

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

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PBS Magazine is assembled by the Charles City Press, Charles City, Iowa and printed by Sutherland Printing, Montezuma, Iowa.

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Cover Photo by:
Barry Wensel
Lineville, Iowa

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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As I write this, fall hunts are wrapping up. In fact, winter is looming here in NE Oregon with snow in the air. Hard to believe that another elk & deer season has come and gone! Now starts the planning for the next season...and the cycle repeats! Next year, give serious thought to one of the regional member hunts, there will be some excellent ones – 5 of which will be offered in a fund raising raffle being announced in this magazine. You will also find in this issue the 2017 election candidates and their profiles. We have a great slate of candidates, with the positions of President, Vice-president, and 3 Year Council all being open. Be sure to carefully look over their profiles and give the candidates a call if you have any questions. The choices will be difficult – which is a good thing!

As my second term as PBS President is coming to a close I have feelings of optimism – but guarded as I'll mention below with a need for more membership involvement. We have had challenging times in the recent past, but now our organization is stable and moving forward positively.

The current Council, and this slate of candidates, all are committed to membership growth and broadening our outreach to like-minded bowhunters interested in joining PBS. Many positive things are coming together as we wrap up this year and start into 2017. The developing Legacy program - with donation level options is being announced, our Life Funds – or a portion of them, are being invested, and as mentioned above the regional hunt program will have a boost from a fund-raising raffle of 5 diverse bow hunts. We also need to look to the summer and focus on a couple places for enhanced Odd Year Gatherings. The Ojibwa event in Wisconsin is a classic, anyone able to travel should try to take that one in. Several of us in the west are talking about a bigger one here – including a PBS fund-raiser, so many positive things are happening.

As a wrap-up comment I want to address PBS involvement, and some meaningful ways to be involved. Our organization provides a lot of opportunities: regional hunts, OYG's, Biennial Gatherings, and of course input on our so-

cial media outlets. A good one frequently overlooked is submitting articles and photos for our magazine. Then there's the option for increased regional activity, such as bowhunting related input to your state fish & wildlife agencies or commissions. In fact, here in Oregon our state traditional organization (TAO) - with input from PBS – are lobbying our F&W Commission to establish a third traditional only bowhunting area. We are proposing this as a "heritage hunt" hallmarking the very historic Pine Grove hunt area located on the east slopes of Mt. Hood. The hunt ended in the mid 1970's but in its hey-day was very popular, and it had a rich heritage in the northwestern states dating to the 1950's. This is just one example! There are many ways to contribute to the success of this organization. It is time for all of us to ask ourselves, "What am I doing for PBS?" This is a perfect time to make a New Year's resolution to do more for PBS!

Happy Holidays to you all!

~ Jim A.

President's Message

by Jim Akenson

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Ask yourself: What am I doing for PBS?

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Vice President's Message

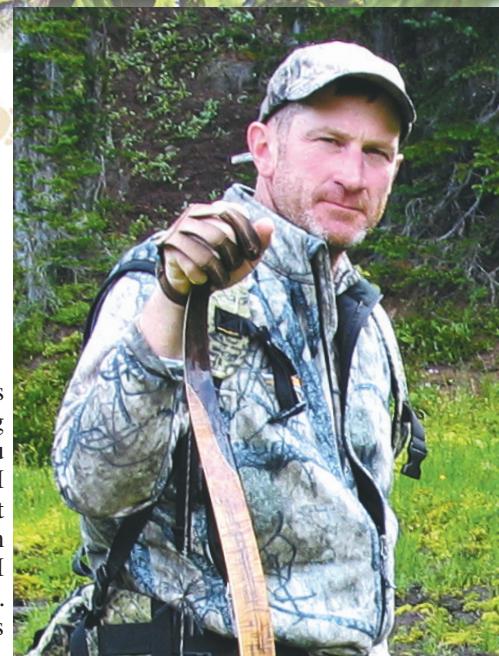
by Norm Johnson
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At the time of writing this column I have just recently returned from the Island of Molokai, Hawaii. Yes, I did take my bow and set aside a couple days of bowhunting on the island. The Island has a very large population of Axis deer, feral hogs, and feral goats. You are allowed 2 goats and 2 pigs, per day with a year round season, and no season limit on numbers. Axis deer (other than closures on state owned land during bird season) are open year round with no bag limit. I spoke with a resident bowhunter on the island and he told me he had been told of estimates approaching 25,000 deer on the island. However, he noted that it is extremely difficult to count the deer because of the dense vegetation that makes up 2/3rds of the island. I searched the DNR website for Hawaii and could find no population counts for the island. Bottom line is they have a lot of deer on the island. Molokai has a land mass of about 260 square miles. If you want to do the math that is about 90 deer per square mile. The one day I hunted deer on the west end of the island I stayed within a relatively small area of about

1000 acres. This region of the island was very arid and very open. I estimate seeing 300-400 deer that day. For those of you wondering, embarrassingly I will admit I did not kill a deer. I know it seems a bit like fishing in your gold fish pond with marshmallows and not catching a thing. I don't want to go into too much detail. Hawaii will be one of our featured states sometime in the future. Many PBS members have hunted the state. It has great bowhunting opportunity but takes some homework before you leave home.

On a related note I was able to contact Walter Naki. Walter is a resident native of Molokai and a long time PBS member. I had not seen Walter in over 10 years. He is a wonderful guy with a big smile and a big heart willing to make you feel welcome on the island and share his vast knowledge of the island and all there is to see, hunt and fish. We are truly blessed to have him as a member. Through my contact with Walter I realized over the years how many times I have called on PBS members for information about a hunt or a destination of travel. It is just one of the many benefits of being a member.

The timing of this magazine coincides with the profiles of our candidates running



to fill the vacating Council positions. I just want to sincerely thank each candidate who has made the tough decision to run. It has become extremely difficult to get qualified candidates to run for a volunteer position. It is my hope we can change attitudes and hearts and turn this trend around.

Not to beat a dead horse but by the time this magazine reaches our members the Fall hunting seasons will be wrapping up in most states. Please send home office your stories. We have arguably one of the best bowhunting publications in the US. It takes participation from all our members to make the magazine a success.

All the best!

~ Norm J.



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In Memory of Neil Neer

July 20, 2016

Neil Neer passed away on July 20th, 2016. Neil was the 1968 National Freestyle Champion. He was also the #2 cardholder of the Ohio Bowhunters Association as he was one of the original founders of that organization. He was a long time member of the PBS and contributed many hunting articles over the years. Neer was a well known and highly respected bowhunter who passed on his love of the sport to many. He will be sadly missed and bowhunting has lost a true sportsman and spokesman.





I hope you are all having as much fun this hunting season as I am. Elbow surgery in May and an unrelated pinched nerve in my back had me questioning if I would bowhunt at all this year, I was finally able to shoot my bow, albeit painfully, in early October. I have seen a bunch of deer since then including a few nice bucks and feel fortunate to have put a couple of deer in the freezer. Being out in the woods with a bow in hand sure does feel good when you have been unable to do it for a while.

Last week I shared a south Georgia camp with a few PBS guys and again got a lesson in Knowledge Through Experience. I am a creature of habit and tend to find items that work for me and stick with them, often for way too long. There are those that are always looking for a better mousetrap - I am not one of those guys. As a result, much of my stuff is old, worn out, and approaching dangerous status. My two favorite bows, made by Owen Jeffery, are over thirty-years-old, all of my tree stands are at over 12-years-old and my safety strap is older than my tree stands. Because I own the back of a ninety-year-old, I need a light, easy-to-install stand, and I have not really seen anything that I like...until this past weekend. Matt Quick, who did a lot of research on stands, had a light, super-quiet deer stand that is just what I am looking for. It is not a well-known brand (Chippewa Wedge-Loc) and I might not have found it on my own. While he was showing me the stand, Julian Tisdale brought out the rock climbing safety harness system he uses when both climbing and sitting in a tree. It looks more simple and safer than any hunting-specific safety strap system I have seen. In one session around the campfire, I learned some

Senior Council's Report

by Matt Schuster

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great stuff, and even got Matt to sell me one of his deer stands. PBS members Don Davis and Dave Waldrop were also in camp, but I didn't learn anything from them – my hope is that they are better prepared for our next hunt ☺.

Elsewhere in this magazine, you will see the introduction of the PBS Legacy Program. It is important that PBS develop multiple income streams in order to not so heavily rely on the auctions at the Biennial Gathering for so much of our funding. Publishing such a fine magazine, supporting and upgrading a website, and other PBS endeavors all require money so if you can help us with a donation through the Legacy Program, please do and thank you in advance. We have lined up some nice gifts for those supporting this program although I like to think that that the gifts are a bonus and not a reason to donate.

Growing organizations like ours is always a challenge – especially in modern times – when bowhunters can network over the internet and many do not feel the need to join organizations. The most traditional, and still the most effective, way for us to grow is through our current membership. If every PBS member will make the fol-

lowing commitment, we will explode in the next year – and with the kind of new members who will stay and support our organization for years: Pledge to find one good new member AND call a PBS buddy and get him to make the same pledge. Even if just a third of our membership will do this – wow, what we will accomplish! I am going to find at least one new member and will be calling a few PBS members from my state to urge them to do the same. Will you make the same pledge?

~ Matt S.

GOT PASSION?

One With The Wilderness

PASSION?

Passions of a Solo Bowhunter

2nd Edition

By MIKE MITTEN

Foreword by Gene Wensel

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Council's Report

by Terry Receveur

Terrance.Receveur@Taconic.com

Wikipedia definition of "Professional"
- The term describes the standards of education and training that prepare members of the profession with the particular knowledge and skills necessary to perform their specific role within that profession. In addition, most professionals are subject to strict codes of conduct, enshrining rigorous ethical and moral obligations. Professional standards of practice and ethics for a particular field are typically agreed upon and maintained through widely recognized professional associations.

I believe this definition aligns very well with the name and purpose of our organization. Professional does not mean that we get paid to bowhunt. As stated on our website, it means we are professional in both attitude and skill, synonymous in the manner a professional pertains to a profession.

I had the honor of hunting with a true professional this past November at a shared deer hunting property in Indiana. My long-time friend Jeff Sample exemplifies the title of "professional" in both his career and in his hunting ethics and approach. Jeff is a Ph.D. virologist researcher and professor at Penn State University in Hershey, Pennsylvania. I had the pleasure of meeting and hunting with Jeff when we were both working at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN. We both took different jobs in different states, but have kept in touch and shared several great hunting adventures.

As our PBS motto states we should continue to strive to become better professional bowhunters via "knowledge through experience". None of us are exempt! I have a lot to learn and this past hunt with Jeff in Indiana provided a wonderful lesson in professionalism. We are on an expensive lease together with three other hunters who are not members of PBS. Jeff's attitude and actions represented our fine organization to the highest possible level and again were an example and inspiration to me and others. Let me just explain a few of the situations where Jeff displayed what the PBS is all about.

Jeff traveled to Indiana from his Pennsylvania home in early November for a two week hunt on the property. During the first week he was the sole hunter on the property and hunted hard all week. He

saw many nice bucks and passed on deer that would have many of us drooling. He had set a goal and he was sticking to it. I arrived at the property on a Saturday and began hunting. It was with great excitement when I got a text from Jeff that said, "I just punched my tag". Having hunted with Jeff on many prior occasions and having witnessed his exceptional shooting, I had no doubt he had a bruiser on the ground. However, for whatever reason we searched and searched for the deer to no avail. His shot placement was right where he was aiming and we were sure we would find a dead deer. Despite the distance the deer traveled and the fact that we never saw any sign that the buck had died, Jeff made the decision that he believed he killed the deer and thus counted his only buck tag as filled. The other members on the lease all agreed that if Jeff wanted to keep hunting and shoot another buck he was more than welcome to do so. Jeff did the admirable and honorable thing and counted his tag filled. That's what a Professional Bowhunter would do!

Jeff continued to hunt for a few more days in an attempt to kill a doe for the freezer. During this time he had a few opportunities to shoot a buck and he was never even tempted to drop the string on one. The opportunity to kill a doe never presented itself and Jeff was happy to have hunted! The timing of Jeff's hunt was such that he would depart just before the Indiana gun opener. He could've easily decided to pick up a gun and harvest some groceries, but he had no interest. His son Connor would provide the tasty venison for his family. Again, Jeff was making choices that represented the PBS in the highest fashion.

2016 was the first year for our group of five to be on the new IN deer lease. Like most situations where there are five distinct personalities and a mixing of old friends and new, there were bound to be a few conflicts. Our experience was no exception. Four of the five members seemed to mesh very well, but there was one member who put his wishes above everyone else. I and another member were limited to a smaller section of the overall property due to a limit on the number of hunters on the larger section. Jeff selflessly decided that he would not hunt the smaller section as he knew it was the only piece my friend and I could hunt. We were



dumbfounded and appreciative of his concern and courtesy. A complete dichotomy of this was displayed by another member who placed a tree stand and a ground blind on the end of a large cornfield and then basically proclaimed that everyone else should stay away from the entire cornfield and surrounding area (@100 acres). This was contrary to the groups agreed upon rule that there would be no "reserved" spots. However, my friend and I tried to honor his wishes and hunted no closer than 400 yards from his stands. We did hunt the entire other end of the cornfield and this created drama like you cannot believe. Jeff was also amazed at the level of selfishness showed by the other member. It was the most glaring display of how to act professionally (by Jeff) and how not to act (by the other member).

According to our website, the Professional Bowhunters Society is an organization of experienced bowhunters dedicated to the advancement and preservation of bowhunting as a major outdoor sport. The PBS encourages the development of skill in bowhunting as well as the exchange of knowledge between bowhunters. The organization is dedicated to the belief that more personal satisfaction is derived from skilled hunting techniques and our sport must be measured in direct relation to the degree of challenge involved. Satisfaction lies in the hunting more than the shooting.

Thank you Jeff for being the example and professional to me and to the others we shared camp with. Trust me, your actions and ethics did not go unnoticed.

Jeff, you are the PBS and I am very proud to know you and hope to one day be the consummate professional that you are!

Aim small and miss small!

~ Terry R.



Council's Report

by Rob Burnham

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has also been a way for us to keep up with each other, our families, work and play. These bowhunters, all PBS members, have become great friends. We have not only shared camps with each other, but our homes and even vacations. I would say that this is one example of how I feel technology has been positive for PBS.

PBS has been using social media and the internet for only a short time, but I foresee an increased level of participation in the future. If you have not been on our website, take the time to check it out. Note that it will, in the not so distant future, be taking on a new look. Work has begun on building the new site with a lot of updated features and capabilities. Things slowed down a little once hunting seasons arrived, but after the holidays have passed the web committee will be putting their noses to the grind stone to get the new site launched. PBS now has an Instagram account, "ProBowSociety". If you have a smartphone (who chose that name?), download the Instagram app and start following PBS. If you have pictures that you would like added to PBS' Instagram you can send them to Ethan Rodrigue. (woodsmansbows@yahoo.com). PBS also has a Facebook page that gets plenty of traffic and is viewed by many non PBS members. We need to capitalize on this and recruit some of these non members.

Our magazine, although not in the technology or social media category, can always use input from our members. We have one, if not the best bowhunting magazine on the planet. A lot of work goes into each issue, much of it behind the scenes. You can help by contributing articles and photographs. Council recently looked into having a digital version created with the possibility of having past issues added as the budget will allow. Once this happens there won't be a need to reprint past articles, which will leave more room for new writings. I know that each and everyone of you has had a memorable or unique bowhunting adventure that you can put into words. Turn the TV off one Sunday, skip the football game (or record it) and take an hour or two of your time to devote to PBS by writing an article.

This is one way that every single member of PBS can give back to the organization.

You don't have to be a writer, our editing section does an outstanding job of proofing each issue before it goes to print. So you see there is no excuse, each member can submit at least one article a year. Just think, if we had a thousand submissions the magazine would be set for years to come. By giving just a few hours out of an entire year to pen an article, you have given back not only to PBS, but your fellow Brothers of the Bow who will enjoy reading about your adventures. Besides, you never know what may come from your article. A perfect example, I wrote an article back in 2006 about my first African bowhunt. It was read by a fellow member and the following year found me back on the dark continent thanks to that writing.

If there is one thing I have learned over the years, what one gets from something is directly related to what they put into it. There will always be those members that pay their dues, receive their magazine and are totally satisfied with the return on their investment. However, I challenge each of you to take an extra step, go the extra mile by donating your time, skills or even financially to PBS. The reward will far surpass the enjoyment of reading the 4 quarterly issues of our magazine. Participate on PBS' website, submit articles and pictures for our magazine as well as Facebook and Instagram. And finally give consideration to making a donation to the PBS Legacy Program that you can read about elsewhere in our magazine.

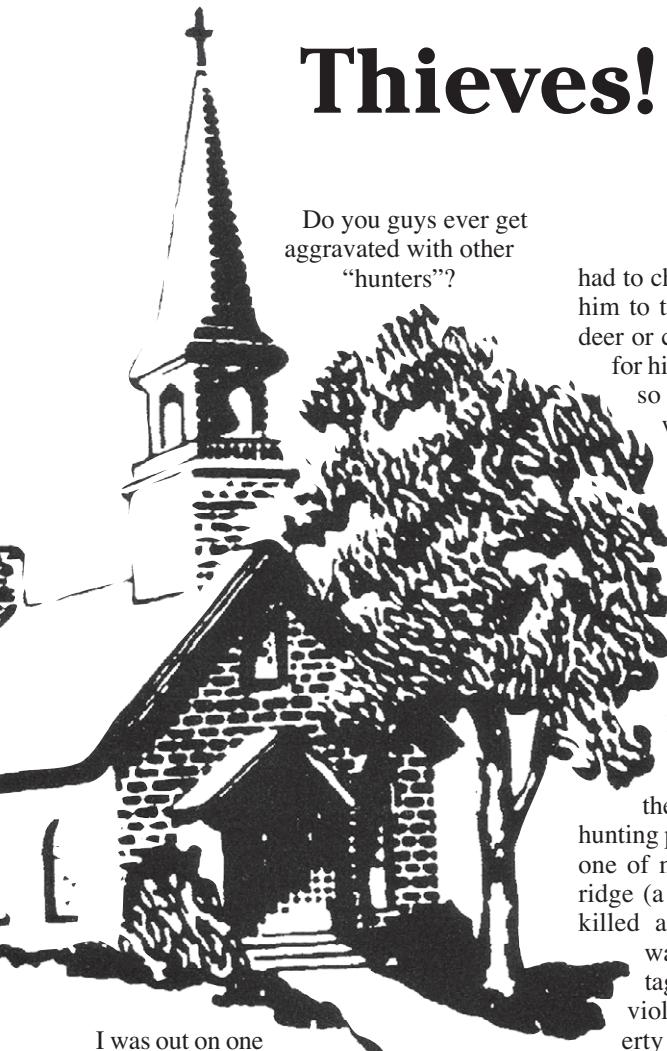
With two nice whitetail does in the freezer and the rut in full swing, it's time I get back into the fall woods to match wits with a cagey buck. Hopefully I will have a story to tell in a future issue of our magazine along with some photos to add to our Facebook and Instagram sites. If you just can't turn that TV off on Sunday, carry that smartphone with you to the woods and use the quiet time to get your article written. You can even use the camera to take some harvest pictures or better yet some short video clips that can be used on our future YouTube channel. Did I forget to mention that?

Wishing all of my Brothers and Sisters of the Bow a very happy holiday season!

"Pick-a-Spot"

~ Rob B.

Thieves!



I was out on one section of my property last Friday afternoon when I heard a shot ring out down in the area where I have several ponds built through the Wetlands Reserve Program. It is brushy and really good habitat. Across the river is not my property and unfortunately above that old grown up abandoned house site is a public dirt road that road hunters (illegal in WV) wear out during the gun seasons. I knew what happened and headed there immediately. I saw an SUV and truck pulled into the old house clearing with their windows down. A drive by shooting had occurred. I crossed the river and waited by the vehicles. Eventually they came from across the river on my property dragging a big 8 point buck, right by the posted signs lining the riverbank. Then the lying started of course. He said he had shot the buck on his cousin's property and it ran across the river. Uh huh..... Well it does not belong to your cousin says I. I stated the name of the owner. "Well I have worked for him so it is ok, he said I could hunt his property." But you crossed over on my posted property? "But I didn't know who owned it. I'll never hunt here again." I

Do you guys ever get aggravated with other "hunters"?

