everyone kept telling us we'd have in Alaska's wet climate, and decided on aluminum.

I remember that Pitt called me in the middle of the night once, and read aloud a newspaper account of a lost Alaskan hunter who had frozen to death, and that a simple windproof shirt/parka would have saved him, according to some authority. So, for a while that winter we tested nylon wind shirts. Pitt rode in the back of a pickup, standing upright at zero temperatures, on one occasion, but felt that the results were inconclusive because his face got to cold and he had to pound on the top of the cab and make his wife pull over. After considerable anguish over the thing we finally agreed that a quality rainsuit would serve dual purpose as either a wind shirt, or as a rain barrier.

We spent most of the two years trying to figure out what the correct footwear might be. We met with a fellow at a sport show who'd been to Alaska hunting every year for about 15-20 years. He wore leather boots each year, and lost all of his toenails each year from the moisture, which kept his feet perpetually wet. He said he planned each year to find a good pair of waterproof boots, but it seemed like each year he never found the time, and ended up wearing the same kind of leather boots again. I still have a pair of \$150.00 (which was unGodly amount of money in the '60's) hand-made, guaranteed waterproof (and they never, ever are) leather boots, which we bought before we found the perfect boot in a 10 inch ankle fit rubber boots from L.L. Bean.

And the Alaska planning tales could go on and on.

I guess the point I wanted to get to is that, for me, planning a trip... what bow am I going to shoot, what clothes will I take, and what will it all be like... has been a considerable part of each hunting trip for me.

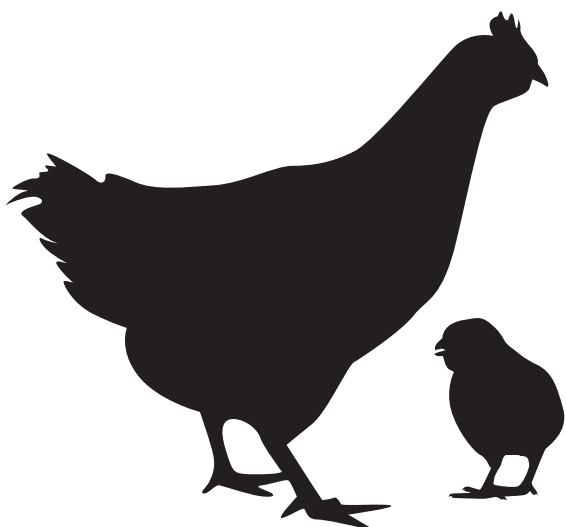
I admit that I don't spend quite as much time planning each hunt as I once did. That is partly because I am a more experienced bowhunter now, and on many occasions I know what I need to take, and what it will be like. And, true, there are more hunts now for me than there once was. But, still, I like the planning, and the thinking about the coming adventure, and if I have to, I do something to make the hunting a little different than the one before...so I'll have to plan and think about it more.

There is almost never a hunt on which I don't do something different... like using a new bow, or trying heavier arrows, or lighter arrows, or making it a backpacking hunt instead of operating from a vehicle based camp. This spring I went bear hunting in Albert and I went with a plan to do most of my hunting on the ground... by taking up a position as far away from the bait as I could, and then watching it with binoculars and putting a stalk on whatever showed up. And, of course, part of that is adding another challenge to the thing, but part of it is also adding a twist that will require additional planning and thinking about the hunt.

My least memorable hunts are always the ones which are spur-of-the-moment things, or the ones which found me too busy to spend much time day-dreaming about them. Planning our hunts are part of the ritual of hunting. and, for me, they are very much a part of the enjoyment of hunting. Someone said that it is a ritual peculiar to man, and is not practiced by animals. I'm not sure I believe that. Particularly since I've seen many a sleeping dog chasing, and whining, and occasionally barking, as they re-live a past chase, or dream of a future one. A true hunter is a breed part, be it man or beast. And I think we all live to do it when we can, and dream about it the rest of the time.

