

Official Publication for the members of the Professional Bowhunters Society

# THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE



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**Cover Photo by Rob Burnham.** All items in photo came from PBS Members - The Osage Self Bow was made by Walt Francis and donated to the 2020 Gathering auction, which Rob won. The leather quiver was made by Dennis Filippelli. The bowhunters cap was from Barry Wensel. The pack was from Bison Gear. And Rob made the Cedar arrows himself.

# THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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## President's Message

by Matt Schuster

matt@easterndynamicsinc.com

**W**hat a great time we all had in Reno! I won't spend much time on that since we have talked about it in email blasts and online but thanks again to all involved – my fellow members of Council, the numerous volunteers, the speakers, vendors, donors, and all the members who showed up to make the event a huge social and financial success. The next one will be even bigger and better. In case you have been stuck in the wilderness, we did announce that the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Lexington, KY will host our 2024 Gathering the weekend of March 14th-17th. A beautiful city with lots of attractions, Lexington is affordable and within reasonable driving distance of a huge percentage of our membership. Two years seems distant but it is never too early to put this weekend on your calendar.

One quick housekeeping announce-

ment – Council has voted to raise dues for Life Membership to \$2500 from the current \$1500 on August 1 so if Life Membership is in your plans, get a check on the way to the PBS office.

Before you know it, fall will be here and one of the highlights of my hunting season is the PBS Hunt on Blackbeard Island off the coast of Georgia the first weekend in December. This beautiful and unique place is open to an unlimited number of hunters. If you can make it, drop me an email and I will put you on the list and get you more information. The hunt is three days but if you travel from a distance and have more time, I can tell you a few other places where you can extend your trip and chase a few hogs. My guess is you will find a few other PBS folks to join you. Rumor is Joey Buchanan will host a winter hog hunt this year in Mississippi. I won't miss that one so watch for details if they are not out by the time this magazine reaches you. If you have never made a PBS Member Hunt, it is worth the effort, and I hope to see

you on a hunt or two this fall.

Anyone who is as serious about bowhunting as our PBS members knows about life and death. I have thought about that a lot the last few months because I lost my Father three days after returning home from the Reno Gathering, my Mother five weeks later, then a good friend, younger than I am who died in his sleep the same morning that my Mother passed. His wife called me on his phone and when I said, "Hey Joe!" she just started crying. If we live very long death touches us all so it doesn't make me special but it sure does make me appreciate life. As hunters we watch critters die more than most so we are familiar with what a brief bit of magic life really is. It can last too long for some like my folks while others like my friend Joe just disappear in their prime. While I would never suggest one neglect family, friends, or any serious obligation, this spring has reminded me how important it that we all live and not get too caught up in the unimportant and to prioritize the things that give us satisfaction

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no matter what those things might be. So if you have places you want to hunt, folks you want to hunt with, or any other bucket list items you are putting off - start getting after them if you can responsibly do so. As you tick them off, you can always add more, and

you will never regret the adventures you find.

Finally, we have a big election coming up with the offices of both President, and Vice-President open. If you qualify to apply for Qualified Regular Membership and want to vote in the election - get your application

in now. If you have questions concerning the qualifications or the process - Senior Councilman Preston Lay will be happy to get you whatever you need.

Best,

*Matt Schuster*

## Vice President's Message

by Terry Receveur

Terrance.Receveur@Taconic.com

**M**ost within the PBS ranks choose the most difficult method for hunting. Traditional archery hunting is hard! You carefully tune your gear, practice shooting often, and prepare both physically and mentally to pursue the game of your choice. We do this knowing that we often will come home empty handed. Getting close enough to game for an ethical shot, with a traditional bow, is very difficult. Unfortunately, when we do get close enough and a shot presents itself, we don't always hit exactly where we were aiming or there was some other unforeseen factor that caused an errant shot and possibly a wounded animal. It is the worst of our nightmares. We absolutely do not want to wound game, but it does happen. It has happened to me and to almost everyone. The question often comes up, "Do traditional bowhunters wound more game than other hunters?" I don't know the answer to that question, but I can surmise based on the difficulty factor that the answer is possibly, yes. However, I do believe that due to the short range nature of hunting with a traditional bow and the experience of those who choose this path, that wounding loss may not be significantly different than those with more modern technology (compounds, crossbows). I think social media and outdoor hunting shows have given modern bowhunters a false sense of ability and pressure to get a grip and grin photo for the "gram." I believe this results in shots at distances and situations that should not be taken, resulting in a higher percentage of wounded and lost game than it should be. However, a good modern bowhunter is very deadly, but I think they are the minority. The next question I hear is, "Then why don't you hunt with a weapon that has a lesser chance of wounding game?" I counter with the question, "Do you want to hunt game