Chaplain's Corner

by Gene Thorn

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had to choose at that point whether to take him to town to a magistrate and take the deer or chew him out and keep an eye out for him in the future. There was no snow so I couldn't positively determine which side of the river he shot it on. He was still illegal for being on my property. I chose mercy and let him go with the deer. But, I am still aggravated, because last year I lost 2 nice bucks to trespassers. One hunter said he shot at a buck on a neighboring property and he came to the house with a sob story and asked my wife, Sandee, permission to go on our property and look specifically on the river bank. She granted permission. On the way back out of there he and his hunting partner took a swing through up by one of my stands up on a flat below the ridge (a long way from the river) and he killed a big tall racked 8 point I had watched all summer. He took advantage of my wife's generosity and then violated it! So much for all the property taxes and school levies attached that I pay, the thousands of dollars of wildlife habitat improvements, and my older age deer management plans on my property. There are several other similar incidents going back through other years. The public land gobbler I called in for a buddy and some guy shot it out from in front of us with a rifle from 200 yards

to the side. The guy that set up a climbing stand and climbed in a tree 20 yards away while I flashlight alerted him, to no avail, on a State Game lands in Pennsylvania. The list goes on and on...These hunters give the rest of us a bad name. Some say they are not hunters, they are thieves, which is true, or at the very least have extremely rude behavior. But, they ride around in trucks with camouflage and orange on,

and blood on their sleeves. Everybody on the outside looking in sees them as hunters.

Given that, it is a privilege to have PBS brothers and sisters that exhibit the epitome of sportsmanship and integrity. We just have to do the best we can, try to influence for good, and endure the injustice out there. The enjoyment and good we get out of hunting is too precious to give up.

John 10: 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

When I think of the good days I have spent with my dad, my wife, and friends hunting my property, it makes the aggravation dim. There is a better way. We in PBS have found that way concerning bowhunting. Our job is to influence the hunting community all we can. Our privilege as Christians is to live an abundant life despite the injustices that happen to us. You and I will endure injustices but the Giver of Life will give us a way to endure with grace and actually thrive in the midst of adversity. Never give up my friends; God is on the throne and abundant life is yours! We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against Satan's influence. Consider the source of THIEVES! *



PBS - Regionally Speaking

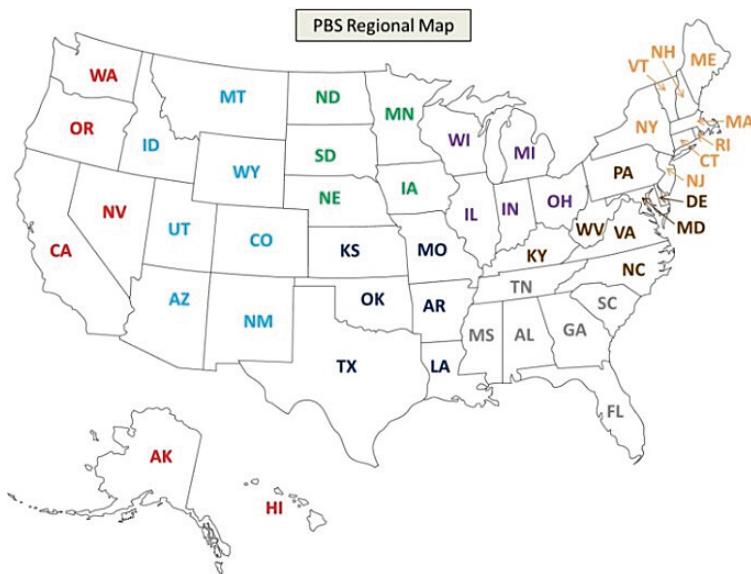
By Jeff Holchin
Third Quarter 2016

Fall hunting seasons will be ending or close to it by the time you read this article. Many of our regional reps are still out hunting at press time, so this article will be brief. 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 Region Program” and “PBS Membership Hunts” forums on our website – we need more activity. If you can host a membership hunt in 2017, no matter how small or short in duration, please do it. It does require some work and planning, but the rewards are great. Let’s build upon the progress we have made so far and make 2017 a banner year for membership hunts.

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:

Chairman - Jeff Holchin (jeffreyholchin@gmail.com)
Appalachian - Gene Thorn (pethorn@hotmail.com)
Great Lakes - Ron Lang (rlang46@gmail.com) and
Mike Vines (miklvines@gmail.com)
International - Richard Flett (deerhunter_4life@hotmail.com)
North Central - John Vargo (john1597@aol.com) and
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 (russell.lantier@bellsouth.net)
Southeast – Ron Herman (rchermanjr@hotmail.com)



Alaska: Several members went on Kodiak Island Sitka blacktail deer hunting trips. Many were successful as seen on Facebook. Kodiak now has had several years of good winters and the deer have thrived. This is a fairly easy DIY hunt and should be considered by all PBS members. They are due for a harsh winter sometime soon, however, so the best time to hunt is now! Alaska tags and licenses will DOUBLE in 2017.

Oregon: The archery seasons are winding down now, though late Columbia blacktail is just starting. This is a tough hunt as the primary rut is over, the bucks go nocturnal and there may be buckets of rain. It is a challenge. We will once again be doing battle on the crossbow and “disability” hunters. Oregon remains the only state where crossbows are not allowed in any season.

Traditional Archers of Oregon, with PBS support, are going to formalize a request to the Oregon Game Commission to reinstitute a traditional archery hunt that had occurred for many years in the Cascade mountains near Mt. Hood. This was formerly known as the Pine Creek hunt. It would be blacktail deer in November. The argument will be based in the fact that muzzleloaders have many hunts set aside from general rifle and traditional archery currently only has 2 hunts set aside from general archery. The appeal will also be based on historical precedence.

The time to hunt is now. Be sure to remember to put in for the western states draws and build points.

Enjoy life, be safe and go hunting.

Rocky Mountain West Report

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

By Dan Mathis

The January 2017 Arizona PBS Members Hunt hosted by Rick Wildermuth is fast approaching. You don't want to miss this Arizona deer hunt. There is still room to join this hunt, just contact Rick (r.wildermuth2@cox.net).

Pacific West Report

(Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, Alaska, Hawaii)
by Tom Vanasche – Regional Representative

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

From Mark Viehweg: Jeff Holchin of North Carolina, Paul Ladner of Illinois and Michael Schneider of Alaska joined me in the Northwest part of South Dakota the first week of October to bow hunt deer. This was a trial run with good PBS friends in a part of the state I hadn't previously hunted. Like any hunt, it becomes just as important to eliminate areas not holding deer then focusing on areas with deer. By the 2nd day of the hunt, we were starting to become familiar with the potential spots to target. Unfortunately, due to family commitments I headed home on the morning of day three. Paul Ladner was able to stalk within six yards of a large 4 x 4 on a windy afternoon on day four. He took the shot as the buck stood up and ended up with a recovery of seventy-five yards. Everyone had opportunities to stalk bucks. We found a good campground capable of holding 3-4 tents.

I am tentatively looking at the weekend of September 23, 2017 for a group of (6) PBS members. This is the opening weekend of the deer season and last week of the archery antelope season. There are a lot of walk-in areas to be explored. All tags are a guaranteed draw. Paul Ladner, Jeff Holchin and myself plan on returning leaving three slots open. Please feel free to contact me at mviehweg99@yahoo.com with questions or to save a spot.

From John Vargo: No report, except that the 2017 Spikebox hog hunts in Texas will be here before you know it. Still a few openings for the January period at press time, which runs from January 29 to February 3. The second hunt is full.

Great Lakes Report

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

by Ron Lang

The Ohio membership deer hunt hosted by Jeff Holchin in November wasn't as successful as expected, with unusually warm

weather and a later date in November that missed the peak rut activity, but one doe was tagged and several bucks were badly frightened.

Northeastern Report

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

by Terry Receveur

Unfortunately, there is not much to report for the Northeastern region. Most of us are fully engaged in the fall hunting seasons. I've heard a few reports of successful outings and I'm hopeful of receiving many more.

As noted in the last column, Sean Bleakley had to cancel the 3rd annual PBS regional membership hunt in NY's Catskill mountains and this leaves a great opening for someone else to step up and put something together. I will certainly host another bowfishing trip in June or July. If you have an idea for a hunt please let me know and we can work together to get it put together.

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

Appalachia Report

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

by Gene Thorn – Regional Representative

A reminder - Larry Schwartz will be putting together an Appalachian Odd Year Gathering in Baltimore Maryland again in 2017. Watch the PBS website for info when we get closer. The one we had there in 2015 was well attended and was a great event. Try to come out for this. It is a great time. Have fun and be safe bowhunting this winter!

Kentucky (No Rep Currently): We need a State Rep for Kentucky. If you are interested, please contact Gene Thorn pethorn@hotmail.com or (304)472-5885. ➔ cont. on page 10 ➔

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Grandpa says we should only kill animals we are prepared to eat

Grandpa says the TuffHead's 3 to 1 ratio makes them fly true

I'm learning to retrieve lost arrows.

I'm reading about FOC arrows at GrandPa's web site www.tuffhead.com

Dr. Ed Ashby visited our camp and talked about his broadhead studies and the old days in Africa. We wrote letters thanking him!

PBS Regionally Speaking

~ continued from page 9

Maryland (Tony Sanders): The Maryland Department of Natural Resources announced that hunters harvested fewer deer during the early hunting season compared with last year. A new partnership between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and St. Mary's County will now permit deer hunting at Myrtle Point Park. Approximately 141 acres of the 192-acre park in California, Md. will be open to regulated archery activity, effective immediately. Partnership with the county will provide another outdoors experience for Maryland archers and bowhunters. The benefits of the hunt are two-fold: it provides a new recreational opportunity for Southern Maryland hunters and addresses the unchecked growth of the deer population in the park and surrounding community. Access to the park will require possession of a free Southern Region Public Hunting Permit and a daily reservation. Hunters must park in designated areas only and observe all posted boundaries. The seasonal parking permit must also be displayed on windshields. For more information on hunting at the Myrtle Point Park Cooperative Wildlife Management Area, please call 301-743-5161. For more general information about park, please contact St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks at 301-475-4200.

Pennsylvania (Tim Denial): Info from the Pa. Game Commission - The Game Commission has created Deer Hunter focus areas -they have pinpointed areas throughout the state on different Game Lands where they encourage hunters to focus on due to the combination of habitat work and improved deer hunting opportunities. (With maps on the PGC website). Also 97 elk were taken in Penn's annual elk hunt I believe 100 permits were issued. About 30,000 applicants put in for this hunt. The largest was an 824 lb. 8x9 taken with a gun. An 813 lb. 7x8 was taken with a bow.

West Virginia (Gene Thorn): WV DNR Wildlife has started an elk stocking program. In November 2016, the first of the elk obtained from Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky were trapped and moved to southern West Virginia.

Southeast Report

(Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia,
South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee)
by Ron Herman – Regional Representative

Alabama: Alabama is seeking the assistance of taxidermists and deer processors to prevent CWD. Earlier this year they enacted a ban on import of deer carcasses from states where Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been confirmed. CWD has been found in captive and/or wild deer in 24 states, two Canadian provinces, Norway, and South Korea. Contact your local district wildlife office for guidance on how to handle suspected CWD situations.

- Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources revised the archery regulation for the 2016-17 hunting season. It reflects changes in industry as to what is legal equipment for deer and turkey. Biggest changes are draw weight going from minimum of 35# to 30#. There is no longer a restriction on arrow length, broadhead weight or blade thickness. However, arrows must have a broadhead with at least two sharpened edges and a minimum cutting diameter of seven-eighths of an inch. Crossbows must have working safety and minimum peak tension of 85 pounds at normal draw.

- There is an Alabama Mobile App and it has been updated for Game Check to simplify the process. All deer and turkey are now required to go through the Game Check system. Hunters have 48 hours to report their harvest online, by phone or now through the Outdoor Alabama Mobile App. It can be completed offline regardless of cellphone or data coverage and will automatically submit when coverage is again received.

Georgia: Campfire Restriction in place on all GA Wildlife Management Areas effective immediately (10/28/2016). Due to the lingering and continued drought conditions, there is an elevated risk of wildfire in north and central Georgia. Until further notice hunters must refrain from building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire while on the WMAs.

- The historic Blackbeard Island bowhunts for 2016 had to be cancelled due to damage from Hurricane Mathew; hopefully Matt Schuster can organize a Membership hunt there for December 2017.

- If Hurricane Mathew has not washed all the hogs out to sea, Jeff Holchin will host another membership hog hunt on the coastal islands not far from Savannah in late January/early February 2017. Stay tuned for details. You'll need a boat or a buddy with a boat to join this hunt, plus a lack of fear of snakes, gators and quicksand. The hunting is not easy (bring your hip boots or waders) but if you like spot/stalk hog hunting in a fairly unique setting, this one might be for you. There are four types of poisonous snakes, two types of poisonous spiders, scorpions, Venus flytraps, stinging nettles, and the river has sharks, whales, manatees and porpoises coming in from the ocean. Two hunters have been stuck in the mud so bad that they had to be pulled out. Oh yeah, the locals illegally catch hogs with their dogs while we are there, and several PBSers have slept in hog nests at night. One hunter was charged by a wounded boar. If it gets warm, the male gators will be doing their mating roar, which is interesting. We regularly get our boats stranded due to high tide fluctuations, and two boats have had to be towed out due to damage or failed outboards. All in all, it's a fine adventure, if you're slightly crazy and like living on the edge.

Florida: Normal use has resumed for Everglades and Francis S Taylor Wildlife Management Areas.

- Hunter Safety internet completion courses being offered in November for six counties free of charge. The counties are Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Hamilton, Levy and Suwannee.

Mississippi: Special Primitive Weapons Season for Deer opened Nov 7 in the Hill and Delta Management Zones. It is for antlerless deer only on private lands and open public lands from Nov 7-18. For list of accepted weapons and future dates visit the MWFP website.

South Carolina: Fires on Pinnacle Mountain and near Table Rock closes section of Foothills Trail. A burning ban in the 33,000 acre Jocassee Gorges area is in effect due to the extremely dry conditions as well. A 10-mile section of the Foothills Trail between Table Rock and Sassafras Mountain is closed due to wildfire...which was started accidentally by campfire.

- Botany Bay WMA reopened on Oct 27 but beach access is still closed due to damage caused by Hurricane Matthew.

- Coyote Harvest Incentive Program was passed by SC General Assembly. This allows for tagging of four male coyotes in each of the four game zones (16 total). Anyone that kills one of the tagged coyotes, saves the carcass for verification and contacts SCDNR will receive complimentary Lifetime Hunting License which can be issued to designee of their choice such as child or grandchild.



Tennessee: Two elk were killed during the 2016 Elk Hunts in Tennessee at the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area and surrounding private lands in October. 33 elk have been legally killed since it started in 2009. The TWFC voted this past May to establish an archery-only hunt in addition to the elk hunt that was launched in 2009. Five hunters were drawn with the opportunity during the hunt of one antlered bull. The hunters had four attempts during the hunt with three misses and one hit, but the bull was not recovered. Of the regular hunt, a third hunter was successful but was charged with multiple violations as he took the elk outside the designated hunting zone of which he was assigned. Charges included shooting from public road, hunting from motor vehicle, hunting closed area, and possession of illegally killed big game.

South Central Report

(Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas)
by Russell Lantier – Regional Representative

Texas: Bill Graves has organized and is hosting a primitive hog hunt in the rugged Davis Mountains of west Texas in January 2017. Bill says: I had the opportunity to hunt a ranch in West Texas that my friend manages this past October for hogs and I must say that I had a great time. The ranch is in the heart of the Davis mountains and is centered on a canyon that has a live water creek in it that is fed by several springs. This canyon has a ton of history with it dating back thousands of years. The canyon is an oasis within the Chihuahuan desert, teeming with oak, walnut, maple and many other variety of flora. This teamed with a constant water source make for quality wildlife habitat. The hunt will take place from 15-21 January 2017. We will be riding in on horseback or mule with a pack animal or two and camp at the head of a park within the canyon. The cost for a Texas nonresident special hunting license is \$135.00 good for a year or you can buy a 5-day special hunting license for \$48.00 good for hogs, javelina and squirrel. The cost per person to hunt the ranch will be \$250.00, yep that's right \$250.00 for the whole enchilada. I had the chance to scout the ranch for the last two months and saw numerous pigs on a daily basis. Along with the pigs there seems to be a bumper crop of mast in the canyon. Within hours of posting this hunt on the PBS web site, the available slots were taken, which proves once again that you should monitor the PBS web site daily and be prepared to act quickly. Hopefully this hunt goes well and Bill will host it again in the future.

International Report

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

by Richard Flett – Regional Representative

No report. *

Introducing

2016-2017

PBS Legacy PROGRAM

Going forward in every 4th Quarter PBS Magazine, we will announce the year's PBS Legacy Program. Members often ask what they can do to help PBS and supporting the Legacy Program is one of the easiest ways to do that.

Funds will go to the General Fund and help support the redesign of the PBS Website, the production of the PBS Magazine, the 2018 Gathering and numerous marketing efforts that will help us grow. No amount is too large or too small and all donations are appreciated.

Businesses donating at the Diamond or Gold are entitled to a free quarter page ad in a PBS issue of their choice and all supporters of the Legacy Program will be acknowledged in the 3rd Quarter Magazine.

Please make checks out the Professional Bowhunters Society and send to the The PBS, PO Box 246, Terrell NC 28682.

Diamond Level ~ \$3500

*Custom Doug Campbell Knife,
Invitation to the Paradise Legacy Hunt**

Gold Level ~ \$2000

*Invitation to the Paradise Legacy Hunt**

Silver Level ~ \$500

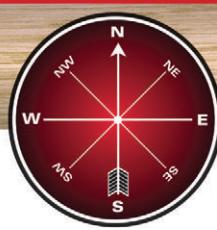
CRKT Larry Fischer Memorial Knife

Sponsor Level ~ \$100

PBS T-Shirt

* The first eight Diamond or Gold Legacy supporters will be invited to a 3-day PBS Legacy Hog hunt at The Paradise Hunt Club in south Georgia. The hunt will likely take place in early May and will be a great chance to chase critters and discuss PBS with fellow supporters. Food will be provided. In the event that a supporter cannot make the hunt, they are welcome to request the Larry Fischer Memorial Knife by CRKT.

* Please check with your accountant to confirm that your donation is tax deductible.



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PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY

BIG 5 HUNT RAFFLE



PBS has 5 exciting membership hunts planned for 2017. Opportunities to participate will be done through purchasing raffle tickets (after January 30). Tickets will sell for \$25.00 each or 5 for \$100.00.

This is a fundraiser for PBS and more details will follow in coming months.

Five PBS members have offered to take one or two raffle ticket winners bowhunting or bowfishing at their favorite honey hole in 2017. You will have the option to bowhunt/bowfish in Virginia, New York, Ohio, Idaho and Oregon for creatures such as eastern turkey, whitetail deer, black bear, elk and carp/bass. The Idaho hunt in particular offers some lucky young bowhunter an excellent chance to tag a black bear and then their parent/guardian could fill a bear tag also. This odd-year fundraiser is your chance to help the PBS financially and experience a great adventure with a fellow PBS member. Life is short – let's bowhunt!

#1 Rough Mountain, Virginia Deer, Turkey and Bear Bowhunt



Rob Burnham is offering a 7-day bowhunt in the Rough Mountain Wilderness of Virginia. Tent, cot and sleeping bag will be provided. All basecamp needs will be provided to include meals and entertainment. If you have an instrument and can play, bring it. I will be doing the pre-season scouting and have tree stands set, both ladder and hang-on's in strategic locations. If you prefer a climber, one will be provided (Lonewolf or API). License cost in 2016 for a non-resident was \$383, which includes a black bear tag (which is optional at \$151.) and you get 5 deer tags (2 bucks) plus 3 turkey tags (2 can be used in the fall). You can meet me there (closest town is Millboro, VA) or I will pick you up at Richmond International Airport. I can't promise you a shot at a deer or even a bear, but I can promise a great time and some beautiful country. You must be in decent shape – it's named "Rough Mountain" for a reason. If you have any questions about this hunt don't hesitate to give me a call. 804-402-6900.

#2 Hudson River, New York Bowfishing and Fishing Excursion

PBS member Terry Receveur out of Kinderhook, NY is offering a fully outfitted two days of bass fishing (largemouth and smallmouth) and two nights of bowfishing for carp for two. Everything (food, lodging, gear, etc.) except your license and transportation to Terry's home is included. You are welcome to bring your own gear. This will be in the summer of 2017 (winner can work out dates with Terry) and the location is just south of Albany, NY. It will be fishing and bowfishing aboard Terry's 2012 Grizzly 21' boat that is equipped with a 101# 36-volt trolling motor and 115 Mercury outboard. If the two bowfishermen do not get at least 50 shots between them, Terry will provide a second trip for free! Contact me at 518-755-9119 or Terrance.Receveur@Taconic.com for details.