This year I am going goat hunting...Rocky Mt. Goats... and I'm planning like mad just how I can make this the adventure of a lifetime. Do you do that too??? ♣

Mother Hen, Chick & the Lucky Charm



By Ben Dodge

Sounds like a turkey story but it's not, it's about antelope. This started with me grumbling to Larry Fischer about not drawing an antelope tag in Wyoming two years in a row. Larry had told me about an outfitter in Colorado with over the counter tags. So I called the outfitter Fred Eichler, we talked, and I booked a group of six hunters. Getting a group to go on a hunt is not that difficult. First call was to Doug Korn to tell him he owes me money for a deposit. Doug's reaction this call is always the same, "How much?" and "When do we go?" The rest of the group gets an informational phone call. They were told the first four deposits received were going. Jim Hoffman was in. Jim and I go back a long time and our first out-of-state trip was for antelope. Jim and I passed each other in the food line at the first PBS banquet in Ohio and, to make along story short, we've been hunting partners ever since. Also in the

group were Terry Bowling, Scott Donner, and Joe Dimino – the last two are the new guys in the group.

When I got a phone call from Jerry Fiegl and he wanted in. I had to say "sorry" because there was no room. Then Jerry's wife Cindy called asking if she could send Jerry on the hunt as a birthday present, but again I had to tell her "sorry, no room." Then disaster struck, Doug couldn't go on account of a son headed off to college. So I called Cindy and told her to send in the money. She was really happy, but it was going to be a surprise to Jerry, and we couldn't tell him for several months. So for the next several months we all listened to him whine and cry about not going.

To prepare for the hunt, we all got together to shoot out of a Double Bull blind at an antelope target we brought. We shot all spring and summer, until the time to leave arrived. The rental van was to be

picked up by Gerry and Jim. I reconfirmed the motel room, and made more calls to Fred, then to the group. We finally got together and had a group meeting. The guys all have nicknames except for Joe. I was Mother Hen, which I have been called for years because I always have to have a plan and all the details in place.

We were leaving on Sunday at 11 a.m. On Sunday at 6:30 a.m. the phone rings. It was Jim with a bad tooth, and he was in really bad shape. He called back and let me know of a dentist appointment set for 8 a.m. Gerry went to get the van on his own, and everyone arrived early except for Jim. We were just about ready to go when Jim pulled in – just on time – and we packed the van, a mini van at that, with five guys and gear. We were off with one quick stop for Jim's antibiotics and pain killers. A quick look at Jim and we all agreed he wasn't driving. He slept much of the first 20

Quotations From our Traditional Heritage

Compiled by Gene Wensel

"Being hunters is what has made humans what they are, too, from millions of years of a hunting past that shaped everything from our bodies to our brains to our social relationships. Then-thousand years of grubbing in the dirt is hardly an adequate period for the impulse to hunt to be extinguished in our lives. And so the real aberration is not that some humans still hunt and kill, but that some do not."

Tom McIntyre

The Way of the Hunter, 1988

"For my own part, I lay on the grass under the trees, and build castles in the clouds, and indulge in the very luxury of rural repose.

Indeed, I can scarcely conceive a kind of life more calculated to put both mind and body in the healthful tone. A morning's ride and several hours diversified by hunting incidents; an encampment in the afternoon under some noble grove on the borders of a stream; an evening banquet of venison, fresh killed, roasted or broiled on the coals; turkeys just from the thickets and wild honey from the trees; and all relished with an appetite unknown to the gourmets of the cities. And at night...such sweet sleeping in the open air, or waking and gazing at the moon and stars shining between the trees."

Washington Irving

A Tour of the Prairies, 1835

LOOKING BACK...

hours. We meet Terry in Iowa, and we stopped for our first night motel stay in Nebraska. We visited Cabela's, ate, and then slept.

Joe had been asking a hundred question sand going on non-stop since we left. We were at breakfast the day we went to the ranch and Joe was talking about this hunt and I finally told him, "I've got to put you under the Mother Hen wing and get you to settle down. So you are no nicknamed 'The Chick'." At least now Joe was happy that he had a nickname, and was officially part of the group.

We arrived at the ranch and met Fred, along with the rest of the guides and other hunters. we ate supper and Fred went over the rules of the hunt with us. We would draw blinds later. Of course, as soon as I left the room they drew blinds, so I got stuck with the last blind. I'm also going to be the first out in the morning and last to be picked up. This meant I would have to wait an hour, maybe more, in the blind morning and evening. Which also meant a long, long day for me, 15-plus hours.

Wake-up was at 3:30 a.m. for breakfast, get your lunch in a pack, grab a pee bottle (gallon jug) and off we went. Fred drove me to my blind, which was under a windmill with the stock tank next to it. I could get a close shot at an antelope if they drink from the stock tank. The blinds are roomy. We were all told to only have one shooting hole open at a time. Fred told me most antelope approach from the left of where I would be sitting.