or do you want to kill game?" If you simply want to kill something, then pick up a gun, crossbow, or even a compound bow. There is no question these tools will provide you a greater probability of having an opportunity to kill something than a traditional bow. If you are more concerned with the challenge of the hunt or giving the animal a more level playing field, then you may choose to pursue them via a traditional bow. If you do choose to hunt the hard way, then do so with open eyes of the possibility of going home empty handed and even to the possibility of wounding game. By no means does accepting the possibility of non-success or wounding of game absolve you of the responsibility to do all you can to prevent it. If you choose to hunt with traditional gear, you must accept the responsibility that comes with it.

It is very hard to accept the wounding of an animal and it results in intense self-reflection and even doubt. I would venture a guess that it is more noble and respectful to the animal to pursue them on a more level playing field, to give them a sporting chance of survival, versus them being sniped from long distances. I will also say it is a personal decision on what your motive is for hunting. Only you can choose the way



you wish to pursue game. Do it on your terms and not due to some Hollywood, sun tanned sport who promotes inches over pursuit. I believe most everyone who chooses to hunt game instead of simply trying to kill game will find much more satisfaction and joy in their hunt.

Aim small and miss small.

*Terry Receveur*

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I often sit and reflect on the bowhunting adventures that have unfolded in my past. Many of those were with PBS members. As I look forward, I'm certain many more will be planned. I'm proud to be a member of such a special group. At our gatherings and events, it's like a family reunion of sorts. We reacquaint with old friends and make new ones. I urge you to get involved and let the PBS fill your life with spirit. It's the heart and soul of bowhunting that has brought us together.

## Council's Report

by Preston Lay  
longbow@cimtel.net

Our membership is strong and growing. I will be penning an article on the PBS membership setup. Hopefully I can shed some light on the two tier (Associate, Regular) membership. I urge you to seek out the passionate few and either encourage them or pay their first year. Some may not remain members but many do. Even in this day and age of information overload, there are still bowhunters out there that haven't heard of the PBS. Some are confused by what it's about. Our membership will always be the best part of us. Any Associate member thinking of becoming a Qualified Regular please know the application is on the website. It can be filled out and sent electronically. I encourage you to consider doing that.

The last magazine was filled with nu-

merous pictures from across the ranks of our members. Thank you for sending those in. We all enjoy seeing those. Remember this is your magazine and it's your submissions that make it so great. I would like to say thank you to Harmony. She's the glue that binds the PBS together on the administration end. She does great work, and it would be tough sledding without her. Having said that, if you have any specific issues with the organization contact a member of Council. Those types of questions get to us anyway and it slows her down on the admin side. I say thank you members and I certainly appreciate the kind words from many of you. Always shoot straight and God bless!

*Preston Lay*



As of the writing of this column, spring is in full bloom and turkey season has either ended or is winding down. Many of you are packing for bear camp somewhere in the US and Canada now that the borders are open. Carp and other rough fish will be visible just under the water and make a challenging target. It's a great time of the year to be a bowhunter!

One of the many things that we all as bowhunters should be doing during the spring is getting into hunting shape, if you're not in shape already. Some weight training and car-

## Council's Report

by Sean Bleakley  
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dio will go a long way in helping you pack out a moose, climb that mountain to glass for sheep or just to drag a deer out of your local woodlot. I for one have gotten out of shape the last few years and I feel it has cost me in one way or another on several big hunts. Although I've had a few setbacks, I'm making it a priority to get out and hike, long walks, and some light weight training.

Another rite of spring, at least for me, is to take inventory of my hunting gear. Make sure that tree stands and climbing sticks are in good repair and safe. Arrows are fletched and tuned. New strings for bows and check shelf material making sure that it's not too worn. You do not want to wait until the last minute to do this

stuff. Scouting is done at this time. Trails are more visible, even as summer rolls in, I find that trails are beaten down through the brush. Hopefully I can find a shed antler or two.