#3 Ohio Turkey and Deer Bowhunt

Jeff Holchin will provide the required hunting license and tags, a boat, all camping gear, and food for a combination turkey/deer bowhunt in Southern Ohio for one bowhunter in 2017. The Ohio license year begins on March 1 and this public area in Ohio has good turkey and deer hunting. It consists of thousands of acres of prime habitat surrounding a lake that can be best hunted by boat. There is a nice campground with hot showers. We can hunt spring turkeys in April for two days (immediately after youth weekend) and rutting whitetails in November for four or five days. You can drive and meet me there, or I can pick you up at the Cincinnati airport. Contact me at 828-303-6120 or jeffreyholchin@gmail.com with any questions.

#4 Oregon's Eagle Cap Wilderness Elk Bow Hunt.

This is a week spent with Jim Akenson, and a couple other friends (PBSers), in pursuit of elk in the rugged Wallowa Mountains of NE Oregon. All you will need is your license and elk tag, duffle and trusty bow (takedown preferred)—as you will be packing in on mules, for 7 days afield. I do not guarantee a kill...but you will see and hear elk (bugle). I have hunted elk for 45 years in both Oregon and Idaho, so know a few techniques (some even work!). Offering this for either 2017 or 2018 – Sept. 13-20 (+ or - a day) would be the dates for 2017. If flying, I will meet you in Lewiston, Idaho – and return to same.



#5 Idaho's North Fork of the Clearwater River Youth Bear Hunt

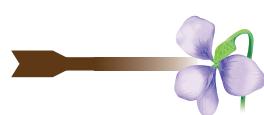
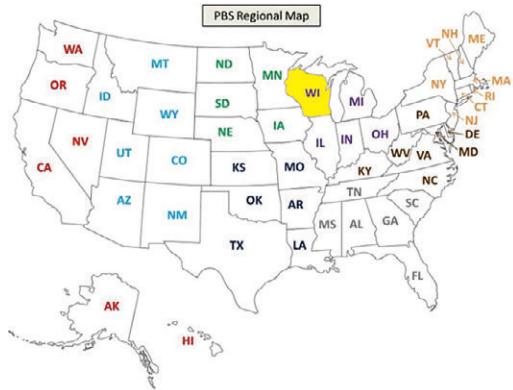
A 2017 (June 11-17) full 7 days of hunting. Hosted by PBSers - Dennis Michael and son, Justin. The hunt will be out of a tree stand over a bait. All you will need is your bow, tree stand harness, and clothing-video camera optional! I have hunted black bear for 30 years and this area for 15 years with great success. I can't guarantee a kill but you should see black bears. If flying, I will pick you up and return to Lewiston, ID. Tags and License not included. Once the youth fills their tag, the parent/guardian can fill their tag.

The ticket order form can be found on the insides of the dust cover. Drawing to be held Saturday, April 15, 2017.
Payment and completed ticket stubs must be turned in by April 10, 2017 to PBS, P.O. Box 246, Terrell, NC 28682

Regional Profile

We are starting a new segment in 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.



Wisconsin



by Brian Tessman

Wisconsin is home to several big game species, including Whitetail Deer, Black Bear, Elk, Wolf, Moose, and Cougar. Currently there are only seasons for deer and bear. The wolf season is tied up in Federal Court and an elk season is still several years away. There will probably never be a moose or cougar season.

Wisconsin has some of the best whitetail and bear hunting in the country. It has long led North America in the number of Pope & Young and Boone & Crockett entries for both species. Obviously there is not a Record Book animal behind every tree. But seeing an animal of that quality is always a possibility just about anywhere in the state. If you are more interested in putting meat in the freezer, bowhunting success rates on deer are annually around 20%. Bear hunters enjoy about a 45% success rate, but I could not find a breakdown on weapon type. There is also excellent turkey hunting to be had, both in the spring and fall seasons. Success rates are annually around 20% in the spring. No fall statistics nor breakdown on weapon type could be found.

Some of the best big buck hunting can be found in the bluff country along the Mississippi River. But there is little public land in this part of the state and guided hunts here are very pricey. The good news is that there is no shortage of good hunting land open to the public in the rest of the state. There are National Forests, State Forests, County Forests, Public Hunting Grounds, and properties enrolled in the Managed Forest Land (MFL) program. This program gives private landowners a big tax break if they leave their lands open

to hunting.

The two National Forests are the Chequamegon and the Nicolet, both located in the northern part of the state. They have a combined acreage of over 1.5 million acres, all of which are open to hunting. You can find out all you need to know about these two National Forests at: www.fs.usda.gov/cnfn.

Wisconsin State Forests total almost half a million acres, most of which are open to hunting. Information can be found at: dnr.wi.gov/topic/stateforests.

Wisconsin County Forests total more than 2.4 million acres, almost all of which is open to public hunting. For more information go to: www.wisconsincountyforests.com.

Information on land enrolled in the (MFL) program which is open to public hunting can be found at: dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestlandowners/opentoppublicapp.html. (MFL) land includes over a million acres of Industrial Forest as well as smaller landholdings.

Whitetail tags are over the counter, non-resident archery licenses are \$160.00. The season opens on the Saturday closest to the 15th of September and closes on the first Sunday after January 1st. In metro zones the season closes on January 31st.

Bear tags are a draw with an application fee for non-residents of \$4.50, non-resident licenses are \$251.00. The state is divided into four zones for management purposes.

Zones A,B, & D are in the northern part of the state and have the most bears per square mile. These tags take from six to ten years to draw. Zone C encompasses the southern 2/3rd of the state. These tags take between two to four years to draw. Zones A,B & D have a twenty eight day season, zone C has a thirty five day season. Both seasons open on the Wednesday after Labor Day. In zones A,B, & D the first week of the season annually alternates between the hound hunters having the first week to themselves, the following year the bait sitters having the first week to themselves. After the first week both methods hunt together with each method having a twenty eight day season. Zone C is closed to hound hunting.



As a side note, if you are interested in hiring a guide that runs hounds, almost all hound hunters in Wisconsin have GPS units on every dog they run and use those units to track the bear's course. When the bear is treed or bayed they use radios to direct the hunter to the bear. Private property never seems to be a barrier, I had a bear shot in my driveway this last fall when I was not home. Just my opinion based on over thirty years of hunting in northern Wisconsin.

Turkey hunting is divided into zones and time periods with the best hunting being in the lower 2/3rd of the state. A non-resident small game license is required and costs \$85.00. Tags are a draw. Go to the DNR's web site for all the info. <http://dnr.wi.gov> *

Council Candidate

President Candidate

Don Davis

I am humbled to be considered by the membership for the office of President of The Professional Bowhunters Society. I am also honored to have Norm Johnson as my opponent. Norm is a fine bowhunter who has and will serve PBS well, should he prevail.

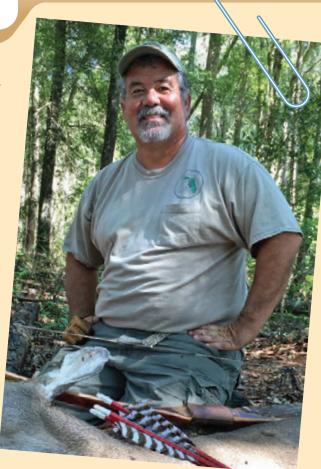
First, introductions are in order. I am Don Davis, aka alligatordond, aka Shogun, aka Buddha Belly. I reside in Melbourne, Florida and have been a PBS member for nearly thirty years, twenty five or so as a Regular member. My very tolerant wife, Miss Penny, is the love of my life and we have two remarkable daughters in Megan and Brooke, the latter whose umbilical cord I cut with a Zwickey broadhead twenty one years ago. Miss Penny and I also have a fine grandson Carter, who at seven, enjoys shooting his longbow with granddaddy.

I have served as an officer with The Florida Bowhunters Council, The Backcountry Fly Fishing Association (several times past Chairman.) I have also volunteered with the Traditional Bowhunters of Florida(TBOF), offering counsel and serving at the direction of several presidents, past and present. I was honored by TBOF in 2011 with their prestigious Keebler/Merritt award for service.

I am running for PBS President not because I think I can do a better job than Norm, but to offer a fresh perspective from the rank and file members, and to give back to the organization I love dearly. PBS is facing numerous challenges in the coming years. Two critical areas are membership recruitment and member retention. Success in both areas will go far to improve our financial health.

It is important for any organization to grow responsibly AND retain members. I believe that new member recruitment should be focused entirely within the traditional bowhunting community and to those interested in transitioning to traditional bowhunting. This opinion is based on our perceived identity as a traditional bowhunting organization throughout the bowhunting world, coupled with the recent identity statement vote confirming that the vast majority of members favor PBS as a traditional bowhunting organization. In conjunction with recruitment we need to identify and develop ways to improve new member retention and renewal.

Our recent collaboration with Clay Hayes on his film "Ascent" is a great start to increasing our visibility and spread the PBS brand. I also believe we need to expand our use of social media to reach the young, serious bowhunters. I am working on some ideas with Clay and other experts within the fields of film and social media to develop a PBS focused series of short films that would be similar to the YETI Pres-



President Candidate

Norm Johnson

It is an honor to be asked to run for the President of the PBS. To be honest it was a position I was not going to seek. The obligations I have to my business and family take a lot of my time and of course priority. Many of you who attended the Florida gathering asked me to run for President so I began to do some soul searching and certainly prayer. My decision to run is based solely on giving of my best effort in common sense leadership and in taking care of the duties that are assigned to the President of the organization.

In the last six years I have submitted two in depth profiles for my previous held Council positions. In the interest of brevity I am going to forgo repeating many of the details of those previous profiles. I am going to use the space available to make very clear my credentials, or lack thereof, and a vision for the future of the PBS. I do this as a benefit to the voting members so you can make an informed decision before you cast your vote.

Other than my previously held Council and Vice President positions I have no experience in running an organization such as the PBS in a Presidential capacity. I am not a gifted orator, writer, and certainly not a quick or analytical thinker. I was the sole owner of Blacktail Bow Co from 1991 until 2013. I ran the business very successfully based on honesty and common sense. My business partner, Alan Pope, and I now split an equal partnership in the business and share these same values.

The single biggest issue that faces the PBS is our lagging membership numbers. I don't believe as President I would have the ability to single handedly double our membership. I do believe good leadership and vision pulls the rock out from under the wheel that begins us moving forward again. Our financial stability and viability are dependent on a growing and thriving membership, it's as simple as that.

The single biggest asset I have to call on in the first year is you "the members". It is my goal to have each and every member sign up one new member. With the help of the Council we can do this, even if we have to personally call on everyone on our members list.

Next is building, or rebuilding, the PBS brand. In the 90's we ran print advertising called "I am the PBS". The ads profiled prominent members who gave a brief positive summary into our vast knowledge base, family oriented fraternity, and exuded the prideful ownership of our high standard of ethics. In an extremely competitive environment where we are in direct competition with many other national and state organizations it is imperative that we keep our brand and what it stands for, front and center. Print ads, social media, and an

~ cont. on page 17



Profiles

Vice Pres. Candidate Matt Schuster

I appreciate being considered for the office of Vice-President of this fine organization. I am single, was born and raised in Georgia, and still live there with an unruly German-wire-haired pointer. I run a small sales agency that covers the southeast in the public safety, work, and outdoor business. Many of my best friends I met through PBS, and I believe the PBS is the best of what our sport represents. I am currently on Council and whether I remain a Councilman or you choose to elect me V.P., I believe for the next few years we (Council) need to concentrate on delivering a quality product (Magazine, Website, Gathering, etc.) to our members while both strengthening our financial position and growing our membership. And we need a long period of peace and harmony, so I personally won't support anything controversial that has the potential of dividing our membership in any way. A few of my specific goals are:

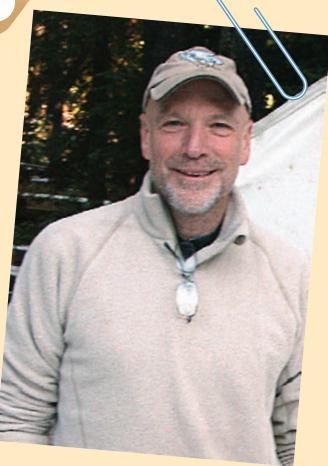
- Continue to develop additional sources of income such as the new Legacy Program
- Upgrade our website and social media presence – an area where I have little aptitude but is key to attracting and keeping younger and current members who enjoy interacting on computers and phones.
- To challenge the State Reps to take on the role of PBS membership ambassador for their state and to connect with state traditional bowhunting organizations in an effort to attract the most dedicated among them.

I would also like to see PBS become more active in recruiting folks to our way of hunting. I believe there are thousands of folks out there using all sorts of hunting equipment right now just waiting to discover that using woodsmanship to get super close to animals is a much more challenging and rewarding way to hunt. We need to show anyone interested that one can be a successful hunter without relying excessively on technology as a substitute for skill, patience, and experience. Most modern hunters won't be interested, but some will – we just have to find them and support them while they gain the confidence to be successful.

I appreciate your consideration.

Matt Schuster

Email: matt@easterndynamicsinc.com



Vice Pres. Candidate

Greg Darling

Well here I am again. I guess I needed some time to cure...

I am pleased to be running for the Vice Presidency of the Professional Bowhunters Society. I find myself amongst some of the finest candidates for the offices this election. I

don't think there is a whole lot to say as to who I am, I've spent a couple of tours on Council and up until the last banquet had been involved in every one since San Antonio.

Where do I stand, and why? I offer that is the easiest to lay out. We have weathered some big storms the past few years and because of some of the rhetoric from those issues caused me to pull back. I'm a big target and pretty slow.

I still believe the Society is fraternal and not a political organization. I think it is important to recognize the issues that fraternal organizations suffer today: low participation, dwindling membership and a distinct graying of the current membership.

It's easy to take shots at the equipment that has become the norm in "mainstream" bowhunting. For guys like myself and so many others who are Regular members we started with a stickbow and we keep promising ourselves we'll finish that way, too. But for many of us reality has crept in and the stickbow hangs on the rack a pleasant memory of our past adventures. Does that make the member less of a bowhunter? He or she was vetted by their peers and joined the ranks of Qualified Membership decades prior. They proved they were quality bowhunters already, yet we have some who take shots at our senior members who now use a compound bow.

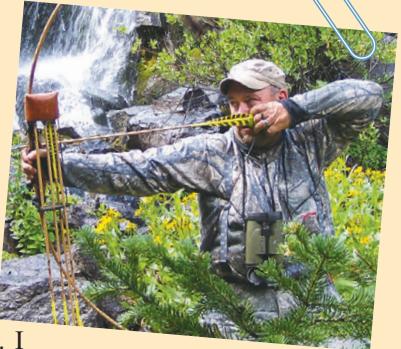
This is where I am amazed at the statements and accusations that often are heard. I guess it doesn't matter what that member did in the past, the contributions to the PBS and bowhunting, them using a compound makes them the ultimate sell out.

How do we progress? Where do we gain membership? Who do we target? In the 90's there was a "Stickbow Revolution" and new state organizations were created out of necessity. The PBS was already loaded with membership who always used or were changing to the stickbow to keep the "bow in bowhunting," the "arch in archery" ... The PBS was an easy fit for many of the new traditional archers who were being converted at the state level.

However, it was recognized late in the 90's and early in the 21st Century that the PBS was strictly bowhunting focused. Enter ATHA and Compton Traditional Bowhunters. Both came about because the PBS by vote had chosen to not become an all traditional organization. The battle for what we shoot became an issue within and without the PBS. We know ATHA folded and Compton became "the" stickbow organization.

It's time to recognize we are not Compton, they have their role and we have our own. We need to minister to the high-tech bowhunters who have lost the taste for the long-range sport it has become. We are the ultimate ambassadors of bowhunting.

How do we grow? Apparently, →
~ cont. on page 17



Candidate Profiles

3 Year Councilman Candidate Ethan Rodrique

First off, I would like to say that being asked to run for Council has been a very humbling experience and I am honored! My father has always been a bowhunter so I guess you could say in a way I was almost born into it. I could not honestly tell you what my first bow was, but my first "real" bow was a Ben Pearson Bronco. The first thing I ever killed in the field was with that bow, it was a copperhead by the way. I have shot a bow and arrow all of my life and when I was just a kid my dad was dragging me along on bow fishing trips and treks through the woods. As I grew older I progressed to hunting whitetails and enjoyed every minute of it. As most kids do, high school came and my attention turned primarily to the things high school boys focus on and immediately after school I left for a four year stint in the military.

After my service I once again started hunting in my new home state of Tennessee. During the time I was away my father traded in his compound for a longbow and began making them. I received one in the mail from him along with a copy of "Bows of the Little Delta". That was 18 years ago and I have been consumed with traditional bowhunting ever since. It has been a great path and I have been lucky enough to make some of the greatest friends and mentors along the way. Around 2002 I became interested in PBS and spoke to a good friend of mine, Russell Lantier, about what PBS was all about. A couple of days later he called me and said he had bought my first year's membership. As I became more and more familiar with PBS I felt that this was an organization I belonged in. After attending my first banquet I knew without a doubt that this organization was one I wanted to be a part of for the rest of my life.

In my years of being a PBS member I have enjoyed many great friendships and some wonderful hunts and experiences. I've been fortunate enough to have taken part in a few memberships hunts as well as several fantastic hunting adventures with other members. Besides chasing whitetails and all manner of small game here at home, I have been fortunate enough to have hunted elk in Utah, Colorado, and Oregon, hogs in Texas, bear in New Brunswick as well as here in Tennessee. And a hunting trip for Sitka blacktails near Kodiak Island, but that's a whole other story!!

My wife Trena and I live on the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee and we have two daughters. Kaylee is 16 and Claire is 13. We enjoy anything outdoors from hiking and fishing to canoeing and camping. Bow hunting is my passion and I hunt with the bow exclusively. I have been making laminated longbows and recurves for the past 17 years or so. I feel very blessed to have a supportive family and friends →



3 Year Councilman Candidate Tom Vanasche

To All PBS Members:

I was asked to run for Council again by Jim Akenson and felt honored to accept that challenge. I'm sure many of you know me and perhaps many do not. I am an Oregonian and have lived here 61 of my 64 years. I recently retired from my medical practice, though I still have a large hazelnut orchard to farm. Vern Struble was my mentor and brought me in as a regular member as well many years ago. I also look quite a bit like Vern, with my bald head, and hope that his ethics and PBS values continue on through me also. In addition, I have been the Pacific Region PBS representative since the inception of that program.

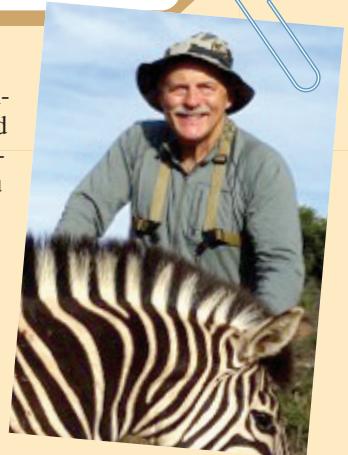
I have seen the ups and downs and dissension of the last several years of our organization and hopefully we are moving beyond that now. As a group we can not be all things to all people or we would have a thousand organizations representing two people each. Our things in common are much greater than our differences. Many of us can be strident in our ways, as the PBS tends to get those who join, bringing along a fierce independent streak in them. I am hoping the new Council will continue to try to expand our social media presence, i.e. website, Facebook, and even Instagram. This is where I believe our new members will be generated from, as that is the language of our youth.

Continuing to grow our organization is vital to our existence. When you attend our biennial meeting and look around, there is a lot of gray hair [if any] in the room. It seems the Council is constantly harping on this, but we must not only maintain, we must expand, if we will survive. The regional hunts have been great, but hopefully we can try to include a few potential new members in these, tempting them to join. In that regard, I recently completed the PBS auction alligator hunt with four of our members. I "knew" them but not really. Now I feel that we are all great friends with a deeper bond. A hunt can make or break that connection.

Show your support of PBS by voting.

Tom Vanasche

Email: tomvanasche@mac.com



**Your vote doesn't count
if you don't cast it!
Watch your mail for the ballot
and make sure you count!**

President Candidate

Don Davis

~ cont. from page 14 → ents series found on youtube. With appropriate "tagging" these films could have a significant positive impact to our membership and subsequently, our bottom line.

There is so much more but so little room. I am confident that PBS will be in good hands regardless of the outcome of the vote. That says a lot about the quality of YOUR Professional Bowhunters Society.