I was set up in the blind with my lucky chair. I know a lucky chair isn't what most bowhunters would have. The chair is a folding chair with lettering that says reserved for Jerry Pierce. It was made to go to the eastern traditional shoot in Pennsylvania and to remember Jerry. This was its first hunt. I sat there drinking coffee and

thinking about things like my Sunday night talks with Jerry and all the good times we had at PBS Banquets and shoots sitting in the booth. All good times, he's sadly missed.

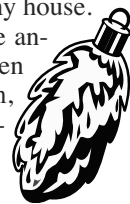
Light finally started to creep over the hills to the east, and I started to scan my eyes over the prairie landscape. It was about 6 a.m. and it was light out now, so legal shooting time had come, but no antelope were in sight. I drank more coffee and took my arrow and moved the cloth window blind to my right and looked out. I was being lazy and it was now 6:10 a.m. Hold on...is that an antelope walking toward the blind? It sure was and it was a good buck. He came right in with no stopping and put his head down into a hole about 18 paces away. He picked his head up and I could see water drip from his mouth. I was not going to pass up a shot, he was just not at the tank where he should have been. I leaned my back against the blind, closed up one shooting hole and opened the other. Bow up, pick a spot, his head went back down into the hole. the shot was gone, and he was hit. The arrow hit in front of his rear leg and angled forward. He ran out about 50 yards and laid down. I wasn't happy with the hit, but I was positive he would be recovered. I watched, waited, and more antelope were coming in to drink at the tank. Though the closest doe was five feet in front of me; they left quickly. The buck got up and followed the does. I signaled Fred, and he came in and we talked about the hit. He then climbed up the windmill, and saw that the buck was just over the rise, meaning we would wait for an hour at least.

We finally got up on top of the hill and the buck had moved over to a fence line, but he was dead. It was photo time, then back to the ranch. My total hunt time was under 15 minutes. Back at the ranch we learned Jerry killed a good wide horned

buck with a double lung shot and he would be back soon. Jerry and I talked about the hunt, and decided to call Doug and let him know his best hunting buddy had killed a buck and the guy that replaced him on the hunt had too. We are really nice guys, but Doug was glad to hear from us.

Everyone saw antelope and shots were taken, but missed. On the last day of the hunt I told Joe to take the J.P. chair with him, because he couldn't get any antelope close enough. So off Joey went with the chair, and a few hours later Fred told us Joe hit a buck. Fred then took me out to Joe's blind, we met Joe and one of the other guides. Soon we recovered Joe's buck. More photos were taken that night. Jim missed a buck and Terry told us about missing a buck early in the day. Everyone had at least one shot, though. As we ate dinner Terry finally told us the whole story about missing his first buck, and then killing the second one that came in. It was the best buck taken all week. We left in the morning, and it's a long drive straight thru - 30 hours to home in New York.

So how does this story get the title of "Mother Hen, Chick and Lucky Charm?" Well you read about two of the nicknames. Two months went by and I got home from work and the phone rang. It was Fred calling just to chat and see what was up. I told him I had to cut the call short because I had planned to go out and get in my tree stand behind the house for the evening hunt. To end our conversation he said shoot an big one and call me back tonight. An hour and half later I was standing over a P&Y 11 point taken 200 yards behind my house. I called Fred's phone and as he answered I said this is Mother Hen wanting to talk to Lucky Charm, and that's how Fred got his nickname, and so did the story. *



"When you are fed up with the troublesome present, with being very twentieth century, you take up your gun, whistle for you dog, go out to the mountain, and, without further ado, give yourself the pleasure of being paleolithic."

Jose Ortega y Gasset
Wild Heart

"Hunting is a complex affair with roots too deep to be pulled up and examined. If a hunter is asked to explain his sport, he can no more rationalize hunting than he can describe emotion. His hunting is and always has been a conditioned instinct that is largely emotional."

Edward L. Kozicky
For The Young Hunter, 1963

"When you have shot one bird flying, you have shot all birds flying. They are all different and they fly different ways but the sensation is the same and the last one is as good as the first."

Ernest Hemingway
Fathers and Sons, 1933

"It may be that a person who has not hunted simply cannot fathom how it is possible for us to kill animals we respect. Any more than a person who has never fallen in love can possibly understand what it means to make love. On the other hand, we owe it to ourselves and to the future of hunting to do our utmost to articulate to non-hunters that for us the food chain is a love chain. Who loves the roses more than those who grow them? Who loves roses more than those who pick and kill them?"