Finally, the nicer weather brings shoots and rendezvous throughout the summer. They are not only a great place to shoot at unknown distances, but it's a really great place to run into a PBS member or two. The PBS usually has a booth set up. By volunteering an hour or two, you will not only help out the PBS but you will also get to know some of the finest people in the sport.

*Sean Bleakley*





## Council's Report

by Bubba Graves  
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I'd like to start my first Council report by thanking the Council for believing in me and asking me to run for Council. Furthermore, I would be amiss if I did not thank all who voted for me and to thank Andy Houck for stepping up and running for Council. Andy has done a lot for the PBS, much of which is behind the scenes. He was a worthy opponent and I look forward to seeing him run for Council in the future.

The PBS as we all know is the greatest group of bowhunters that many have not heard of, and I am proud to be a member. We as a group, have chosen to take on the responsibility of representing bowhunting in it's highest standards and to live by the standards set forth in our Constitution and By-Laws in Article II Purpose and Objective. Section I.

1. It shall be the purpose and objective of the Professional Bowhunters Society to:

A. Promote and maintain fellowship among persons who have a primary interest in maintaining professionalism in the field

of bowhunting.

B. Encourage and promote the taking of wild game by means of bow and arrow in humane and sportsman like manner.

C. Share with others the experience, knowledge and skills gained through application of proper shooting skills and hunting techniques.

D. Practice and promote good and safe sportsmanship in the art of bowhunting,

E. Encourage and support sound bowhunting legislation and to oppose legislation which is not consistent with its purposes.

F. Develop and maintain an educational forum to teach and promote the wise and safe use of our natural resources, the conservation of wild game and the preservation of its natural habitat.

Most bowhunters today, especially in the mainstream, just don't get what we are about and sometimes it doesn't hurt to remind ourselves why we joined the PBS. We are not here to beat our chest and to be selfish in our approach to enjoy our lifestyle. We as hardcore

bowhunters have not lost what we believe in. We know that the process of becoming an ethical bowhunter is not the speed wash setting on a washing machine. We still find the romance in pursuing game with the bow and arrow and believe that it is the love for our sport and not the lust that drives us.

To the new members, welcome. If you have any question that I can answer about the PBS, please feel free to contact me. I am your source for questions or concerns and for those members who have been Associate members for several years please consider becoming a Regular Qualified Member.

Finally, I'd like to remind all of us to be more involved in the PBS. Share your stories, mentor a young bowhunter, promote the PBS and recruit new members, attend an Odd Year Gathering and be an example for all to follow. The PBS has a lot to offer and is more than just a magazine. The PBS is it's membership.

*Bubba Graves*

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### Correction to PBS Magazine 2nd Quarter edition (2022)

In the 2022 Biennial Gathering Contest Winners feature, there was an error in the caption under Jerry Pierce Bowyers Contest. The caption should have read, "Jerry Pierce Bowyers Contest (not pictured) 1st Place Amateur - Greg Haskell"



## Chaplain's Corner

by Gene Thorn

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# The Song of the Bow!

**T**here is something very special about the bow. My longbows and recurves are beautiful to my eye and feel so good in the hand. They are so much more than the woods and fiberglass they are made of. I can assure you that when you have them and can't pull them, they are that much more appealing. I have now endured six and a half months of physical therapy after rotator cuff surgery to get to the place where I can start shooting a bow again. I have so missed my bows! The bow and arrow is one of the best good gifts that God has given us. All good things ultimately come from Him. The Bible even has a passage called the, "Song of the Bow". As David lamented the passing of Saul and Jonathan, he gave

this song to be learned by the children of Judah so that they would cherish the bow and be ready to do battle in the future. Israel therefore would avoid the disaster of not having archers available when they needed them.