For now I will close with this. Get and wear the badge of honor of the PBS. Whether Associate member or Regular, be the leader you are, lead by example, and represent the Professional Bowhunters Society well.

Don Davis

Email: alligatordond@cs.com

Vice Pres. Candidate

Greg Darling

~ cont. from page 15 → soliciting at traditional only gatherings and events hasn't exactly worked well for us. Yes, our marketing arm is doing better at capturing more of the trad guys, but if we were a business we would be failing.

We have members who feel drawing blood in an argument is a right. I'm here to tell you it's not and it's not working. All we do is create a harder line on both sides and end up making nothing better for your personal position.

We need to get our kids and grandkids engaged, we need to get their friends engaged as well. We have spent a lot of time being selfish in holding onto the old without embracing the new. If we're going to change people it won't be by exclusion. Trust me, I'm not saying we need to fold and let it all in, that's not it. The Associate membership was created to allow a newer person to sample the PBS. We used to help our members get better, grow into a traditional minded bowhunter before eventually applying for Qualified Membership.

We used to be known for our mentoring, our acceptance of different things as they applied to bowhunting. Not to beat a dead horse, but how many of us said, "Carbon arrows? Never!!" Right? We need to pick our battles where we know if we can't win, we can have a positive effect and stay out of fights. We just end up looking foolish fighting. We are a brotherhood of largely like-minded bowhunters. We need to reassess our role and why we have fallen somewhat into obscurity.

The past six years have been hell on the PBS, the past 2 have calmed significantly thanks to great leadership on the Council. I hope to be a positive influence within the Society. Regardless of win or lose I am a member who has always been proud of my affiliation to the PBS. Thank you for your consideration.

In closing I ask you all to step up, be an ambassador instead of being an antagonist. We're the most ethical, best practiced and professional bowhunters on Earth. I believe if we show that, we'll attract quality individuals who will accept the challenge of bowhunting, not just as a sport but as we see it a way of life outside.

Greg Darling

President Candidate

Norm Johnson

~ cont. from page 14 → active updated web site all working together will help us introduce ourselves to those in the archery world who share our interests.

We currently have five committees within the organization. They are the Conservation Committee, the Bowhunting Preservation Committee, Publicity Committee, Magazine Committee, and newly formed Finance Committee. With my sole focus on growing the membership as well as the brand I will not (in the short term) put any funding or efforts into the Conservation or the Preservation committee. However, I will double down with the Publicity Committee using this committee to aid in developing our print advertising, social media, website, and booth signup stations at traditional gatherings around the country. The Magazine Committee will continue with their input on editing and magazine layout. The newly formed Finance Committee is only used at times when important investment decisions are made in accordance with our nonprofit status.

I will continue to strongly support and promote our regional hunt program. Lastly, I will strongly promote our traditional equipment culture that is so prevalent within this organization. The traditional bowhunters, traditional manufactures, and traditional companies have been the workhorse and funding behind this organization for decades and we have every reason to be proud of this culture.

Kind regards,

Norm Johnson

Email: norm@blacktailbows.com

3 Year Councilman Candidate

Ethan Rodrigue

~ cont. from page 16 → that share my passion for bow hunting. I have served in several capacities while a member of PBS including banquet committee, as a regional representative and am currently the publicity committee chairman.

I think for PBS to grow and flourish we need to let people know what we are all about. Probably the best way for us to do this as an organization is through media, social media is a powerful and inexpensive tool. The PBS has had a Facebook page for quite some time now and I am currently working on spreading our message through Instagram and have created a YouTube channel specifically for PBS. The "hunting community" is changing rapidly. There is a large number of people these days that are very interested in hunting, specifically bow hunting and bow hunting for the right reasons. There are large amounts of media out there focusing on the adventure, challenge, ethics, conservation, and spirit of the chase. Things that PBS has always stood for, we just need to let people know about us. That's why as publicity committee chairman I have taken on the responsibility of trying to reach people with what we are all about. If given the opportunity to serve on Council I will continue to do everything I can to promote PBS and grow our organization in any way I can. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ethan Rodrigue

Email: woodsmanbows@yahoo.com

Going for Gator



By Tom Vanasche

The auctioneer stopped and the hands went down. A smile came across my face as I knew I was going alligator hunting in Florida with Terry Receveur. The 2016 Professional Bowhunters Society auction [appropriately in Florida] had ended and I was thrilled. I thought I had won the auction for this hunt two years prior in Cincinnati, but apparently Bo Slaughter had raised a hand after I thought it was over, and came away with the prize. He, however, had had a shoulder injury and was putting the hunt off till this year.

We did not have a lock on the hunt this year yet, as you have to draw a tag and the odds are somewhat low. Terry enhances our chances however by having several people apply, as the winner of the draw gets a tag for two gators and can give the tags to anyone of their choosing. The only issue with

Bill Terry, Terry Receveur, Bo Slaughter, Jamie and Nathan Fikkert along with author, Tom Vanasche set out on a PBS Gator Hunt on Lake Okeechobee in Florida.

this is that the original drawer of the tag must be present for the taking of the game. Bo and I did not draw, but when the results were in, Terry's uncle who lives near the gators, and Jamie Fikkert in Jacksonville had drawn, so we had four permits.

Jamie had never bowhunted anything before and her husband, Nathan, was getting her bow prepped for the big show and he would use her second tag.

On August 13th I flew to Orlando and Terry picked me up at the airport. He had driven from New York with Bill Terry and picked up Bo on the way going through Virginia. The trip was not without incident as Terry hit a deer with the boat trailer, not a mile from his house, and needed to replace the axle. They arrived on time however, after driving all night and we headed on to Lake Okeechobee, our headquarters. Upon arrival at our motel, I was helping unload the truck when a loose uncased arrow drove a Wensel Woodsman into my left lower leg. The trip was starting out with a bit of bad luck. Fortunately it was a clean wound and not a pass through so nobody put a tag on me!

We were a day and a half early, so there was lots of time to get our gear sorted out and for Terry to take us on a combo scouting and bass fishing expedition. We caught several largemouth bass and saw a few gators. Captain Terry said not to worry as they were primarily nocturnal and we would see many more at night.

Arriving early gave us time get in some scouting and bass fishing.

The actual hunting hours are, I believe, 5 pm to 10 am. It is expected that you will spotlight them, however if the light stays on their eyes they will dive, so they need to be approached cautiously. The standard methods of capture are with harpoon, grapping hooks, spearguns and crossbows. Once alongside the boat a "bangstick" is typically used to dispatch the animal. We, of course, are traditionalists and would use our bows, and when the gator was exhausted and up to the boat, a knife was used to "pith" it, i.e. sever the spinal cord at the base of the brain.

At 5:30pm opening night, we loaded the boat and we were off to the canals. There were seven of us in the boat as Terry's uncle, Jerry, had to accompany us as he had drawn the two tags for Bo and I. It was crowded with people, bows, coolers and excitement. For this unit we had drawn two of the three permits available, so we hoped we would be lonely on the water.

We initially did not see a lot of gators, though Nathan was able to connect on a seven and a half footer that we handled easily and brought in the boat. Captain Terry elected to change venues to a different creek system and the action commenced immediately. It was now about 1am and Bo made a perfect shot with his fish arrow just behind the jowls and the rodeo began actively.

Ideally you get your heavy fish arrow that is attached to 250# test line imbedded well under the gator hide. The line is on a spinning reel with a float [should you drop





it] and basically you play the alligator like a giant fish. As the prey wears out you can get it close to the boat, but it is still very dangerous and the hunt is not over.

I was able to get an additional harpoon in the body section, which left another fish point and line attached. With these two lines and another 40 minutes of fight, we were able to get a noose around its nose and tape it closed with electrical tape. Dragging the head over the gunnel, Bo pithed his eight and a half foot reptile and we had filled half our tags.

It was surprising to me the difference in size with only a foot of length between the

two, as Bo's looked enormous side by side. The difference in weight may have been nearly 100 pounds.

Captain Terry has been involved in the taking of over 20 alligators and obviously was very experienced in selecting the creeks and gauging the size of these near prehistoric beasts, when all you can see are their eyes and nose. Jamie and I sat on a cooler in front, with Terry operating the trolling motor and spotlight, while we took direction from the master. He pointed out one near the boat, and I deferred to Jamie, as I thought it was relatively small. It dove and Terry wondered if I was looking for something larger than 10 feet because that was what I had just passed. Embarrassingly, I said no, and we moved on to our next target.

We drifted up to about 15 feet from another opportunity that I thought maybe was

nine feet, and I elected to shoot. The arrow was off and with a "CRACK" it connected. You are aiming for a spot [behind the jowls] which is underwater and some guesstimation is involved. This is a fleshy area and you are trying to obviously avoid impenetrable bone. I thought I hit well, though nobody else did. Fortunately, the line was secure, as I grabbed the reel and hung on to this 11 foot, 500lb mini submarine.

Several times I had to toss the reel into the creek, as it was uncontrollable, and the gator could potentially wrap the line around the propeller or cut it on the boat. Terry did a masterful job of maneuvering the vessel, positioning the light and locating the reel several times. I would take up slack and seem to be gaining ground, when he would take off again in a violent rush. Then, again, I would have to toss the reel, as he could also easily break the line if it ran out. Twice we got him near the boat and each time we got an

→ ~ cont. on page 20 →



Going for Gator

~ continued from page 19

additional line hooked in to attempt to land him. It truly was an adrenaline rush "cluster". With seven people on board, four bows, two harpoons, a spotlight and three lines dragging around the boat, dancing among our feet, attached to this massive beast, it is a wonder that we succeeded in landing him. Despite the three lines, it was not giving up until I finally put a two blade broadhead through his lungs. As the lung bubbles surfaced, he was finally weak enough that we could get his nose over the rail and pith him as well. At 4 am that adventure had climaxed.

That left Jamie with the only remaining tag. The next night we were back at it, a boatload of pros at this point. After a couple of misses [just for practice you know], Jamie kept at it and was able to get her first bowkill. There can't be too many people that can say their first species taken with a bow was an eight and a half foot alligator. We were very proud of her and glad that her gator was larger than Nathan's.

We had filled our tags in two nights and the action was incredible. It came at a price however, as Terry's trailer wrecked a bearing and axle, as well as a flat tire. His trailer boat guide got bent and his propeller was damaged. I got a broadhead in the leg and we lost one reel setup and ruined another as well as a few arrows.

We, at the PBS, need to thank Terry for all he has done on these auction hunts to provide us these great hunting opportunities and raise a considerable about of money as well. My hat is off to you, Terry Receveur.

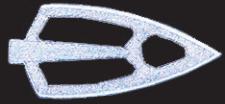
For this hunt I used a 63# Blacktail recurve and a 1900 grain Muzzy arrow and fish point. All preformed flawlessly for my one shot.



Jamie was able to get her first bow kill on this hunt with an eight and half foot gator!



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Appalachia Odd Year Gathering

March 17-19, 2017

Based on all of the positive feedback we had after the 2015 Odd Year Gathering I contacted Gene Thorn and Baltimore Bowmen about doing it there again. It all worked out and I am happy to announce that the Appalachia region of PBS will again have its 2017 Odd Year Gathering at Baltimore Bowmen!

Come and join us on Friday, March 17, through Sunday, March 19, at Baltimore Bowmen, the home of the Baltimore Bowmen Traditional Classic (BBTC). You can get there early on Friday morning if you want and stay through Sunday late afternoon.

As usual, we will have some excellent and challenging 3D courses laid out, a seminar or two, raffles and auctions, an intro to the PBS for those who don't know much about us, and of course excellent fellowship.

We will also be holding our Second Annual Chili Cookoff.
so bring your best recipe and let us see whatcha' got!!

For those who bring their families, downtown Baltimore is just 30 minutes away and has shopping, a Hard Rock Cafe restaurant, the National Aquarium, Maryland Science Center, and four historic ships that include the USS Constitution and the USS Torsk, a WWII submarine.

For more information contact Larry Schwartz
by email at larryschwartz@comcast.net or by phone on 443-994-1098.



Directions and area hotels are listed on the Baltimore Bowmen website here:

<http://www.baltimorebowmen.com/direction.htm> & <http://www.baltimorebowmen.com/hotels.htm>.

See you all there!

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Happy Anniversary

By Barry Wensel

At times I feel as though I'm cheating when I go out of my way to be sneaky. There's this small, 1.5 acre, food plot surrounded by approximately 400 acres of mature timber I bowhunt. Although I have nothing against food plots whatsoever, the primary reason this one exists is to allow deer to feed evenings before they drop down to the cultivated crop fields to the west. The hidden plot just discourages drive-by shootings that otherwise might tempt passing vehicles from the county road. If the truth be known, I have never killed a deer in a food plot in my life that I recall. As stated, I have nothing against them, I just prefer to ambush them to and from the plots themselves.

In this particular scenario there's an old farm two-track dropping down through the timber to the plot at the bottom of the ridge. It appears to be a no brainer to access the bottom by just dropping down the road into the plot. This leads to another undeniable fact that in-the-field scouting times will teach you things that you can't learn via aerial maps or photos. Over the years I noticed after the foliage dropped whenever I entered the food plot via the farm road I would see white flags running across the flat and up the ridge on the other side across the plot. You could get away with entrance/exit when there were leaves on the trees but not after fall foliage dropped opening up the timbered view.

I've always been a big fan of hunting undisturbed deer. By doing so, we hunt them in their normal patterns rather than altered, defensive movements. So, rather than risking any disturbance in the area, when I first top out the ridge, using the directional air currents to my advantage, I swing wide and quietly make my descent by slipping unseen down through the timbered ridge rather than walk the two-track. After dropping into the creek bed at the bottom, remaining out of sight by walking the dry creek bed itself, I loop around and across a weedy flat entering the stand via "the back door." It's hundreds of yards out of my way but well worth it. When I point it out it's a very obvious no-brainer. But most guys are either too lazy or do not even consider it in the first place. These are the little secrets that dictate your potential for success and what your hunt will produce.

So it was on the afternoon of November 21, 2016. The name of the stand is Grand Junction because it sits where two old internal fences, a hedgerow and a bend in the creek bottom come together. To add to the positive mental side of things, I have personally seen at least four B&C class bucks from the stand over the years.

When I have to cross a main deer trail in order to get into my stand I always make sure I do so in a shooting lane so if any approaching deer happen to cut my track they will do so in a precise spot where I can take them if wanted.

The afternoon was beautiful, partly cloudy, 50 degrees and the winds at 8 MPH out of the southeast. An hour into my sit, the first deer I saw was the great two year old up and comer non-typical pictured above. He had a neat, twisted rack with several extra points. He's one of those you look at and dream what he'll turn into at full maturity. He was about 100 yards away on the flat across the dry creek. I filmed him as he dropped down into the creek and disappeared from my sight. Two minutes later and two hundred yards away I watched a bigger buck come off the food plot and drop into the dry creek bed. He appeared to have decent mass and width, with a honey-blonde colored 4x4 rack. It was obvious he'd made eye contact with the young non-typical as the 4x4 was all puffed up with his ears laid back in an aggressive posture. Unfortunately for me they were now down over the bank and out of my sight. Five minutes later, up out of the creek 200 yards away came a 3x2 that I'd seen several other times previous.



Barry's buck died flat on his back, looking like a dog wanting a belly rub.



Just then, movement caught my eye. On the flat at 150 yards was a really good buck, a shooter for sure. He had pure white antlers and appeared to be a basic 5x4 with the body of a bull, indicative of a fully mature stud. The direction he was headed would not bring him anywhere close so I decided to wheeze. He walked behind some slash and I couldn't see him anymore. I gave him another slap in the face with a second wheeze. I still couldn't see him and wondered if he could even hear my calling. Suddenly two does broke out of the dry creek bed with flags flying. I wasn't sure what was going on as I had a good steady wind and none of the bucks were chasing them.

For some unknown reason I looked behind me and standing 40 yards directly downwind, opposite all the action, was an-

other great buck. It struck me he'd apparently heard me wheeze, looked over and saw the movement of the does, and was deciding what action to take. He was just standing there as I said a little prayer. Instantly, here he came at a fast trot. He jumped the old fence five yards to my right. As soon as his hooves hit the ground on my side he broke into a slow run/gallop.

I haven't shot a running deer for decades but instincts took over. He was less than ten yards. I drew and swung with his steady gait. The instant I released I knew he was mine. The arrow disappeared right behind the shoulders broadside for a perfect double lung pass-through. Running about 70 yards, he crossed the dry creek. As soon as he topped out he stopped. I could see he was having a hard time standing. He was flicking his tail around wildly,

which experience has taught me is a very good sign. Taking my eyes off him for literally a second, I looked back and he was gone. I wasn't sure if he stepped forward behind some brush or if he went down. It ended up he did both.

Making a long story short, as I approached him I can't ever remember seeing a buck die in that position. He was flat on his back looking like a dog wanting a belly rub. This buck meant a lot to me and will go down in my memory as one of my all-time favorites. As luck would have it, I happened to get him on the 57th anniversary of the day I killed my very first deer ever. And a beauty he was. He has a basic 5x4 frame plus split brow tines on each side. He ended up measuring 161 2/8 inches with heavy bases of 6.5" on his right and 6.25" on his left and 25" main beams. Although I didn't weigh him, I'm sure he dressed well over 200 lbs.

The other reason this one was so special is because of my open heart surgery and subsequent cardiac rehab all last summer. I easily could have missed the entire season or worse. The fact is, I could hardly draw a 35 lb. bow back on Sept. 1st. I borrowed an old 40 lb. recurve my brother had and left it strung and lying on the dining room table. Every time I walked by I'd draw it back a couple times. Long story short, the day before our October 1st opening day I put three arrows in a 3 inch circle at 18 yards with my 61 lb. Tall Tines recurve. Even so, I vowed not to shoot at one over 15 yards. And, I must brag I kept my word when a potential Booner walked by me at 27-28 yards the last few days of October. I just didn't feel confident with the shot so I let him walk.

Now "the rest of the story", two days later I was pulling chips from my trail cameras. Low and behold, there was a picture of my buck on a camera half a mile away. In all honesty I didn't recognize him at first because the time/date of the photo was after I'd already killed him. But on closer examination the time/date obviously had to be off as it's definitely the same buck. I'll admit I really lucked out on the lighting and focus. As you can see from the front cover of this magazine issue the photo came out looking like a great Andrew Warhol painting.

I just wanted to thank everyone who helped me get through this past year. Whitetails are cool for sure, but the love and support of family and friends is stronger. I'm really blessed. That's my story and I'm sticking to it. Thank you all! ♣



A Black Bear Journey

Part II

By Rob Burnham



Part Two, the experience! As most of my PBS brothers know, it's the experience and all of the things that go along with a hunt that make it memorable. The fine details and even the not so fine details, the things that just happen that embed the memories in the brain to recall days, even years later. The journey north with two of my best friends would be no different. We talked through the night and into the early morning hours about past hunts, future hunts, family and bowhunting. It always amazes me how 3 people from hundreds of miles apart can come together on an adventure like this. It's as if we had known each other all our lives.

To call our transportation tight quarters would be a HUGE understatement. Three bowhunters packed into a mid size car with enough gear to do a remote two week hunt in the far north doesn't leave room for even a pair of extra socks. It was like working a jigsaw puzzle getting everything packed, to include Craig, who we literally stuffed into the back seat between duffle bags and bows. He was a real trooper and didn't complain once. I think we were all just so excited about the adventure that we would have taken a covered wagon had it been our only means of travel.

Arriving in Nakina, we met with fellow PBS brothers Greg Whelton and his son, Nick. They would be joining us for the first week of the hunt. After a bite to eat and getting settled into our rooms for the night we made a run out to the local landfill to see if any bears were digging through the trash. Greg & I sat up on a hill after the others had left and right before dark we got to see what we had come for. A pretty nice black bear ventured into the landfill right at dark. We both enjoyed the encounter and hoped it wouldn't be the last bear seen on this trip. The following morning everyone would be busy getting gear to the float plane base, having it weighed and finally packing the plane for the hour plus flight to camp.

This would be my first time flying in a float plane. Flying over the Canadian landscape, I can only describe it as being worth every penny. Had I still been shooting with a film camera, I would have used up most of my film on the flight to camp. Winding rivers, streams and lakes as far as the eyes



can see, surrounded by open terrain and thick evergreen forest. The view from above was nothing short of spectacular. We hadn't made it to camp and already my memory bank was logging this adventure and what an adventure it would be. Although I could have spent the entire day flying, I was ready for camp and the bear hunting that awaited. This hunt had been a long time in the making, I was anxious to string my bow.