Randall L. Eaton, Ph.D.
The Sacred Hunt

Blackened Venison

"The Story"

By Monty Browning

Our camp was barely visible as I trudged down the last stretch of the gravel bar that served as a bush runway. Just off the end of the strip, two backpack tents marked Bob Nancarrow's and my home for two weeks in Alaska's moose season. I nearly stepped on the instrument before I saw it and stooping down, picked it up and turned it over in my hand. A GPS, obviously dropped there by the pilot of the Cub that had floated in and bounced to a stop like a goose in corn stubble the evening before.

I had watched the little yellow Cub fly out about mid-morning from the mountain across the river. Through ten power optics, I could see the pilot's small tent set up in the edge of the trees halfway down the strip. We had talked briefly and learned that the pilot and his companion were sheep hunters and were going back to fly out the meat of Dall sheep they had taken.

The GPS, protected from the rain inside a plastic bag from my gear, was left propped against their tent with a short note.

Later, after the Cub returned, the pilot walked up to our camp to thank us for our help.

"Is there anything I can do for you guys?" the pilot asked.

"No," I replied. "It was our pleasure. We're just glad that we could help." Then I thought about the Dall sheep he would be flying out and changed my mind.

"If it's not too much to ask," I asked, "we would love to have a small pice of meat from the ram. Neither of us have tasted Dall sheep and those who have say it is the best game meat out there."

"No problem," the pilot said. "I'll take care of you."

"Nothing fancy," I said as he started towards his tent. "Just enough for us to have a taste. We would be thankful for a piece of shoulder."

It was dark when we trudged in, meatless, the following night. The Cub and the tent were gone and Camp Lonesome was quiet and peaceful. Thinking that the pilot had forgotten our scrap of sheep, I opened our cooler. There on top, neatly trimmed and coiled in a Ziploc bag was half a Dall sheep backstrap. The note simply said, "THANKS."

"A man is only as good as his word," I said with an approving smile. "He's a good man. Tonight we eat well."

It was a choice cut of sheep meat and Nancarrow and I looked at each other and then at the backstrap the way Wyle E. Coyote looks at Road Runner.

Bob wasted no time and soon had a small pile of tender dry spruce twigs burning clean. Then he added broken dry limb sections, and as the flames consumed the fuel, added heavy wood. The flames pushed back the night and the sparks rising in the pale blue smoke extinguished themselves like fireflies fading the darkness.

Potatoes were washed, wrapped in foil and tucked into the hot coals to roast alongside foil-wrapped onion halves with butter and garlic salt.

The backstrap was prepared for the searing process as carefully as if it were Woolly Mammoth discovered frozen intact in a Siberian glacier.

I dug through my duffle and found my olive oil, spices and soy sauce that I carry nearly everywhere I hunt. Then, by the numbers, I carefully coated the meat with seasoning. Once finished, I set the meat aside while the potatoes roasted.

Satisfied, I turned my attention to the fire. Pushing the big chunks of burning wood aside, I pulled a bed of glowing embers to one side for a cooking fire, then placed a smoke-blackened pan over the coals and pured enough olive oil in to cover the bottom of the pan. As the oil heated, I opened a can of green beans and dumped the contents in a small pot, a precious slice of stick butter oozing across the surface as it heated over the hiss of the little gas burner.

I watched the oil until a light blue haze of smoke began to rise, the sign that the oil had reached the searing temperature. The seasoned chunk of ram settled into the oil with a loud sizzle, the aroma of cooking meat and spice rising with the heat. My mouth watered in anticipation.

I glanced at my watch. "Three minutes per side," I said to Bob, "any more would ruin it."

"I trust you buddy," Bob said as he rolled the potatoes from the coals with a stick. Then he unwrapped the spuds and put each one on a plate, unwrapped the onion, steam rising into the cold air, and drizzled soy sauce on top.

I raised one end of the meat and the



Seasoned backstrap ready for the pan.
Seasoning in order of use.



Use tongs to turn meat.

coating of spices lifted clean without much sticking, the sign that it was cooking properly. I turned the meat over and checked my watch. Three minutes later I carefully lifted the meat from the pan, placed it on a board for slicing and passed it under my nose and inhaled deeply of the rising aroma.

"Very nice," I said with a smile. "This is going to be a treat."

Turning back to the pan, I splashed in half a cup of soy sauce and about an equal amount of Coke, the Coke a poor substitute for red wine. Using the spatula, I cleaned the pan, scraping the blackened spices and remaining olive oil until the liquid was reduced slightly. Then I sliced the meat, arranged the slices on each plate and spooned the sauce over the meat.