The sight and sound of the float plane as it disappeared over the horizon, made me acknowledge that the hunt was here and underway. Words can't describe the feeling, but knowing that your connection to the rest of the world just flew out of sight definitely adds another element to the adventure. Pausing there on the dock, I imagined what it must have been like back in the days of Fred Bear & Glenn St. Charles and how they must have felt as they watched



the plane fade into the distance. The next order of business was to get the gear secured into our cabins, string bows and shoot a few arrows to make sure our sticks were ready for the hunt.

Sharing a cabin with Frog and the Preacher, almost sounds like a Disney movie, but this was anything but. As with most camps I've had the pleasure of sharing with PBS members, at some point we go through the show and tell part.

Comparing each other's gear, bows, arrows, broadheads and knives along with anything else we feel unique. Over time those show and tell sessions help to mold the things each of us totes afield with

us. Sharing the "Knowledge Through Experience", is such a big part of why PBS camps are so great. The bow I would be hunting with, Marilyn Monroe, was one such example of comparing bows and gear. I discovered Kwyk Styk bows years ago while photographing a hunt in Texas. She has been my go to bow ever since. I should probably write an article about how this bow got the name Marilyn, but I'll save that for another time. On with the hunt!

Traveling by boat to our stands, the cool breeze felt good on my face. The lack of black flies and mosquitoes was a double bonus and a welcome relief. As much as I'd like to say, "a bear hunt without the nagging insects would be great", it's all part of



the lore of a black bear hunt. Seriously, what would a bear hunt be without having to use head nets, Deet or ThermaCells. Pulling into the cove where Craig would be hunting for the evening, I shut off the motor to the boat to let us drift the last 30 to 40 yards to shore. Try as hard as we might to be quiet, something always seems to hit the side of a metal boat alerting the entire nearby forest of our presence. I handed Craig his pack with a quick fist bump and he disappeared into the forest. I quietly paddled out a hundred yards then cranked the motor back up and headed towards my stand.

I could hear my own heart beat settling into my ladder stand for the evening. The smells and sounds of the forest I had missed, but no longer. I was back in the far north hunting bear, finally. I spent the first evening getting used to the different sounds and calls of the birds. I studied my surroundings, looking for trails that an approaching bear may use to a slip quietly into the bait. Just before dark off in the distance a lone wolf howled, "Owooooooooo"! Some might consider the sound eerie, I however find it very soothing, like nature's music. As the evening light faded I would be visited by an owl, who for some reason thought I was a meal. I felt the wind across the side of my face, ducking just in time to prevent a collision. Had I not turned my head when I did, I'm sure there would have

been a fight. Your guess is as good as mine as to who would have won that one.

The first week seemed to fly by without as much as a glimpse of one of the black ghosts. There had been sightings and even a few shots by other members of camp, but I had not seen a bear other than those pictures captured by the trail cameras that were placed at each site to monitor the comings and goings. I hunted hard, spending countless hours on stand. Night after night I would listen to the wolves at dark and make the long boat ride back to camp after dark. Several evenings while traveling back to camp the Northern Lights appeared. Despite the many trips previously to Canada, I had never seen this awesome display in the sky.

Sunday afternoon's weather was warmer than it had been, but no rain in the forecast. I'd hunted stand #10 eight out of the nine days thus far and had yet to see a bear much less any sign. There had been no trail camera pictures and the bait that had been added on day one was still there and getting moldy. I had not tried a burn yet, but had a plastic bottle full of bacon grease and some oil from one of the fish fries. I decided I would give #10 another shot and that a burn was in order. The wind was not perfect, in fact it was blowing from me out to the river in a northerly direction. I figured if it drifted down the shore line at all, it was worth the try. I lit the Sterno can then

placing the old coffee pot I had found on top with about a 1/4 of the grease from the plastic bottle. Once it was burning and the smoke was floating on the light breeze, I climbed up into the ladder stand.

About an hour had gone by with no results. The coffee pot was smoking good and I could see the light gray trail of smoke as it drifted north down the

shore line. Then I heard a loud splash near the shore and thought to myself, man that was huge fish that just jumped. Minutes later I heard a crash and more splashing. Now that's odd I thought! Then a log or branch cracked and I turned in my stand, looking in the direction of the noise. My eyes were glued on this patch of woods when a black form materialized. "Holy Cow!" It was a bear and a decent one at that. I watched as he worked his way from the shore into the woods to the right of the bait site. He made his way to a game trail then followed it to within maybe 30 yards of my stand. He then began to check the air, bobbing his head up and down and licking his nose while flaring his nostrils. I knew that he was fully aware of my presence as he had come from down wind of me following the scent from the smoking pot. He walked closer still, stopping at 20 yards, again checking the wind.

By now I had stood and retrieved my bow from the hanger. I still didn't have a shot, but wanted to be ready should a shot present itself. The bear was being very cautious, not wanting to commit to come into the bait. He stayed on the trail that would bring him right behind my treestand. At about 15 yards he stopped and just stood there for what felt like hours. He then slowly turned and walked back up the trail out of sight. Taking my first full breath, I relaxed my arms and shoulders. That was cool. I had seen a bear. I had just regained my composure when he appeared once again. He followed the same routine as before, walking a few yards then stopping to check the air and his surroundings. At 15 yards he froze yet again. He turned around and walked off for the second time, only this time he stayed in sight.

By now I had had a chance to calm down and get my breathing under control, I was thoroughly enjoying the show. My camera was mounted to a tree pod, but was on the opposite side of the tree,

→ ~ cont. on page 26



A Black Bear Journey

Part II continued

~ continued from page 25

I had no way to swing it around to get the bear on film. The bear followed this same routine several more times over the next 15-20 minutes. Finally he came down the path walking right under me between the tree and the ladder. Unfortunately he never offered me a shot as he walked past and down the trail that led out to the boat. As he disappeared around the bend in the trail, I thought to myself he is going to get into the five gallon bucket of bait that was stashed in the bow of the boat. The bear had been out of sight for over ten minutes, I felt he had made his way on down the shore line since I hadn't heard any commotion coming from the boat.

I was about to sit back down and reflect on the encounter when I caught movement again. Here came the bear back down the trail towards me. Again he walked right under the tree where he stopped. I was looking straight down through the grating on the tree stand and could see he was messing with something. Then he walked out from under me and laid down just five yards from the tree I was in. He had turned around and was facing me at this point. He had located the plastic bottle and some how managed to remove the top and was licking the grease. For ten minutes he worked that bottle, getting every last drop out of it. When he had licked it clean he stood. Instinct kicked in and I knew that a shot could possibly be presented to me at any moment. I made my mind up that if he



began to walk towards the bait, I would let him walk past, but if he turned to walk back down the trail I was going to take the shot. My fingers tightened on the string and I brought my bow arm up readying for a shot.

The bear turned to his left showing his decision to walk back up the path. I drew, anchored and released. I watched as my bright blue feathers disappeared into his right side angling forward into the chest cavity. He bolted as if being hit by a hot poker, running back up the game trail. The woods turned silent, only for a moment though. I could hear the labored breathing and the gurgling sound of a deflated lung, then the woods went silent once again. I couldn't see the bear, but I knew in my heart that he was down. I waited maybe ten minutes then I lowered my bow and quiver and climbed down. I could see the blood trail immediately and located my arrow about ten yards from where the bear was standing when I shot him. The arrow was covered in bright crimson blood. I nocked another arrow and slowly followed the bears exit path. I had followed his trail for only 15 yards when I saw him lying next to a log. He had run maybe 35-

40 yards before dying. There had been no death moan, but he was dead. My 15 year journey full of heartaches and disappointments had finally come to an end, I had taken my first black bear with a traditional bow. *

Outfitter: Attawapiskat River Adventures Eddie North

This was his very first Black Bear Camp and now that Ontario has reopened their Spring Bear Hunt, Eddie is going to be offering a 7 Day Spring Hunt.

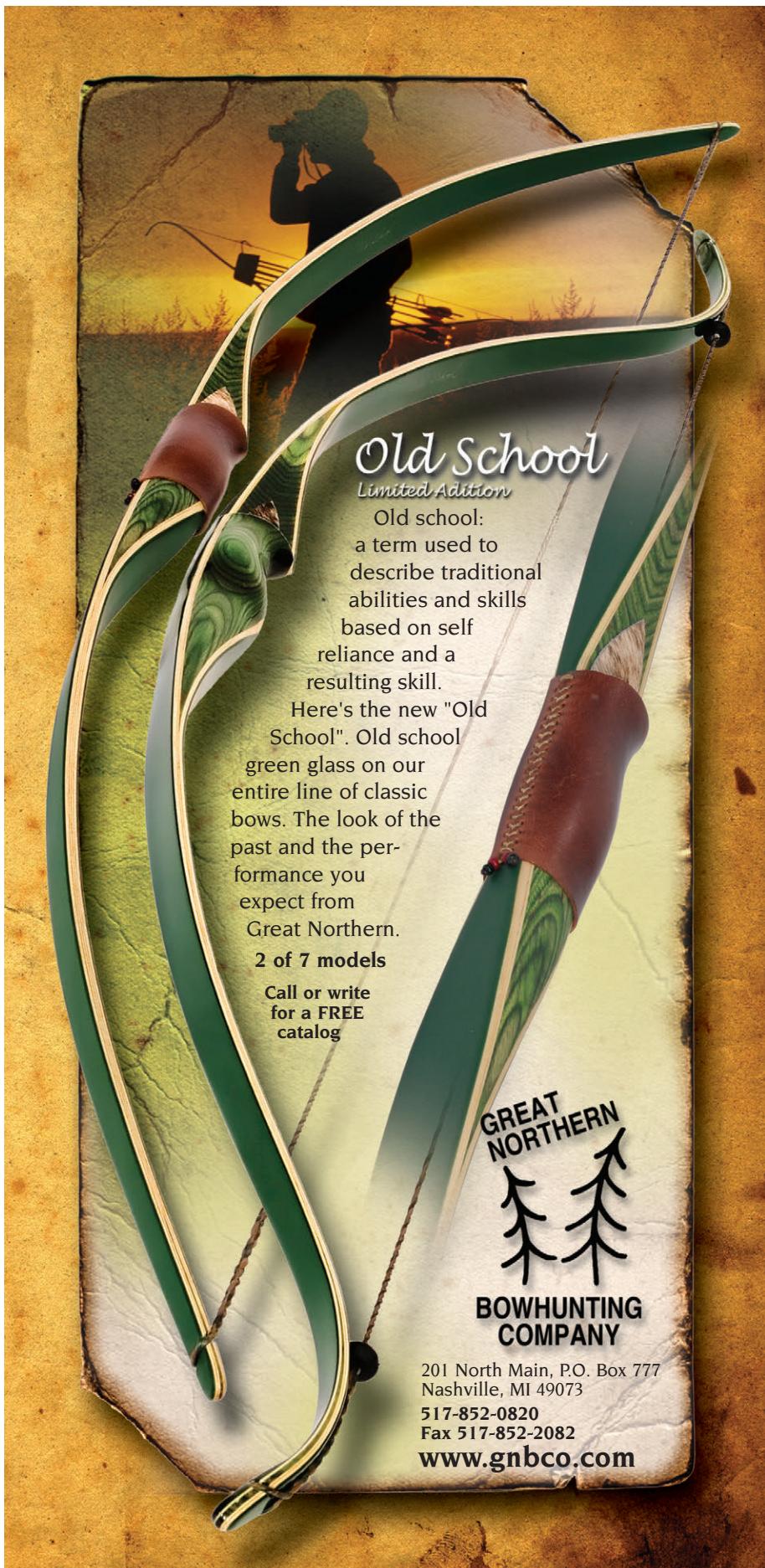
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Trail Cam Tidbits... Big Ones That Got Away



Above: Bill Terry, Sr. spotted this nice buck in November.

Below: Gene Wensel got some nice shots of this guy while sitting a different stand 400 yards from him.





Something I Have Always Wanted To Do

By Scott Smolen

For more years than I can remember I thought that it would be neat to spot a buck in the summer and follow him all through June, July and August in his summer habits and hangouts. Come fall use what I have learned and apply it to setting up on him for the season opener. Many hunters do just that!

Since retiring five years ago, I do have the time to do something like this. In fact, two years ago I did watch a great eight point buck all summer long. I gathered well over 100 pictures of him as well as glassing him almost daily!! He lived pretty much on my property so that helped a bunch. I remember on the Friday before our bow opener in 2014 I watched him from our loft feeding in our soybean field across from our home. He was shedding his velvet and had bloody strips hanging off his antlers!! Later that evening he was in my clover/alfalfa patch feeding and I had perfect photos of him as well!

The following day was the opener and I sat my stand on my clover, my journal shows that I saw 24 deer and 12 were bucks including the Big 8. I had so much action I started to video all the deer coming out and feeding, the sparring bucks, etc.. That was when the big guy walked out and fed past me at 12 yards feeding before I could set the camera down and grab my bow!! I do have some great footage of him walking away feeding.

I had so many deer out and close by, I was unable to react quick enough. Dumb mistake Scott!

I hunted that field a few more evenings but the beans had since dried down enough that the leaves lost their appeal and the pods were not quite dried down enough.

Plus the fact there was a big seven pointer that was huge and he bullied the other bucks when he came out, in fact other bucks would not enter or would leave when he came out. I was able to have another close encounter with him during the rut, but the doe he was following wouldn't walk past me with him in tow. Maybe he heard me shaking?

Now fast forward to June 2016. I spotted a nice looking buck in early velvet that looked like he was going to grow into something good. Throughout the summer months he became a regular in our soybean field across from our house and better yet he was regular on the trails leading to and from my clover/alfalfa plot. Soon I started hanging my cameras around and almost from the beginning started getting some great photos. I could glass him almost any night from the loft and when other vehicles would stop and glass he was never afraid and would not run off the field! He acted pretty bold. I have over 100 trail camera pictures of him. I have a clover/alfalfa plot that sits behind a cornfield in a shallow dip that cannot be seen from the road. The fact that the corn, my plot and a soybean field all corner together with a field road makes this a great spot.

I have a tripod stand that sits just into the woods on my plot field. The wind here is very predictable and the down drafts go just where they are supposed to, making it a great stand to hunt in many conditions.

September 17th, opening night here in Wisconsin, found me climbing in my stand at 4:30. It wasn't long and the deer started showing up, feeding their way to the soybeans. I recognized most of the deer from the photos I had gotten all summer.

At 6:00 sharp the Big 8 came into the field from the north, he was feeding with his head down coming towards me head on!! At ten yards he stopped and fed, offering no shot. As I stood, bow in hand, shaking like a leaf, he suddenly threw up his head on red alert, ear cupped forward and staring down the valley behind me. I strained to see what had him bothered and could see or hear nothing! After about 30 seconds of this he spun and walked away all stiff legged. I watched him stand inside the woods and stare downhill for ten minutes before leaving.

Oh well, I thought. He would be back. My photos all summer showed him regularly coming and going in the field. Sure enough at 6:30 here he came but behind me walking stiff legged and still staring downhill behind my stand but this time he had a two and half year old eight point buck with him. They walked ten yards behind me on full alert and headed down the hill. Once on the ledge that parallels the hill they turned and walked to the south. I never knew what had them bothered, but later that evening I did hear the squeal of something getting attacked, so...coyotes?? Or??

I ended up seeing seven deer on the plot with six of them being bucks! I had a camera set on the field and decided to stay out of there for a few days to let things simmer down. On my camera check the following day there was no Big 8 returning! But the others all were there. On my camera check Monday he was there but at midnight, he was always an early bird there! Tuesdays check showed he was there at 7:30 and was in and out throughout the night. Now was the time to act, the bean leaves were drying down fast and losing their appeal that along

with a front moving in bringing with it a few days of rain and warm temps. So on Tuesday, September 20th, I headed for my tripod stand.

The temperature was 73 degrees. Much warmer than I like!! But given the circumstances I felt I better move today! Once settled in it didn't take long for things to get moving. I had a doe and fawn come out soon to feed on my lush plot. Soon after that two small bucks showed up. Things were looking up and my journal showed I had eight deer in and out with five being bucks that evening.

Then at 6:40 here he came out with a two and half year old eight pointer. They entered the field across from me and fed my way. The two and half year old kept harassing the Big 8. He would drop his head and approach him and the Big 8 would move off! I kept thinking, "Don't be a pansy, go after him and kick his ass!! You're twice his size." Three different times he was moved off and finally was moved in my direction. At one point he closed the distance to six yards, and then here came the two and half year old and dropped his head. But this time it worked to my advantage and he started quartering away. At twelve yards I drew and let her fly.

My first thought was that I under shot

him! He loped off the field and there was my arrow sticking in the ground. How did I miss? I was dumbfounded. I think I was so focused and concentrated so hard on "my spot" that when he jumped at the shot I assumed I under shot him.

I waited a bit then climbed down. When I got my arrow I noticed blood on the feathers but greasy tallow on the shaft! I walked to where he entered the woods, which was the same trail he entered and upon entering the woods I noticed blood on the trail.

I have a habit of taking my "dirty" broadhead off the arrow and wiping the

shaft before returning it to my quiver. I then always wrap my bloody broadhead in a hankie and put it in my fanny pack. I do this as much for safety as I do for not to contaminate my quiver. That's just me...

Once I finished this I stood back up and couldn't believe my eyes. There in the onsetting darkness I saw what looked like a big white belly. My shaky binoculars confirmed that! I bet you could hear the whoop and "Thank you Lord!".

Walking up to him I noticed I did hit him a bit low, but it put him down in less than 100 yards. He was everything I had expected and more. His inside spread was 17" and he has long symmetrical points. I don't score my bucks, but I will say he made my book! I couldn't be happier.

I shot him on my home turf, a planned out approach that worked out. Luck is always a factor and I will take it every time. I used my brand new Schafer Silver Tip takedown longbow that I had just received from Dave Windauer in June. I practiced diligently and used a homemade arrow with a hand sharpened Wensel Woodsman broadhead, just the way it should be. I didn't get him opening day but came very close. I did get him on my second attempt. I always comment, if I die tomorrow shooting bucks like this, I would die a very



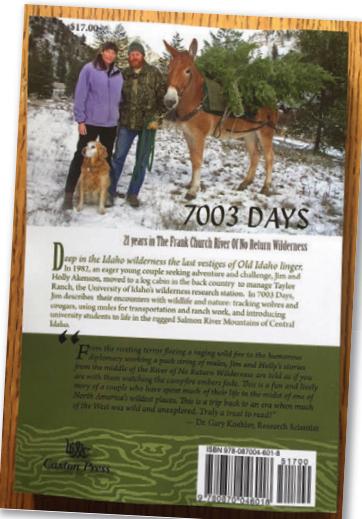
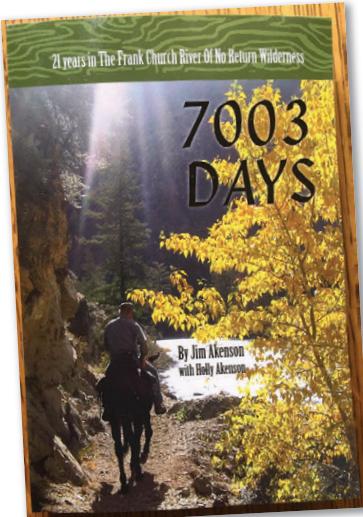
7003 DAYS

21 years in The Frank Church River Of No Return Wilderness

By Jim Akenson with Holly Akenson

Deep in the Idaho wilderness the last vestiges of Old Idaho linger. In 1982, an eager young couple seeking adventure and challenge, Jim and Holly Akenson, moved to a log cabin in the back country to manage Taylor Ranch, the University of Idaho's wilderness research station. In 7003 DAYS, Jim describes their encounters with wildlife and nature: tracking wolves and cougars, using mules for transportation and ranch work, and introducing university students to life in the rugged Salmon River Mountains of Central Idaho.

Jim's bowhunting stories are tied to the first bowhunters in the region...the Sheepeater Indians, or "Tukudika."



For ordering email the author at micaake@yahoo.com or contact Caxtonpress.com



Tom Vanasche and his Roosevelt elk.



Regular member, Joe Ellsworth, harvested this Brooks Range Caribou on September 7.

Have a great hunt this year? Share it with fellow PBSers!

Submit your favorite hunting photo to be included in the magazine!