We sat propped in front of the fire, slowly savoring the fine flavor of the ram, the gurgle of the river to our front and the hiss of the wind in the spruce behind our camp.

"Medieval kings probably didn't eat this well," I said to Bob as we feasted.

"You're probably right," Bob said. "This is fabulous."

I couldn't put my finger on just what it was, maybe the simple fact that we were in Alaska or maybe the magic of the fire or maybe the food after a hard day in the bush. But, regardless, it was well worth remembering.

Author's Note:

The following recipe is for all venison lovers, but especially those members who attended the PBS banquet in Baltimore, Maryland, and failed to copy it on their napkin.

Rule One:

NO SUBSTITUTES!

Also, don't be put off by the word blackened. A better description would be

seasoned and seared. When I was given the recipe, I was told that McCormick brand spices should be used. I have tasted different brands, and as for the seasoned pepper and especially the seasoned salt, I agree. Garlic salt, onion powder or onion salts don't seem to differ much by brand, use what you have.

Like most blackened dishes, the pan used is the timeless classic iron skillet. I prefer the No. 9 pan (the bottom measures nine inches in diameter), because it holds a full deer backstrap cut in two sections. It also works well with a London broil, and unlike thin metals, this heavy cast iron hold the heat evenly.

To heat the pan to the high temperatures necessary to properly sear the meat, a good gas flame cooker or pile of white hot charcoal briquettes works wonders. Just level the pile with the pan directly on the coals. Camp fires are pure magic and the oldest form of cooking. Pull coals to one side to avoid the heat of the flames.

If you are reduced to cooking inside over gas or electric, trade the low walled skillet for a Dutch oven. A No. 10 or larger works well, and the high sides will catch most of the splatter from the oil.

How it's done:

If I'm using venison backstrap (my favorite), I use a filet knife to remove the sinew from the top. Then I cut the backstrap in half. If the meat has been frozen, be sure that once seasoned, the meat reaches room temperature before cooking.

Seasoning By the Numbers:

Seasoning is done by the numbers because part of the coating is lost in the searing process. The seasoned pepper goes against the meat and the seasoned salt holds everything together.

1. McCormick's Brand Seasoned Pepper:

Completely cover meat with liberal amounts of seasoned pepper. Use your hand to press the seasoning onto the meat.

2. Onion Salt or Onion Powder:

Use this one sparingly, the way you would salt your scrambled eggs. The onion provides one of the flavors, but is easy to overdo.

3. Garlic Salt:

Use plenty of garlic salt. On a thick cut, only a thin layer remains after the searing.

4. McCormick's Brand Seasoned Salt:

Like the seasoned pepper, this one is important. It contains sugar (go figure) and the sugar caramelizes in the hot oil and tends to stick everything in place if done properly. It seals everything in.

Now, set the meat aside. It usually leave it on the open counter so the guest can "ooh" and "aah" over it until the oil is hot enough.

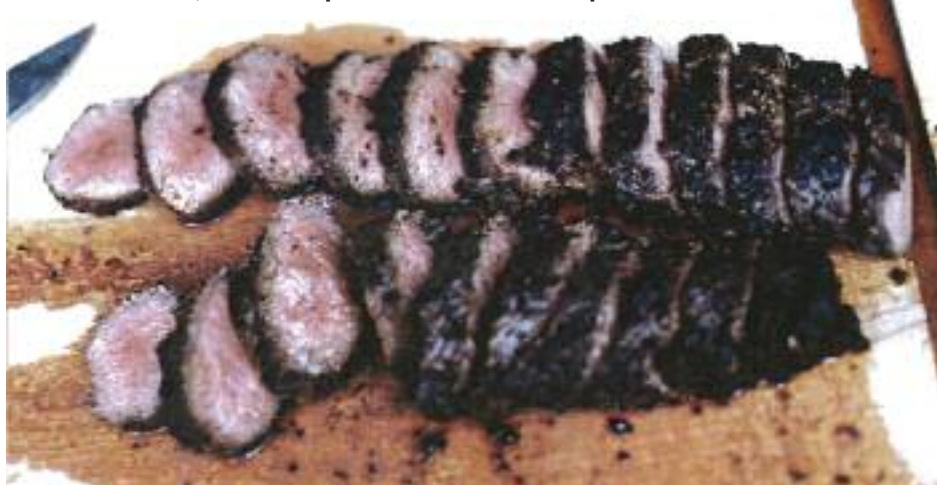
While many blackened dishes call for butter, this dish is done strictly with extra virgin olive oil. It adds excellent flavor and is good for you at the same time. I use enough to cover the bottom of the pan, about one-eighth inch or less.

Put the pan on and be ready to sear when the oil first starts to smoke lightly. Use tongs, not a fork, to place the meat in the hot oil.

It is my opinion that game meat should be cooked rare to medium rare only, anything more than that dries and toughens the meat. If your guests are squeamish about rare meat, I try for three to five minutes per side. Anything more and I tend to get nervous.

~ cont. on page 46 ~

Seasoned venison is best if not overcooked. Once sliced, return to pan and sauce to keep hot and serve.



Blackened Venison cont.

~ continued from page 45

A word of caution:

The oil and pan are very hot and the oil tends to pop and splatter from the moisture of the meat. Be very careful. I have had hot oil splash from the pan only to ignite the pan of oil mist with an impressive fireball. If that happens, stay calm and act as if it is part of the show. Your guests will be impressed. It goes out quickly.

When the time is up for side one, carefully lift one corner to see if the seasoning lifts clean. If not, cook two minutes more, then turn. Thicker cuts need more time. When two sides lift clean, give the other two sides about a minute each, more on heavy cuts.

Now remove the meat to a cutting board and turn down the heat. Pour in about a half cup each of red wine and soy sauce, and using a spatula, clean the pan and reduce the liquid slightly. Remove the pan from the heat while you slice the meat into half-inch slices. Don't let your guests watch this unless they enjoy excellent dining. Place sliced meat on a heated platter and pour pan liquid over the slices.

Enjoy!

One variation:

If you prefer venison cooked medium, try the following. Once both sides are properly seared, reduce heat to a clower setting or flame and continue cooking, turning carefully every two minutes for another eight to ten minutes (I am not responsible for the results.) Then remove and prepare sauce at a higher heat. This recipe works equally well for steaks cut form deer hindquarters and if your freezer is empty, London boil or any beef steaks, If you are out of venison, there is no shame in begging from your hunting buddies. Invite them to bring the meat and you can do the cooking.

One last thought:

Venison needs little if any seasoning to distract from its excellent flavor. The worst, in my opinion, is to marinate good venison until it tastes like the marinade. A better idea would be to heat and eat the