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2017**

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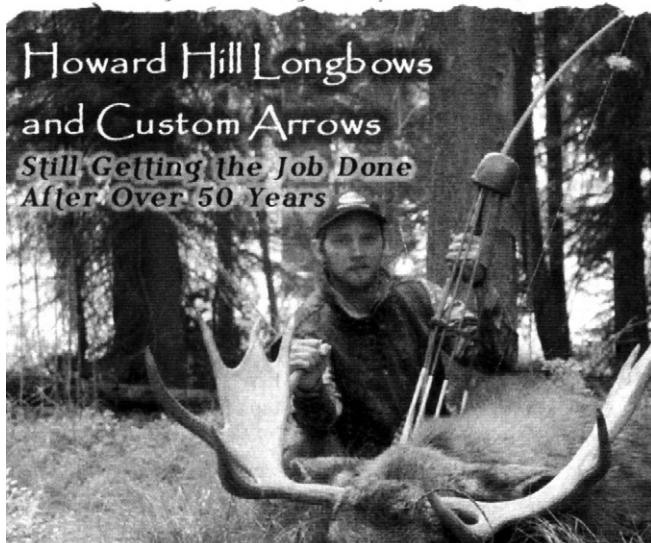
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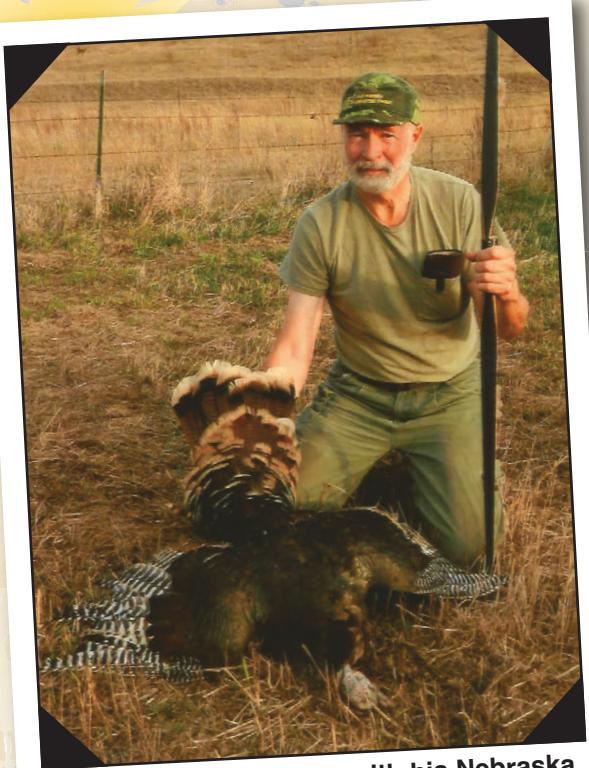
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Bill "Willie" Bonczar with his Nebraska turkey. He shoots with a Great Northern bow and Willie arrows.



Dennis Dunn took this bull moose in northern Alaska. The bull had a 53-inch spread and a total of ten brow tines. Each palm carried 10 scoreable points.



Ben Dodge harvested this nice Nebraska turkey in October on the Clintworth Ranch using a Great Northern bow.

Member Photos



Ben Dodge harvested this nice buck in October of 2015.

Hope for a Deer

By Herb Higgins

“Dad, there’s a deer,” whispered Hope.

As multiple thoughts rushed through my head, I noticed my daughter was hooking the wrist release to the string loop, intent to capitalize on an opportunity. My attempt to locate the deer in the hardwoods bottoms in front of us was futile. This deer was approaching from due west where limbs and some stubborn leaves blocked my view of an approach. When the deer finally walked into view my first glimpse revealed a mature, full grown animal and I was taken aback by his size. Here was a huge bodied, heavy horned, corn fed, Indiana whitetail in all his glory. He advanced down the wooded lane with a swagger that stated he was king.

I was a bit concerned because Murphy had played a hand in the deer's approach from the west and there was only a small window in which Hope would have cover to draw her bow. As the buck approached the small open field we overlooked, his casual demeanor changed due to a swirling wind. I whispered to Hope that she needed to wait until the buck was behind a tree before she drew her bow. She nodded in acknowledgement, intently focused on the unfolding events.

This buck, closing the gap, was the “Holy Grail” of deer in our neck of the woods. His rack mirrored his body size – BIG! I reflected back on the events that had transpired, leading to our current situation of hanging in this particular tree with such a majestic animal approaching. First there was the decision that my daughter had made to bowhunt this season, second was the miss that she was still feeling the sting from, third was her decision to pass on an opportunity at a spike. And finally, there was my one-sided affair with my favorite weekend meteorologist on the local television station. (Thanks Bryce for assuring me that I am not the only hunter that has such fond feelings for women that are major players in guiding my stand choice decisions.)

Hope had spent several years of “learning the ropes” before finally experiencing

success in harvesting a deer with a firearm the previous year. Her continued resolve to stick it out even through the cold last day provided her with a sense of satisfaction and tasty table fare that she continued to remind the family she had provided. Hope's expressed desire to hunt with a bow was not a surprise. After explaining the bow season is three months of hunting and brought a whole new set of mental and physical challenges versus the limited three week gun season there was little else I could convey except to offer her a firsthand experience. Spring found us acquiring and setting up equipment. Summer saw us both practicing and having frank discussions around the responsibility that we as hunters must hold ourselves to. The finality to summer was punctuated by some time in the woods adjusting stands and clearing shooting lanes.

The season began sluggishly for us. Late October found us overlooking a saddle in a prime location for ambushing cruising pre-rut bucks. Dawn was cool and crisp and shortly afterwards, I heard and simultaneously eyed a deer with multiple tines heading in our direction. “Hope! Buck,” I stated. She stood and by the time she had her release attached and was positioned for a shot, the buck was already passing the first shooting lane. As the deer began to quarter away, he entered the last shooting lane. At the sound of Hope's release going off, I watched as the arrow flew high and wide, passing through the hair on top of the buck's neck. She had pulled the shot!

Later that same morning, a small spike buck approached. With a lack of action on behalf of Hope, I questioned her intentions. She whispered “I don't want the spike; I want another shot at the nine!” I chuckled as the spike spent quarter of an hour meandering around us, offering multiple opportunities. At Hope's prodding for me to take the spike, I responded in conflict to the guidance I was eagerly doling out. With Indiana's one buck limit, I was unwilling

to fill my antlered tag so early into the rut. In a future conversation, we discussed the difference between experience and opportunity.

Weeks later I attentively watched the forecast as weather girl Nicole extolled about the oncoming front early in the week. Knowing that cold weather drove deer to feed earlier, I engaged conversation with Hope on a planned evening hunt. The front moved through Monday night as predicted. On Wednesday, our designated evening to hunt, I spent a lot of time reflecting on the prevailing wind and a single stand stood out. When I was able to step away from work, it was toward this stand that Hope and I made our way.

Once we were secured in the stand, I pointed to Hope the most likely approach routes, expectantly telling her that does would be filtering through the travel corridor we overlooked. While waiting, Hope expressed regret for not taking a shot at the spike buck earlier. I was very pleased with her maturation of becoming a bowhunter and her recognition of difference between gun hunting and bowhunting opportunities.

Our wait was short when Hope suddenly stated “Dad, there's a deer.” During my admiration of the approaching buck, I could not help but be impressed. His body size was as impressive as the sweeping antlers that adorned his head. My quick look revealed that this was a basic ten point that was heavy in both main beam and in protruding tines. Murphy's play had the buck doing the unpredicted, approaching from a pasture to the west. Hope's position had allowed her to catch the flash of the buck as it jumped the fence. Things became more interesting as Hope was successful in using the strategically located tree in front of us as cover to draw her bow.

The buck paused briefly behind a branch of limbs that blocked any shot. He turned quartering with nostrils flaring, looking into the woods behind us. Just as quickly he exhaled deeply and turned to continue his travel. As he cleared the

branch, I asked Hope if she was ready. Her nod was followed by my soft voice grunt. The buck stopped in mid stride and Hope triggered the release. The arrow struck with a resounding thump and the buck leaped away. I witnessed the spinning arrow strike an appropriate distance behind the shoulder just above mid-body. However, the protrusion of arrow at the buck's retreat left me to question an exit wound.

The buck's departure from the scene was noisy in the quiet evening. He quickly crossed the wooded bottoms angling diagonally up the far side and finally out of sight across a flat bench. A few seconds of silence were followed by a loud ruckus. At the sound, I told her that I thought the buck was down. Hope's excitement was epic. She asked over and over, "Was it a good shot?" My reply of, "As perfect as it gets" was clearly reflected in her grin. Hope sat down, shaking from the adrenaline and excitement. With dusk approaching, I limited our waiting to 20 minutes, wanting to ensure plenty of daylight to assess the initial blood trail.

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Once on the ground, Hope counted 10 paces from the base of the tree to where the buck stood when shot. She expressed amazement that she could get that close to deer. I joined her on the ground where she was already engrossed in following the profuse blood trail. Though we knew his course, following the trail allowed for additional time to discern the story the trail told. Bright, red, frothy, bubbly blood clearly indicated a lung hit. Lung matter was also seen spattering onto some of the leaves. Fifty yards into the search the fletched end of the arrow was discovered. A quick lesson on putting this against a full length arrow to see the penetration allowed us to surmise that her shot had penetrated both lungs.

On the bench, where we had last seen the buck, the trail dumped out onto the adjoining pasture. At the fence, a mass of white hair could be seen. We deduced that this had been the source of the loud commotion we heard. As muscle function had begun to fail, the buck had not cleared the fence and became momentarily entangled. The hair that lay around indicated he had forcibly struggled through. The massive hemorrhaging that the broadhead had inflicted had made quick his demise, for not twenty yards into the field lay the magnificent animal.



Hope approached the downed animal and I allowed her a moment of reflection before I joined her and gave a congratulatory hug. After admiring the buck and properly punching her tag, Hope used my phone to share the moment with her grandpa. Her excitement at telling the story could not be overstated. After some celebratory photos, Hope took the lead on the peace work. We then headed back to the house to acquire transportation for this huge animal. Hope and I spent many enjoyable hours hunting during the remainder of the season, but unfortunately the deer remained out of range for both of us. However, the memories that were made that season will remain for a lifetime. *

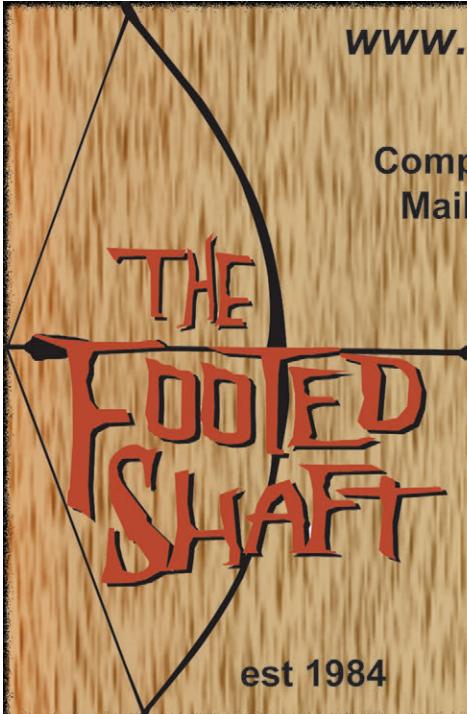
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Atawapiskat River Bears

By Emile P. LeBlanc

Little did we know as Greg Whelton and I drove almost due north headed towards our Northern Ontario Bear hunt from my home in Gonzales and his home in Abita Springs, that we would miss the great Southeast Louisiana flood of 2016. We were acquaintances from a previous PBS bowfishing trip near Port Sulphur, Louisiana but by the time we got back home, we were almost kin!

Greg had bowhunted the Beteau Lake area last year for bear and was ready to get back to the remote fly in camp run by Eddie Guergis of "Eddie North's Attawapiskat River Adventures". I had won the auction for the trip at the PBS Banquet hosted in Florida and donated by Eddie. The 27 hour drive to Nakina, Ontario Canada gave us ample time to visit and discuss what we might expect on our ten day black bear hunt.

The one hour flight from Nakina Air Service took us 140 miles north, across some awe inspiring country covered with potholes, lakes and river systems, to

Eddie's remote camp. As a retired wildlife biologist, I attempted to try to imagine just how many ducks and other waterfowl this massive area could produce each year and the fact that a large portion of this country has never had a human footstep placed on it.

After arriving, getting settled and getting something to eat, we had a discussion about the bear hunting set up. Eddie was short-handed for help this year for bear camp. Greg and I were the only two hunters in camp for ten days. This meant Greg and I had the run of the place to ourselves. Now, I am not one to be pampered when it comes to my bowhunting and neither is Greg, so even though there were no bears on bait,

Greg and I had a unique opportunity to get out and earn our bears! The last bear on camera was a week ago so they couldn't be very far away. We headed out with bait and fish-

ing poles to check cameras, bait up several sites and do some fishing. We still had two days before the season opened and this would add to the adventure. We checked and baited five of the ten sites that first evening and caught several fish. Greg caught the first and last fish of the trip!

Eddie had hired Michael Laughlin to be our cook for the hunt and later found out that Mike was also pretty handy with a hammer. There is no shortage of projects to do when it comes to a remote hunting/fishing camp. Eddie and Mike would work on camp projects while Greg and I ran around checking bait sites, cameras and fishing. Mike kept us all fed up between projects during the day and we all relaxed, played a few hands of cards and watched TV on the big screen until it was time to turn in.

By mid week, Greg and I had baited and were keeping up with seven of the ten bait sites before we got hits on sites #4 and #5. We were both excited and pumped as we got back to camp to eat a late lunch, clean up and get ready for the evening hunt. Greg dropped me off at site #4 then continued to site #5 where he spent the evening on stand. We southern boys call it "Taking a Stand" while the Canadians call it "On a Watch."

I was set up and ready to hunt by 5:00 pm, nine yards from the bait drum in a ten foot ladder stand, with a large pine limb in front of me for added cover. The bear had hit the bait at noon so I was hoping he would revisit the site again before dark. I fired up the Thermacell and hung it on the stand to keep the mosquitoes, gnats and black flies at bay.

My wait was occupied by the presence of a couple of whiskey jack birds checking out the bait menu along with a couple of brown squirrels and a chipmunk scurrying around the area. Just at 8:00 pm, I heard what sounded like heavy breathing coming from my downwind side. A glance in that direction showed nothing but a moment later I heard it again and caught movement. Surely a bear would not be coming in directly downwind but here he came! Word is that these bears have little to no interactions with humans





and I was about to find out just what that meant! He made his way around a fallen tree root ball towards the tree holding the game camera where he sniffed the camera then proceeded to mouth the camera before moving on to the bait drum. After sniffing the fresh bait, he laid on his belly with his head in the drum like he was all alone.

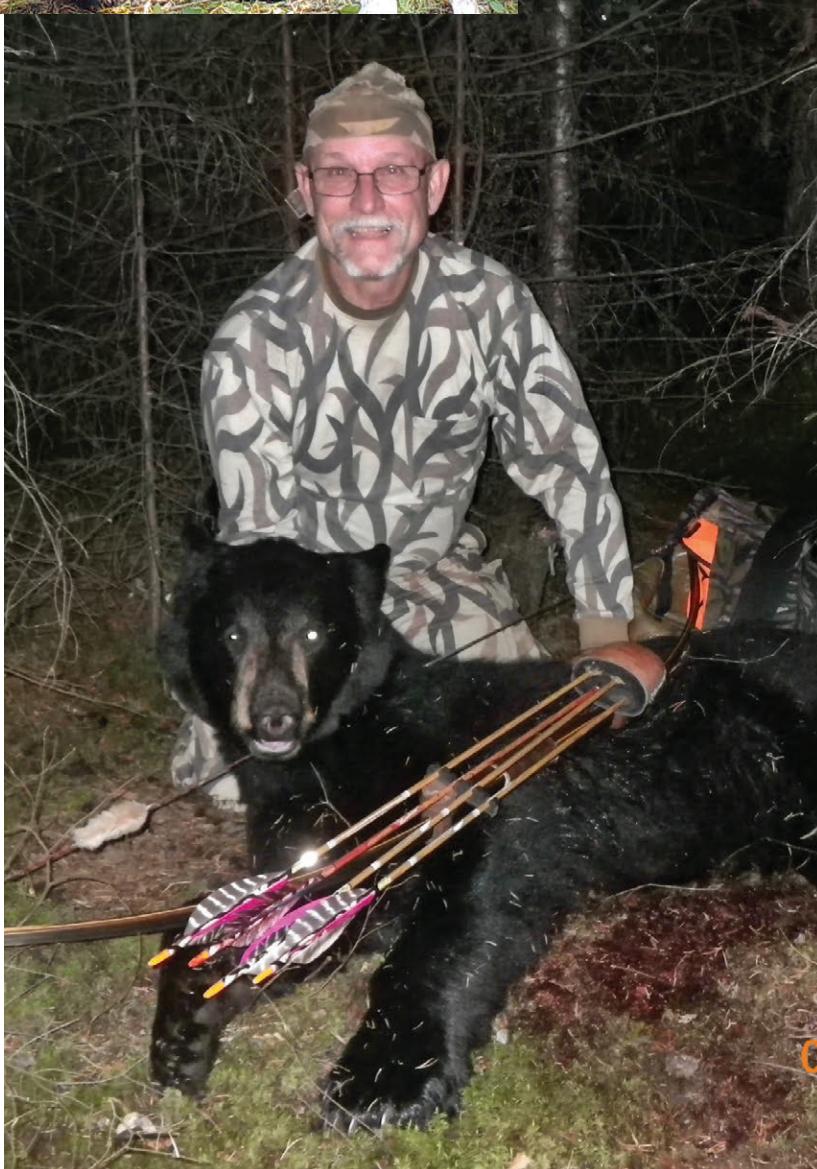
As I started to move my longbow from my lap to an upright position, my lower limb tip touched the metal stand making a metallic "ping." The bear jerked his head from the drum and looked my way for several seconds before shrugging it off and going back to feeding. I needed to stand for the best shot opportunity so I slowly rose from my seated position only to "ping" my lower limb on the stand again! AHHH! I thought I was done as he once again jerked his head from the drum and stared in my direction. Of course, I froze and could not believe that he was still there. As he put his head back into the drum, I decided to take the shot as his chest area was open. The shot was tight behind his right shoulder but just grazed his chest low. He jerked his head out and stared my way for a couple of seconds then stood up and walked my way looking for the source of the distraction.

He stood facing me at six yards trying to figure out what had just happened while I gingerly got another arrow from my quiver and nocked it as quietly as I knew how. After several seconds, he started to turn back towards the drum. I started my draw which he heard and turned back facing my stand and continued looking in my direction for the source of the noise. The arrow moving across my leather rest caught his attention. This time he looked up at me! Thankfully, he could not make any kind of form out of my ASAT camo behind the large

limb crossing in front of me. Finally, as he turned for the third time, I came to full draw and released as he reached the broadside position. I watched the arrow as it hit him just behind the rib cage and off he went past the drum and down the trail. I caught a glimpse of my arrow out of his left side. I listened as intently as I could at the direction of his exit, hoping to hear the death bawl that did not come. Of course, now the replay in my mind made me wonder if I had hit him too far back for a gut shot or maybe a liver hit. I waited for about 15 minutes to settle down before contacting Eddie back at camp with the radio that I had just shot

a bear. He and Mike arrived about 30 minutes later to help track the bear.

There was blood where he was standing when I shot and enough blood down the trail to follow pretty easily. My arrow was about 30 yds down the trail with good blood on it too. We teamed up on the blood trail down the ridge along the trail without much trouble until the blood stopped. We looked ahead and down a couple of other trails but no blood. I stood at the last blood looking around and noticed a tree through the brush with blood on it. Closer inspection found more blood on a log that he had crossed headed up into a thick area. As I back tracked looking up into the thicket, I



could see his dark form laying in a small depression. He had traveled 117 yards before going down from the razor sharp old green Bear Razorhead. The arrow had hit him just behind the rib cage on his right side and exited right behind his left leg. Eddie and Mike loaded him in the sled and drug him back to the boat for the short trip to camp. Greg hunted til last light but saw nothing this evening and helped me skin and quarter my bear.

The next day, Greg was back on stand #5

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Atawapiskat River Bears

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by noon. Mike and I ran all the other bait sites and checked cameras. A hefty bear came on Greg by 4:03 pm. It was the bear we had on camera the day before. Greg took the shot when the bear got right and sent an arrow through him at nine yards. He ran straight over a fallen tree. Greg did not hear the death bawl from this bear either and called the camp shortly after the shot. The four of us went over to give him a hand tracking his bear through some very thick, brushy habitat. As we got into the brush, out of sight of his stand, we started finding blood. As the trail opened up a bit, the blood trail turned into one of the most awesome blood trails that I had ever seen. Greg's bear only made it 50 yards before going down across a fallen tree. Even with the use of a sled to carry the bear in, it was a tough job getting him back out to the boat through the heavy brush and fallen trees. The bear turned out to be a solitary 200# sow carrying plenty of winter fat. We got it back to camp and had her skinned and quartered before dark.

For the next several days, we fished and ran the baits and cameras every day just to see what would hit them and what was in the area. Within three days, three new sites had bears hitting the bait. Eddie called the air service to pick us up two days early as we had completed the task at hand and were ready to get home to survey the flood damage, even though neither of our homes had taken on any water. The drive home seemed to be at least twice as long!

This area sports some very amazing country with plenty of game and minimal pressure. Eddie's camp also caters to trophy

continued



pike and walleye fishing along with Eddie's passion, moose hunting. I have wanted to kill a moose for some time so it looks like my next trip north will be hunting moose with Eddie. *

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Still Hunting With Gramps

By Shad Vanatti

My grandfather, Mr. Robert Benson, not only molded me into the man I am today; he is also the reason I fell in love with archery and bow hunting. I had a very close relationship with my grandfather (I always called him Gramps, by the way). So that's how I will refer to him in this story, as well). He not only raised me, but for 35 years he was also my best friend. He never hesitated to take me with him to the woods, on the water or on Thursday night summer deer scouting rides to hang out with the guys. One of the most magical things he did was when he put a bow in my hands for the first time when I was 5 years old. I'm not sure that he could have realized how much that would change my life forever. From that moment on, I was hooked.



Gramps passed away on February 6, 2011, after a decade long battle with bone cancer. Shortly after his passing, I contacted Yana Robertson about talking to her father, Dick Robertson, to see if he would be interested in making a memorial bow for my Gramps. I had hung out with Dick and Yana at the Traditional Bowhunters Expo in Kalamazoo a few weeks prior and fell in love with the new Raven Styk Longbow bow that he had designed. One of my Gramps' favorite bows was his Robertson longbow. One that fellow PBS member and one of grandpa's best friends, Mr. Mike Helman, now owns. I wanted something special in this bow. More than just a tribute, I wanted to see if Dick would put some of my Gramps ashes in the glue strip between the bamboo and myrtle lams. Dick gladly agreed to this and I threw down the deposit to get the bow going. When Yana delivered it to me at Cloverdale, that June, I was awestruck with its beauty. It shot like a bow that I have been shooting my entire life.

After his passing, I sunk deeper into a depression that I was already secretly battling. I didn't know how to live without my father figure and best friend. Despite the unwavering support of my amazing fiancée, Stacey, and my children, I spiraled into the depths of a drunken depression. It is a place that I would live in for a few years. During that time, every fall, the Robertson and I were in the woods. All I wanted to do was take a deer with that bow; to try and tell myself that I was OK. I knew that I wasn't and a few animals suffered because of it. I lost the first three deer I shot with that bow. Not one of those was a risky shot. They were all less than 15 yards at bucks that were relaxed. The problem was me... I was not mentally there. I almost quit bow hunting. I kept talking to Mike and Stacey and my best friends, Tubby and Joe about my issues with continuing to hunt this way. I couldn't keep wounding animals and something needed to change.



That's when I admitted that I had a problem and I started going to therapy. That is also where this story picks up...

I wasn't hunting

October 5, 2014, found me a different man. I decided to take the Robertson on a walk through some very special woods. Long ago, I was given permission to hunt a tract of woods that gave birth to many firsts. It was where Stacey took her first deer. It was where my son, Chase, took his first deer. It was where Tubby took his first deer. It was where I took my first solo turkey. It was also one of the last tracts of woods that I walked with my Gramps. These woods hold a very special place in my heart and we were about to create another memory, even though I wasn't yet aware of it.

I was only out there to take a walk with my bow. I wasn't hunting. I wanted to check out the woods and see how things looked. I hadn't been out there for a few months and I wanted to scout for Chase and me to possibly hunt the following weekend. Slowly walking through the woods, I felt a calm that I hadn't experienced in a long time. A calm that was very welcomed. I decided to check out a stand that I put up the year prior on an oak ridge. There were acorns scattered all over the forest floor, along with lots of deer poop. There were also a couple of small rubs. I decided to climb up and check the stand out. Other than the seat being torn apart by one of the many tree dwelling animals, all was safe and sound. Despite →

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Still Hunting With Gramps continued

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the wind being completely wrong for that stand, I tied my bow to the pull rope and decided I was going to sit there and watch some Mother Nature TV for the evening. I climbed up, got situated, nocked an arrow and hung my bow on the hook. I was only there to sit and enjoy. Remember, I wasn't hunting.

The evening was beautiful. The bright sun coupled with the squirrels and the birds brought some much needed peace. It was good to be back. Not just physically back in the woods; but mentally back. I sat there in that tree completely at peace. No care or concern with killing a deer. No pressure. I was simply lost in a moment. I was reborn from the depths of a hellish depression.

I happened to glance at my phone. Stacey was texting me and asking if I was OK. She knows the head spinning that the fall woods had brought. After all the work I had put in to get better, she was concerned that being in the woods with that bow may cause issues. I told her that I was surprisingly well and I was just going to sit there and enjoy the evening. I had no intentions of trying to kill anything. After the previous few years of losing animals, I wasn't even about to try and shoot something unless everything was perfect. It had to be close. It had to be relaxed. It had to be perfectly broadside. These are scenarios that we bowhunters know don't happen often. It was 6:30pm when I sent that last text.

I heard a twig break behind me. Slowly, I turned my head to the right expecting to see another squirrel. I was shocked when I noticed antlers and he was only five yards behind me! I was so lost in the moment that I didn't even hear him walk in. Now, here I was, sitting down with my bow hanging on the hook and this beautiful buck was eating acorns right below me. I was all smiles. Remember, I wasn't hunting.

I decided to see if I could get away with

standing up. Slowly, I did the try to stand and raise your seat dance we all know so well. Expecting him to catch me at any moment, I was shocked when I was standing and he was still there eating acorns. Now to see if I could get away

with getting my bow off of the hook. Somehow I managed to do just that. All the while, he was moving about ten yards to the north and was under a lot of foliage. I still wasn't even thinking about shooting him. I knew at any moment I was going to be busted. I was just seeing what I could get away with. Remember, I wasn't hunting.



There is a giant oak tree and a few smaller ones about 15 yards in front of my stand. There is also a dead log a few yards past that. When I put this stand up, I considered anything inside of that log to be fair game. By this time the buck had made his way to the back side of that oak tree and just behind that log. He was around 25 yards out. He was a big bodied, beautiful seven point buck. I started talking to him. Stacey always thinks it's funny how I talk to animals. I was literally whispering my thoughts. I told him I wasn't there to hunt. That as long as he stayed behind that log, we would just enjoy the evening together. I was still expecting him to run at any moment. The wind was blowing from my back and hitting him square in the face. For reasons that I won't ever know, he ignored my talks and the wind. He started to cross the log and fed closer to me. I told him that as long as he didn't come inside of 15 yards

that we would continue to enjoy the evening together. He came closer and turned broadside...

As he turned broadside, I picked a spot and started to pull the string to cheek. He never stopped in my opening and walked back behind the big oak tree. I thought he had finally wised up to the situation and was walking away. I smiled again and thought of how cool this whole experience had been. No heart pounding trying to kill something episode. Just hanging out with nature and enjoying the moment. He was still slowly walking away and eating acorns.

Suddenly, he turned around and walked back to the opening at 12 yards. His shoulder was covered by one small tree. His stomach was covered by another. He was

broadside with his vitals exposed when he dipped his head to eat. Without thought; I picked a spot, hit my anchor and watched the arrow go right where I was looking. He ran about 40 yards and started to walk around in circles and fell down. No sooner than he hit the ground, he regained his footing and took off in what would be his final run. He was crashing through brush and I heard him hit water in the creek that ran behind me.

This was the point when everything flooded out of me; the deer, the shot, Gramps' ashes in my bow. All the emotion buckled my knees. I squatted in my tree stand and I cried. I cried a lot. Then I started to doubt what I thought happened. With all the bad things that went down in the previous three years of bowhunting, I started to doubt myself. I calmed myself and regained positive thoughts about what I knew happened. I called Stacey and through emotionally broken speech, told her what just happened. After we hung up and she said she was on her way, I also sent Joe a text. I knew that I needed help getting this deer out of the woods. It had to be someone who knew this journey and understood it. He said that he would head that way with his wife as soon as he got off of work. Not only would I need help getting the deer out, I am also colorblind and I always need assistance with a blood trail. I made a loop out of the woods in the opposite direction he ran and waited for their arrival.

Once they all arrived, I took them to

where I shot the deer. Joe's wife, Jami, quickly found my arrow. It was a clean pass through and the arrow was covered in bright red blood. I explained to them what the deer had done and the direction it ran. Then, it started to rain. I instantly had to fight off negative thoughts thinking that this was going to be like the others. That the rain was going to wash away everything and I wouldn't find it. Once again, calming myself, I knew what I had witnessed and knew that we would find him regardless of rain. Soon after, the rain stopped and Joe was still finding good blood. We followed the blood to the creek which verified what I had heard. That's when Joe spotted his body half out of the water on the opposite side of the flooded area that the beavers had created.

Wading through the cold and waist deep water didn't even bother me. I had finally done something that had been weighing me down for the past three years. I did what I used to do. I just went hunting with Gramps. The shot was perfect through both lungs and his final run was about 120 yards.

The drag out was nothing short of exhausting. Joe helped me get it close to the area where he could drive his truck back. I decided to dress it there. After the necessary work was completed; Joe, Stacey and Jami went back to get the truck and my

bow for pictures. I decided to drag him the last 50 yards to the lane by myself. Once there, I shut off my light and sat beside him in the dark. Reflecting, tears started to roll down my face. This moment was only momentary but it was also forever. I gave my thanks to the beautiful seven point buck and my Gramps for putting that bow in my hands so long ago. I needed this moment. I needed the alone time with the deer and my thoughts. I needed the tears and to know that I was going to be ok. I needed to know that I could still go hunting with Gramps.

The Bear Take-Down

The 2015 Indiana archery season snuck up on me. I was preoccupied with Stacey's health issues and wasn't focused on early season scouting. Around the middle of September, I strung my Robertson up to release some stress and shoot a few arrows. After a few shots, I decided to get Gramps' old 1970's Bear magnesium A riser bow out of the case and put it together. This was his favorite hunting bow and he gave it to me about five years before he passed away. I've always loved this bow and I shoot it really well. Carrying it in the woods is like hanging out with an old friend. After putting it together, setting the brace height and making sure everything was good, I went outside to shoot it. I had some arrows that my friend, Alex Roche, made me a couple of years prior. These are absolutely stunning wood arrows that are fletched with real turkey feathers and equipped with original Woodsman broadheads. I grabbed a few of the arrows and they flew like they were made for each other.

Right then, I decided that was the setup I was using for the deer season. The romance was going to be high with this one.

October 18, 2015, found my son, Chase, and I sneaking into the bottoms of one of my favorite hunting areas. I am very fortunate that my soon to be in-



laws have some very good deer hunting woods. I am also very grateful that they allow us to hunt there. They are not hunters and have never let anybody hunt their land. That is one of the reasons that the land is so good to hunt. For a small tract of land, it really produces a lot of deer. My Gramps always told me that it doesn't matter how much land you have to hunt, you only need the perfect 20 acres. That perfectly describes this property.

After getting Chase situated in his ladder stand, I snuck off to my favorite set up. It is a double tree that intersects three different trails. My stand is about 16 feet off the ground and offers 15 yard or less shots on all of the trails. The area is really thick with bush honeysuckle and long range visibility isn't an option. The deer really love this area and I have a lot of great memories while hunting this spot. In a couple of short hours, another great memory was about to be created.

Around 6:30pm, I heard something in the creek that was about 30 yards behind me. There are a lot of raccoons in this area and I frequently hear them in the creek. I wasn't paying much attention to the sounds until I heard a couple of twigs break. I was already standing and I slowly turned my head to the right to see what was walking towards me. My pulse quickened when my eyes locked on to a beautiful 130" nine pointer. As he was walking towards my set up, I reached up and removed my bow from the hook. At 15 yards, he suddenly stopped and started looking around. He was coming from behind me and the westerly winds were blowing my scent directly to him. He never looked up at me in the tree but he knew something wasn't right. Slowly, he turned around and walked back the way he came.

Chase was about 100 yards away from me and it was too ~ cont. on page 40

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Still Hunting With Gramps

continued

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thick for him to see what was going on by my stand. I sent him a text telling him about the buck. I was hoping to keep him attentive during this last hour of daylight. I was sure that knowing there was a big buck within 150 yards of him would do the trick. He said that the squirrels were driving him crazy and he would keep his eyes peeled.

As my body started to calm down from the excitement, I heard that unmistakable sound of a deer walking towards me from the south. Straining my eyes to see what was walking; my pulse quickened when I noticed it was a small racked buck. I decided right then that I was going to shoot it if I was given the opportunity. He was walking steadily on a trail that crosses in front of me at ten yards. His head was down like he was trailing a doe and as he walked into my opening, I started my draw. He stopped briefly as I hit my anchor and let the string slide from my fingertips. I was instantly upset with myself as I watched the arrow disappear behind the ribs. In all the excitement, I'm really not sure that I ever picked a spot. He ran a quick loop around me and stopped. He was walking slowly and acting like he was sick. I quickly nocked another arrow as he was only about 25 yards away and I was hoping I might be able to sneak one into his chest if he gave me the chance. He walked towards the creek and stood there looking at it. Suddenly, he took off across the creek to the east and crashed through the woods. Then all was quiet.

Chase heard the commotion and was blowing up my phone. After a few minutes, I called him back and explained what had happened. I told him to sit there until I got to his stand. He did just that. Replaying the episode in my mind, I was really upset with what I had done. I never want any animal to suffer; especially one at my expense. I lowered my bow once it got dark and avoided the area of the shot as I made my way to Chase. We quietly snuck out of the woods. I could hear the words that my Gramps always said to me if I was unsure after a shot. He would always say "when in doubt, back out." The old man was still speaking to me...

After making some phone calls and deciding to give the animal some time, Stacey and I met up with Eli Hendricks to help

with the tracking. Arriving at the stand, Eli found my arrow lying right where I shot the deer. It had passed completely through and was lying on the ground. It also confirmed what I had thought; it was covered in stomach stench and matter. Once again, we backed out and made plans to meet again at daybreak. I knew that as long as we didn't jump it and the coyotes stayed off of him, that he would bed down.

Meeting at sunrise the following morning, after a sleepless night, we were joined by Mike Helman to help with the tracking job. Thinking we may be on a body search, I wanted all the help I could get. We quietly walked back to my stand and showed Mike the arrow. I told them the last place I saw the deer standing and we walked to that spot. I was surprised when Stacey and Eli quickly found blood. We crossed the creek and headed east on the blood trail. About 60 yards on the other side of the creek, I noticed the buck on the ground. He had only made it about 150 yards. Walking up, I saw his chest move and my heart sank. He was still alive but was struggling for life and didn't have the strength to move. I quickly placed another arrow through his lungs and walked away to let him go peacefully.

I was so upset with myself that the animal had suffered, because of me, throughout the night. However, I knew that I had done the right thing, after the shot, by not pushing him. Thankfully the coyotes stayed away and he was at as much peace as he could have been. I sat beside him, ran my fingers over his coat, gave my thanks and told him I was sorry for making him suffer. He was a three point buck with a long spike on one side and a fork on the other and dressed at 125 pounds.

None of us ever (hopefully) want to put a bad shot on any animal. It does happen and how we handle the situation, after the fact, is of the utmost importance. I am grateful for the guidance of my Gramps, his words when I needed them and his old bow to create another memory that will last a lifetime. This buck's antlers now reside on my work bench where I build and sharpen my arrows to remind me of another day that I was still hunting with Gramps.

The Magic Of November 4th

The 2016 Indiana archery season approached with me looking for a new challenge. My friend, Dennis Jackson, had made me some special arrows to hunt with.

They were cane shafts with hand tied turkey feathers and obsidian heads knapped by Dennis. They shot like a dream from my Timberhawk longbow. I couldn't have been happier with this set up and I was looking forward to spending time with it in the fall woods.

I am not a typical deer hunter. I don't really care about killing big bucks. I enjoy my encounters with them and I normally won't pass one up if I am given the opportunity at a good, close shot. It has happened on more than one occasion though. I love to hunt for bucks but antler size is not an issue for me. For many a moon, I have been about the romance of the hunt... the meaning... the journey. I credit most of that thinking to being raised by my Gramps and having PBS Regular member Mike Helman as a bowhunting mentor since I was a child. They are all trophies, in my book, especially when using a bow.

The middle of October, since my Gramps passed away, always leaves me struggling. October 12, 1936, was the day he was born. He and I, given the chance, would always go bowhunting on his birthday. A huge part of my depression was caused by the lack of having coping skills. That doesn't sound like a big deal until your world flips upside down and you don't know how to deal with it. During my battle with recovery from depression, I had started running. I fell in love with trail running; more so, ultra running (distances over a marathon). Much of my time in the past few years has been spent running. It has helped me become sober and is a great tool with battling depression. In early September, I completed the Hallucination 100 mile trail race in Michigan. That race, and my abuse to my body past, had left me with a hip injury. So, with not being able to run while it heals to help cope with normal life stress, I was really struggling by the time mid October had rolled around.

Around the third week of October, I was doing some early afternoon shooting in the backyard with the Timberhawk and cane arrows. I was having a rough day and it was helping to take my mind off of things. I decided to string up the Robertson memorial bow and shoot a few with Gramps. I hadn't shot this bow since late September of 2015 and I hadn't hunted with it since the 2014 season. It didn't seem to matter. That bow just shoots where I am looking at. I don't know if it's Dick's great bow building or the extra mojo of my Gramps ashes in the bow limbs, but I shoot that bow without thought. It's exactly what you would want in any weapon. Right then, I made the decision to take this bow back in the woods. I got the arrow box out that had



the arrows in it that I made to hunt with this bow: Gold Tip traditional carbons with 200 grain VPA terminators on the front. After shooting them and making sure everything was still good, I put the file back to them and made sure they were sharp. I could instantly feel a calming coming over me.

November 4th found me wide awake at 4:30 am. I had no real reason to be up that early but my body said it was time to start moving. I had the option of going to work and making some extra overtime money but something kept pulling me to the woods. This was an optional work day so I showered, made some breakfast, enjoyed a cup of coffee and decided to go sit in the woods. The mind and body were firing well and I was grateful for the peace. While enjoying my breakfast and coffee, I logged on to Facebook. Something I had been avoiding for the past few weeks because of all the political rants. Dennis Jackson had posted how he loved November 4th and it was always his best day of hunting. He had pictures of all the deer he had taken on that day. With a short drive to the woods and plenty of time on my hands before daylight, I finished my coffee and read his stories.

I arrived at my future in-laws property around 7am. Legal shooting light wasn't until 7:50am. A cold front had moved in

and I was grateful for the cooler temps and break from the bugs. My stand choice wasn't that far of a walk so I took my time getting dressed and made sure I had everything together for a long sit. I had nothing to do so I planned on staying in the stand until around noon and just enjoying the morning. After a couple of practice shots under the light in their front yard, I was ready for my slow walk to the stand. I had planned to sit in what Chase and I call the fence stand. It's about 15 yards from an old fence opening. Most of the fence has been down for a lot of years but for some reason the deer still walk around the old corner post where a gate once stood. After climbing up and getting situated, I could feel the wind was wrong. I took out my wind checker and watched the white powder confirm it. I lowered my bow, unhooked my harness and moved to my favorite stand; the double tree.

It was already daylight by the time I was situated in the double tree stand. I looked at my watch and it was 8:05am. The leaves were really crunchy and I decided to do a couple of grunt calls to make up for my noise. Not ten minutes later, I caught antlers moving through the bush honeysuckle towards me. My eyes widened and my pulse quickened when I noticed it was the big ten pointer from the trail camera

pictures. As much as I don't care about shooting big bucks, they still get my blood pumping. He was a beautiful typical ten point in the 150" range. I removed my bow from the hook and readied it for a hopeful opportunity. He was on a trail that intersects in front of my stand with two other trails. He stopped about ten yards from the tree and was quartering towards me. He looked around briefly, looked up at me in the stand and slowly turned around to walk away without ever offering me a shot. It was another close encounter with a big buck from the double tree. I wasn't upset that I didn't have a chance to shoot him. I was really grateful for the chance to be that close to such a beautiful animal. He won that round. Well played, sir. Well played.