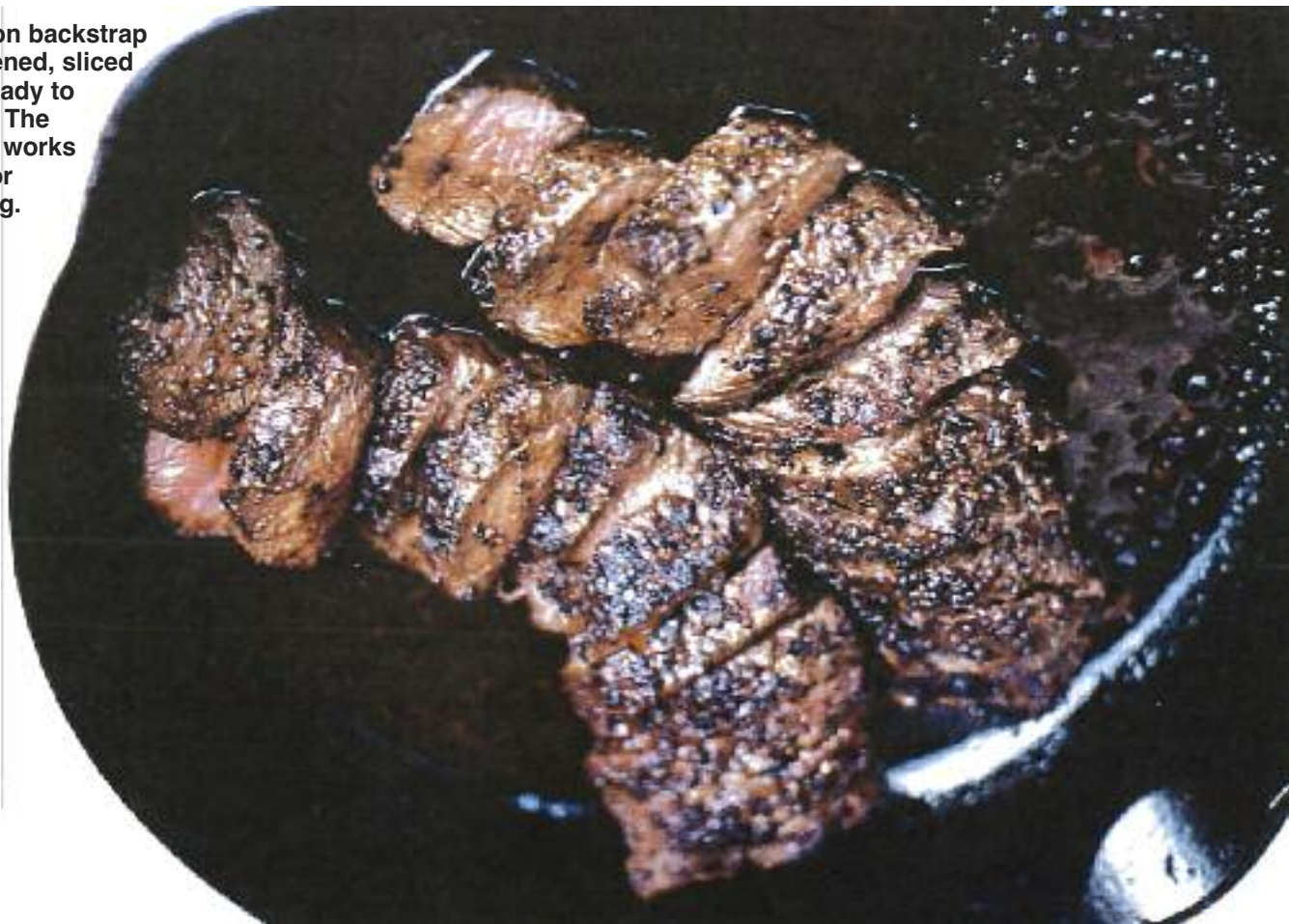


Good venison needs little to make a great meal. A good salad and mashed potatoes or add a nice green vegetable to make it happen.

venison and drink the marinade. Leave the juice to lesser game and jerky if you must.

I have used this method of cooking on everything from cape buffalo to Dall sheep and from ribeyes to London broil with excellent results. The end result in this dish is rare to medium rare venison slices with a very thin coat of seasoning on the edge. *

Venison backstrap blackened, sliced and ready to serve. The skillet works well for searing.



What the ...? Decisions Decisions!

By Barry Wensel

Even though I live in Iowa I've been trying to make my mind up on my best hunting days for the 2016 season. I've been researching some info on deer-vehicle collisions (DVCs) as well as the corresponding moon phases. There is a lot of info on Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire and New Brunswick dating back for decades. I figured I'd throw it all into one pot, stir it up and see what floats to the surface.

Since Kansas was closest to Iowa I looked at the 2005 and 2008 DVCs to see how they compared to Maine, where I summer. Based on the average dates for the 2003-2014, Kansas had a DVC peak on Nov. 13 and a breeding peak on Nov. 17th. In turn, Maine had a DVC peak on Nov. 18th and a breeding peak on Nov. 16, although that seems opposite in my opinion of what it should be.

The 2005 charts show the existence of a bimodal rut for both states, with the peak of the rut at the end of the first week of November and the second during the early part of the third week of November.

The 2008 charts show the primary breeding as being about the normal time frames for both states, but a lot more than usual was done BEFORE the average peak date. And, the Kansas breeding peaks were a couple days later. Although the DVC peak dates were the average dates, a lot of breeding was done before the typical peak breeding dates for each state, which is contrary to what typically happens during a "normal" rut. But I think we pretty much all can come to that conclusion during any bimodal rut within and considering leap year factors. I just consider these as oddball years and try to take them in stride.

Some predictions via moon charts for 2016 show a rutting moon on Nov. 14th. That means the prime chase phase period will be Nov. 11 thru Nov. 20 and a breeding window Nov. 21 thru Dec. 5th. Another chart shows the rutting hypothesis predictions for a peak chasing period of Nov. 14 thru Nov. 21 and a peak tending period of Nov. 21 thru Nov. 28th. BUT, this is contrary to what the DVC data indicates.

If DVCs and the timing of primary breeding as compared to intrasecular regions are truly influenced by the rutting moon, the 2016 rut, with a Nov. 14 full moon, will play out in a similar manner as 2005 and 2008. And you remember what that was like!!! (if not, please refer to your logs). I think you'll find we're going to have another strange rut comparatively

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with a lot of hunters scratching their bald heads wondering about the increased amount of breeding done during the second week of the month. I believe the lulls in the DVC activities represent when the deer were hunkered down with tending, rather than actively chasing. I am betting 2008 was a bimodal rut too, but I somehow lost my reference data for that year. Interestingly, the peak dates varied by a week between the two years, in spite of the full moons being only two days apart.

The rutting moon theory will predict peak breeding to be Nov. 22-23rd this year. But the DVC data doesn't support this year by year "7 to 10 days after the full moon" notion. That in itself pretty much indicates 2005 was a bimodal rut year and the theory did not predict the initial, earlier peak. My proposal is that some characteristic of the moon's orbit influences the timing of the whitetail breeding and then says the timing of the peak of breeding is a week different between Kansas and New Brunswick. But it seems if the moon was a factor, the herds would be synchronized.

I think it's quite obvious the bimodal rut of 2005 was present... at least in appearance! At first I was thinking it was latitude variations, but after checking the archives on weather patterns for New Brunswick in 2005, I have decided that unseasonal warm front in '05 sandwiched between the two pre and post cold fronts most likely triggered the variations coinciding with the moon phase. And we all know on a cycling pattern we had best be hitting it hard between those dates. Again, this year with those similar moon phase patterns will be predictable. My data base will either support or dispel the theories regarding the date of the full moon in respect to being proven to be related to the timing of the peak date for DVC accidents.

Even with bimodal rut dates of 2005, a significant correlation to the date of the rutting moon and the DVC peaks, the research tried to insinuate the peak of the rut was a date of the mean value of the data (i.e. average). However, because the data does not plot in a "normal" (i.e. true bell shape) manner the peak date will differ from the mean or medium/median (i.e. 50 percentile). This supports the fact the New Brunswick peak breeding date is at least a week later than that of Kansas even with latitude variations. Therefore, I question



how the deer research has closed their eyes to the possibility they just might have it wrong. Using the terms "mean, median and peak" can be very misleading as they do not mean (no pun intended) the same thing.

If we overlay conception charts to dispel the notion of any full moon influence with the dates of the rutting moon annually, it will get quite confusing. The fact the peak breeding is a week later than most of the northern U.S. my theory is it's because there is a tighter "green up" window vital to fawn survival in the spring but GPS technology isn't yet good enough to tell when a buck is specifically tending versus chasing, although the DVC data matches up with the midday movement seen during a full moon period. Those middle of the day DVCs are obviously wicked..

After plotting the annual DVC data for various states then plotting the peak dates in calendar and date of the full moon orders, I discovered the DVC peak each year seems influenced by when the full moon occurs between Oct. 25 and Nov. 23, but not in a uniform manner. Even though there is a strong statistical correlation, that correlation does not prove causation.

I don't know, this has really messed up my head. Maybe it's just the meds I'm on but I can't remember a bimodal rut in 2005... and that really bothers me. And to top it off I just can't wrap my head around the fact the date of the peak of the rut was the mean value of the rut in 2005. I can vouch for the Kansas stats in the data that year but I personally cannot dispel the rutting moon factors with the notion the chart in fact supports those indications at the same time in 2005. That's really weird. I keep going back to latitude variations.... And you all know what that means!!!

BW

P.S. I just made all this up because Jack needed to fill a few more pages in the magazine.

In retrospect, I believe you should hunt all day, everyday of the season so you don't miss anything (no pun intended.)

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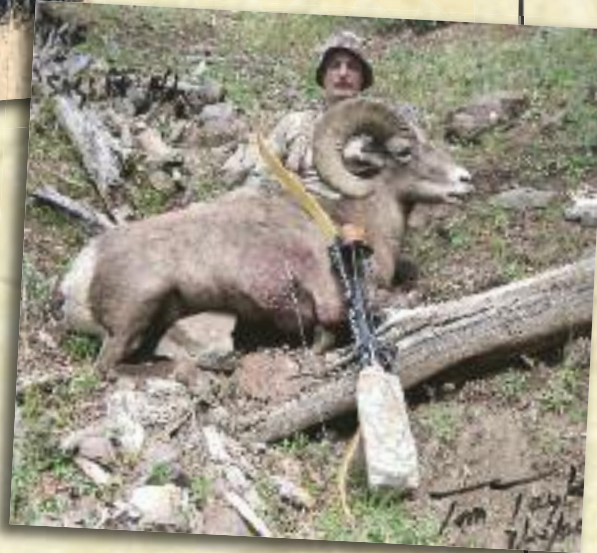
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