No more than ten minutes later, I heard grunts and something coming through the creek that is behind my stand. I was straining my head and eyes to the right to see what was coming up behind me; it was the deer I had been waiting 28 years for. It was another deer that Chase and I had pictures of. It's a buck that had about 7" straight spikes. For some crazy reason, I have always been fascinated with straight spike bucks. I remember vividly seeing my first one when I was with my Gramps at 13 years old. Then, when I was 16, I missed one with my bow. I have never had a chance at a straight spike since then. Of all the deer that we had pictures of, a few being really big bucks, this was the deer that I was hoping I would have a chance at.

He was moving to my right and I wasn't sure if he would even walk in front of my stand. Once he got to the trail that runs in front of me, he turned left and came walking in. I readied for the chance. He stopped broadside for maybe two seconds in the exact same spot that I shot my buck a year prior. In one thoughtless moment, my finger hit my anchor and my arrow vanished through his chest in the exact spot I was looking at. He took off towards Chase's ladder stand and I was sure that I heard him crash. The shot looked absolutely perfect. For the first time, in a really long time, I was confident in what I had seen.

After calming down, I called Stacey to tell her I just shot the spike. She said she would get ready and be there shortly with our 18 year old daughter, Kayla. After we hung up, I called Mike Helman. He knew how fascinated I was with spikes and how long I wanted the chance at one. He asked about the shot and I told him it looked perfect and I thought I heard him go down. He said he would get dressed and come there to be part of the recovery. Twenty minutes later, I lowered my bow, unhooked my harness and snuck out

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Still Hunting With Gramps continued

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of the woods in the opposite way the deer had run. Being colorblind, I learned early on to avoid the shot area and the possible blood trail. I don't see blood very well and I don't want to mess things up for those who help me recover the animals.

Mike, Stacey and Kayla arrived shortly after I got back to my car. I couldn't quit smiling because I knew that I had put a good shot on the deer that I had wanted. We walked back to the stand and Kayla quickly found my arrow covered in bright red blood. Sign was everywhere and the trail was really easy to follow in the bush honeysuckle that he crashed through. With them on the blood, I stepped to the side to look ahead of us where I thought I heard him crash. I could see the white belly and couldn't believe how it all played out. He was seriously down within seconds of the shot. It still amazes me, even after 25+ years of bowhunting, how quickly a well placed arrow will put a large animal down. After hugs, congratulatory handshakes and pictures, I dressed the deer and started to drag him back to the lane. He dressed out just shy of 140# and I had him caped for a shoulder mount.

Time For Change

As much as I have enjoyed all the adventures with these two bows, and I know

there will be more to come, I feel it is a healthy time for me to put them away and move on to a new chapter. I

have found out through these gifts and time spent reflecting, that these bows aren't what keeps me hunting with Gramps. He is with me in everything I do, regardless of what I am carrying. His words of advice and his calming voice when I am struggling are ever present in my thoughts. Therefore, I will be starting a new hunting chapter in 2017. It will be one that is about growth, about change, about moving forward, about a new journey.

I met Tracey and Dave Balowski of St. Joe River Bows right before my Gramps passed away. In that time, we have become good friends. I have always loved the bows that Tracey builds and I shoot them really well. She knows my story and we have a bond that is bigger than traditional archery. Stacey and I have even been welcomed guests to stay in their home before a race in Kalamazoo; a race that Tracey and her daughter also ran with us. She will be building my new bow with the only instructions



being a one piece recurve, a specific grip that I like, 62" and 50 or so pounds at 28". The woods she uses and anything else she puts on the bow will be up to her and a complete reflection of how she views our friendship through her art. I'm really excited about this step in my journey and the memories that will come from it.

I really feel that sometimes we are handed gifts that are ways to show us everything will be OK. It could be something like a new found friendship or simple visit from an animal while sitting peacefully in the woods. If we slow down to look at these moments and reflect; we can appreciate all of them for the gifts they truly are. I am grateful for all of the moments that I have had with my Gramps; during his physical time here and the moments that I feel him still with me. I know that even while carrying the new recurve in the woods, I will still be hunting with Gramps. *

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Long Time Coming

By Bill Graves

I am always amazed at how friendships are formed. I first met Steve Hohensee way back in the mid 90's when he was giving a seminar on bowhunting Alaska at a United Bowhunters of Missouri event. I was serving as a U.S. Army drill instructor at Fort Leonard Wood at the time and after seeing Steve's seminar I was hooked and I had to do whatever it took to get to Alaska. I was successful in my quest to get to Alaska and took everything I learned that day from Steve and hit the ground running.

After that meeting in Missouri some 20 years ago Steve and I developed a friendship via the internet chatting with one another about getting together to hunt, and wishing one another happy birthday on our mutual day of birth. Those hunts never came to be, as it seemed that something always got in the way, the war in Afghanistan being one of the major factors. After retiring from the Army I moved back to my home state of Texas, but soon Alaska was calling my name and I had to answer. I moved back to Alaska after securing a job with the Department of Defense and once again I was in the land of my dreams.

I had spent two tours of duty in Alaska as a soldier and spent as much time as I could, hunting with the bow and arrow. I was mostly successful on my hunts except for my quest for a grizzly bear, I had several close encounters, but as it goes with bowhunting things did not always fall into place. I was happy to be back in Alaska again and patiently waited to become a full fledged resident again.

Steve and I spoke about doing some hunts together prior to me becoming a resident, but as before things did not seem to work out for some reason or another. One day while at work I received an email from Steve asking if I would like to come to his home to hunt bear with him, our mutual friend Dr. Ben Pinney and a friend of theirs, Luke. To me Steve's question needed no thought, so without hesitation, I dropped what I was doing, called Steve and began formulating a plan. After getting the dates down for the hunt, I approached my boss explaining that I needed to go on this hunt. He honored my request and wished me luck on my upcoming bear hunt on the Kenai Peninsula. Steve had my blood

pumping and my mind racing by sending me trail camera photos of some of the big bears he had been seeing in the area. I was more than ready to head south to the Kenai Peninsula on what was to become a great hunt with great friends.

The time from when Steve and I solidified our plans to the time that I started my drive to Steve's home seemed to pass slowly, but the day finally arrived. It took very little time for me to pack my truck because one never knows when an opportunity may arise to go on a quick hunt while living in Alaska, so I was always prepared.

As I drove south along the Parks Highway and then ultimately on to the Seward Highway, I took in the beautiful scenery that made the hours of driving seem like minutes. I soon pulled up to Steve's home and was in awe of the beauty that surrounded his home. Both Steve and Ben were outside as I arrived. Steve was tending to some needed task and Ben was on top of Steve's wood shed honing his downward angle tree stand shots. I was elated to see both of them; it had been too many years. The last time I saw Ben he was just a young teenage boy and now standing before me was a man. We spent the next couple of hours catching up and listening to one another's stories and getting my gear in order. After eating supper we jumped into the truck and headed out to drop off Ben for his evening hunt and for Steve to show me where my stand was located.

We were hunting grizzly and black bear over bait, the ADF&G decided that they would open grizzly baiting in a few Game Management Units across the state and our GMU was one of them. I was immediately impressed with our hunting area as we climbed higher and higher up the mountain until we came upon a shelf near a small stream. I thought to myself that this was the best looking bear area I had seen in awhile and could not wait to get into my stand. Steve waited till I was safely in my stand and then gave me a few words of encouragement and silently slipped back down the mountain. The mountain side was silent except for the breeze rustling the leaves of the huge cottonwood trees that surrounded me. I settled into my stand, got my gear into order, nocked an arrow, took a few

draws to loosen up my muscles and then settled in with great anticipation as the images of big bears filled my head. I saw bears while on the stand almost every time that I sat, but none of them offered me a chance at a shot, either it was a wrong angle, too far, or an obstacle was in the way such as a tree. None the less I was having a great time and had plenty of time to get a chance at a bear on my ten day hunt.

Times away from the stand were spent solidifying our friendship, making new friends and enjoying the great meals prepared by Steve's wife. One day while sitting around the house Steve asked me if I wanted to stalk a black bear that was up on the side of the mountain behind his house. Without hesitation I grabbed my day pack, bow and arrows, marked the bear and headed up the mountain. I slowly made my way through the alders to a point where I thought that I could see the bear, but there was no bear. Later after I came off the mountain Steve had told me that the bear had taken off well before I even got to the base of the mountain, oh well, nothing like a little exercise.

We had been hunting several days when Ben was the first to connect with a nice black bear. Ben was hunting in a location that was one of the scariest places to get into. In this location Ben had to bike in a couple of miles and then walk the rest of the way through some of the darkest timber I had ever seen in Alaska. Ben was even harassed by a brown bear as he walked out one night. The bear was following him and breaking brush and woofing the whole time. I hunted that site a few times, so I know how Ben felt. Each time I went in the pucker factor was way up. The notion of sneaking into a bait site, knowing that some 9 foot plus bears could be there to protect its food is somewhat unnerving. The final approach to the stand is on a slight rise and you cannot see the stand till the last moment, so that really added to the thrill. On one of my hunts at this location, I was put up the tree quickly by a very aggressive and very vocal bear that was approaching the stand in a hurry. I think that I developed a few more grey hairs in my beard after that encounter.

Luke and Ben →
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Long Time Coming continued

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hunted hard and were seeing bears, but the bears were being very wary. However, one night on the stand Ben encountered a bear that was less than wary. Ben told the tale of his close encounter with this bear. With the excitement of the hunt still coursing through his body, Ben explained in detail how the bear approached the bait site and then continued closing the distance to the tree that he was sitting in. At first he thought that maybe the bear was just going to check out the tree and go about his business, but to Ben's amazement the bear began to climb the tree that he was sitting in! As the bear climbed closer, Ben quickly decided that he needed to do something, so he slowly reached for his holstered .44 and began unsnapping the holster and much to Ben's delight that is all it took. After hearing the snap of the holster the bear decided that he wanted no part in that, so he headed back down the tree and over to an easier meal at the bait. The bear began to eat as Ben went through his mental process to prepare for his shot. The bear was quartering away when Ben released his arrow and upon impact the bear spun around, ran past Ben's stand, dropped off the shelf and out of sight.

Ben replayed the shot in his head and was thinking that maybe the shot angle was too severe and that his shot was maybe a bit too far back. Ben contacted Steve giving him the details of the shot and his concern. Steve told Ben to hold tight and he would be there as quick as he could. As Ben sat silently in the failing light of the evening, he replayed the past moments. As he waited on Steve's arrival he noticed that the woods were beginning to get darker than normal. Ben looked skyward and saw that the sky was an eerie, yellowish gray color and that ash was falling. The wind had shifted and filled the valley with smoke and ash from a large wildfire that was raging nearby. As Ben surveyed his surroundings he took in the beauty and eeriness of the evening sky. He was soon alerted to

Steve's arrival and with a hint of concern they began the tracking process; however those concerns were quickly put to rest when they discovered that his bear had traveled less than 100 yards.

After Ben and Luke had to return home to tend to life's ever going business, I continued to hunt. I spent my time hunting between my stand location and the one where Ben had taken his bear. I was seeing bear at my location, but really wanted to see the monsters that were coming to Ben's site. It seemed it didn't matter where I was or what time I was there the bears were at the location I was not. I tried to mix things up by going to different locations at different times, but it seemed that the bear were watching me and coming in when either I was not there or after I left.

The days were slipping away as



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I continued my quest for a grizzly bear and thought that maybe this was not the time. One evening while in my stand I was in deep thought when I caught movement off to my left. I quickly snapped out of my trance and locked my eyes onto a very large black bear sneaking up out of a draw. This bear was very cautious and took his time closing the distance. I made up my mind that I was going to take this bear and call it all good. He was a mere ten yards from my stand and was about to turn left which

would have put him in a great position for a shot, however, while I was in my deep thoughts I had placed my bow up on my pack that was hanging on a tree next to me. While keeping a watchful eye on him I slowly reached for my bow and in a snap he was gone. No doubt he was keeping an even more watchful eye on me.

The final day of the season quickly approached and I decided to spend my last evening in my stand. To be honest I did not have much hope of seeing anything as I was feeling defeated, but that feeling



turned around abruptly for I was not in the stand a mere 15 minutes when I saw my first bear of the evening. This bear had come into the bait without offering any shots, so I was happy to just watch the show. He had been at the site for about 15 minutes getting his fill and then just as he came he exited without giving me a shot.

I was still running what had just happened in my head when I looked up and saw a very large grizzly with two sub adults in tow headed my way. She got within 20 yards of my stand and then let out a loud woof and headed up the mountain with her two cubs in tow. I thought at that moment that nothing else would come in after hearing her woof a warning, however not ten minutes later from down the mountain came another grizzly. I got myself ready and into position as the bear approached, I was in awe



at the beauty of this bear. I told my friend Fred that I would love to take a nice blond grizzly on this hunt and there it was, a blond grizzly.

This was the moment I have been waiting for, a moment that I had played in my head numerous times. I focused all my attention on the place where I wanted to place my arrow. I blocked out everything else, concentrated and applied tension on my bow string. The process of drawing my bow as always seemed automatic and as I hit my anchor point, the arrow

was gone in a flash. I watched as my arrow covered the short eight yards to the bear and then slice through fur and flesh. The bear let out a low growl and spun towards my location and then down the draw. The bear stopped after running about 15 yards and then slowly walked up the mountain. I saw that she was hit well as there was an ever growing spot of blood on her side.

I settled my nerves as I watched her walk out of sight and sent Steve a message that I had shot a bear. Steve responded and told me to stand by and he would come to my location to help me track my bear in the ever waning light. Steve arrived shortly and after I climbed down I relived the story with him and we took up the trail with Steve covering me while I had my nose to the ground looking for blood in the tall wet grass. We had covered about 70 yards when Steve said, "Hey, is that your bear?" I looked up and sure enough there was my bear laying 20 yards ahead.

We approached my bear with caution and as I closed in

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Long Time Coming continued

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the final distance I was shocked as the bear roared and jumped to its feet albeit mortally wounded and to our delight ran away from us and bedded down again after covering 10 yards or so. I then regained my composure, slipped in close and placed another arrow into the bear. Steve and I were both elated and after the congratulatory handshakes, I tagged the bear and began the process of taking photos. Steve and I both agreed that it would be best to come back in the morning to skin and process the bear. A smart move because it was getting dark quick and we knew there were other bears in the area.

The night went by quickly and after a good breakfast, Steve and I headed out to recover my bear. The walk in was pleasant, but in the back of my mind I was worried that other bears may have gotten to my bear in the night. Those thoughts were soon washed away as we approached the bear and began the process of skinning and quartering. As we were putting the bear in our packs I told Steve that I wanted to pack as much of the bear that I could fit in my pack. I killed it and wanted to feel the majority of the weight on my back as we hiked down the mountain. I reveled in the weight of my pack as we made it down the mountain, my thoughts turned to the hunt, enjoying time with friends and the fact that I was very thankful for the opportunity Steve gave me to

take my first
grizzly bear. *



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A Little Kinky, But Oh So Sweet

By Ken Hoehn

The thing that winds my crank the most in bowhunting is taking game with equipment that I have made with my own two hands. I think there is a lot of truth in the statement "the amount of effort you put into something is directly proportional to the amount of satisfaction you get out of it." Making your own equipment certainly adds to the effort needed to complete the challenge. Many of us have reaped the benefits of making our own equipment, some to a greater degree than others.

For the most part, I have been hunting with homemade glass laminated longbows since 1982 and it has been a blast. For this hunting season, I was looking for something a little more challenging, something a little different.

I remember seeing a picture in a magazine quite a while back of Ron LaClair kneeling behind a deer he took with a snaky osage bow. That picture had a lasting effect on me. I thought that was really neat, taking a deer with a crooked, kinky bow. Maybe I could accomplish the same thing? I would make that a goal for this upcoming hunting season. With that idea in mind, I set out to see if I could be successful in this endeavor. I had taken deer in the past with homemade selfbows, but they were all straight limbed bows. Could I get the job done with a crooked piece of osage? There is something magical about getting an arrow to fly true to its mark out of something as kinky and contorted as a snake bow.

After a bout with colon cancer, I realized I am not bullet proof. If I wanted to do this, maybe I shouldn't put it off any longer? I have wanted to make a good snake bow for some time now, but every attempt has resulted in failure. I made firewood out of my first attempt. On my second try, the string refused to run through



Steve and Ken with the selfbow buck

the center of the handle when I strung the bow. I thought I had a winner on the third try. The bow was tillered on the tree to 27" (my maximum draw length on a good day). I was elated! I decided to take the dog for a walk and when I returned, I planned to take the bow out in the back yard and give birth to her by launching a few arrows. When I returned, I strung it up, drew it back in the garage, and it crystallized. Bummer, the agony of defeat. Now I needed more snaky wood.

It seems to me, the interest in selfbows has waned in the last ten years or so. It's almost impossible to find anybody selling staves at Denton Hill and it's even harder to find snaky staves. While visiting a friend, I noticed he had an osage stave laying above the rafters in his garage. I remember helping him split this batch of osage many years ago. I thought I could detect some snake in the bark of this stave. Since this gentleman had long since quit trying to make selfbows, I asked if I could try to get a bow out of the stave. I took this stave home with me. I remember this osage coming from Kansas.

I started working this stave and it didn't take long to see it was indeed snaky. I was in business. Now I had this stave and one other snaky piece of osage. During the summer, I fashioned two snaky bows. They

both shot great. I achieved good arrow flight out of both, and both bows shot where I was looking. One was 49 lbs. at my draw length. I backed this bow with copperhead skins and named her "Kattywampus." The other bow came out at 55 lbs. I backed her with western diamondbacks and named her "Snapple-puss." To me these bows have a personality and you have to give them a name. Both bows have cow horn tips. There are a lot of classy looking

bows out there, but in my opinion, none can match the look of a snake skin backed osage snake bow, unless it is a sturgeon skin backed yew bow.

Over the summer, I practiced with both bows and tried different arrow combinations out of both. The lighter bow favored 5/16" tapered cedars while the heavier bow shot carbons like a dart. I prepared a dozen shafts for each bow and put Magnus II's on the business end of all the arrows.

My season got off to a slow start due to a family visit by my daughter, her husband, and two of my grandchildren. They would be staying with my wife and I for the first two weeks of archery season. I got to hunt some, but not like other years. I took my son-in-law to the airport Sunday, so he could fly home to Flagstaff for work. I didn't feel as guilty hunting with my daughter and granddaughters at home. I planned to "escape" and sneak off to hunt with fellow PBS member Steve Riddle Monday evening. I sponsored Steve for regular membership and we have become good friends. We get together for hunts, shoots, and socializing. Steve owns land about an hour drive from me. I arrived at Steve's in the early afternoon. We chatted and made plans for the evening hunt. He suggested I sit the "gate stand". That proved to be a good choice.

The evening hunt →
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A Little Kinky, but oh so sweet continued

~ continued from page 47

was pretty uneventful until the last dwindling minutes of legal shooting time. I had only spotted a couple grey squirrels to this point. Then I looked back over my left shoulder, and here came a year and half old buck. I'm thinking, is he legal? In this unit bucks have to have two points up off the main beam on at least one antler to be legal. Then I noticed another deer coming behind. There was no doubt; this second buck was a legal shooter.

I immediately focus my attention on the bigger buck. I allowed the smaller animal to pass. When the bigger buck went behind a big maple with two leads, my bow was up and in shooting position, and drawn partially. When the animal cleared the big maple, he was broadside. I picked my spot, finished my draw, released the arrow and watched it slam into the sweet spot. I knew the deer was dead as he ran off. I remain quiet in the stand for several minutes.

Now the smaller buck came back and appeared to be looking for his buddy. The smaller buck was standing there staring in

and shortly reemerged to stare some more. I was pretty sure he saw and/or smelled the demise of his buddy.

I sent Steve a text to inform him of what just happened. We agreed to meet at his garage. When I texted Steve I didn't tell him I hit a buck. It was my desire all along to shoot any deer with the snake bow. Of course, here in western Pennsylvania, your chances are much better to shoot a doe. We returned with flashlights and had little trouble finding blood. It was a short blood trail to the end of the rainbow. There was my pot of gold, a beautiful two and half year old deer. I had accomplished my goal of taking a deer with a snaky selfbow, and it was even sweeter because it happened to be a nice buck and I

the direction of where his pal ran. He then disappeared into some cover

was hunting with a good friend.

I am pleased to inform you he is a tasty critter. This is the second buck I have killed on Steve's property. I hope I don't wear out my welcome by thinning his deer herd. Later in the season, Steve would kill a real nice eight point near his parents' home, and I would be able to assist in the recovery. I saved the brain and both of these hides. It is my intention to fabricate a useful piece of clothing from these two bucks. Maybe next year I can try to take a deer or turkey with the copperhead backed snake bow? Regardless, I'd say we both had a great season! ♦

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