**2 Samuel 1:17 Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son,**

**18 and he told them to teach the children of Judah the "Song of the Bow"; indeed it is written in the Book of Jasher:**

**19 "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!"**

**20 Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon— Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.**

**21 "O mountains of Gilboa, Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, Nor fields of offerings. For the shield of the mighty is cast away there! The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.**

**22 From the blood of the slain, From the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty.**

**23 "Saul and Jonathan were be-**

**loved and pleasant in their lives, And in their death they were not divided; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions.**

**24 "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.**

**25 "How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places.**

**26 I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women.**

**27 "How the mighty have fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"**

Saul lacked archers and succumbed to the enemy's bowmen. There is an old American adage – "Don't bring a knife to a gunfight." That is basically what happened. Throughout Scripture the bow is a symbol of power. Compared to a sword, which is a hand to hand close in weapon, the bow casts an arrow out to long ranges. The archer sees his target approaching in the distance, hones in on his movements and takes him to the ground before he has an opportunity to attack. Throughout history archers have turned the tide of battle in the armies of the world. The archers of Ghengis Khan swept those that resisted them. The longbowmen of England turned the day against France at Crecy and Agincourt. The sword of Saul fell short and the armies of Israel were defeated by the archers of the Philistine army. The bow requires more skill and strength of arm and has been the top end weapon of most of man's history. The Song of the Bow was a call to the young ones to appreciate the bow and never be without one.

As bowhunters we appreciate what our bows can do for us. In over five decades of hunting with bows I have fed my family many meals of wild game. I also think of all the shooting fun in my yard, stump shooting, bowfishing, archery shoots and archery rendezvous I have been to. Most of all, I cherish the precious people that through archery and bowhunting our paths have crossed and I have developed friendships with over the years. I own several bows that were made by or owned by friends that have left this life. Those bows are very special to me. I see the reflection of those men in each bow as I hold them in my hand. I relate to "The Song of the Bow". I have my own version as each of us does.

God has given us everything we need to thrive in this life. We need to recognize that the Bible contains the answers to all of life's questions, problems and a plan for living an abundant life here, and an eternal life in heaven. King Saul and Israel had all they needed to win the battle with the Philistines but Saul did not follow the Lord, He went with his own power. Israel had archers but did not value and use them. Let us not ignore or despise what the Lord has provided. Let us sing the Song of the Bow!





# 2022-2023 PBS Membership Hunts

Here is a current list of the planned 2022-2023 Membership Hunts:

## 1 October 2022

### Land-Between-The-Lakes (LBL) Kentucky

Land-between-the-lakes (LBL) hunt on the KY side from October 1-9 for whitetail deer and turkey. Thousands of acres of prime country to hunt. There are cabins for rent but also tent camping available, and unbelievable cooking! Contact Mark Wang at markhw19@yahoo.com if interested - pretty high capacity and the cabins are full already.

## 2 October 2022

### Northern Pennsylvania Deer Hunt

Northern PA deer hunt with Tim Denial and the Mercer County Bowbenders - come experience the hardwoods of PA with Tim Denial and friends in mid-late October. Stay at a nice campground with showers and hunt thousands of acres with Tim. Contact Tim Denial at zebdenial@gmail.com if interested.

## 3 October 2022

### Arkansas Ozark Hunt

Colby Farquhar is planning on grabbing a non-resident license for Arkansas this fall, and spending a few days hunting deer/bear in the Ozark National Forest near Fort Smith, AR. This will be a new area for him, so it may be a complete bust. But he wanted to put the invite out there if any other PBS members were interested in joining him for an exploratory hunt and some comradie around a campfire, sometime in the first ten days or so of October? You can stay and hunt as long as you want to, and there is a ton of public ground in the state. A five day non-resident license is good for deer, and is \$180, a non-resident annual runs through June 30, is good for deer/bear/spring turkey, etc and is \$350. Contact ok\_caveman@yahoo.com if interested.

## 4 October 2022

### Blue Ridge, Virginia Hunt

Blue Ridge VA hunt for whitetail deer, turkey and black bear - usually runs for a week towards the end of October. Many thousands of acres of hardwood ridges to hunt, it helps to be in decent shape for this hunt. Randy Brookshier hosts this annual hunt and does all the cooking, which is awesome and not for those on a diet; contact Randy at stykbow59@comcast.net if interested. Size limit is usually around ten hunters.

## 5 December 2022

### Blackbeard Island, Georgia Hunt

Blackbeard Island GA hunt for deer and hogs - this is the nation's oldest organized archery hunt on an island with ancient oaks, Spanish moss, giant rattlesnakes, big gators and lots of history. The deer are tiny but still fun to hunt, there were plenty of hogs for the 2021 hunt and the weather is usually pleasant. This hunt is usually the first full weekend in December (arrive and scout on Wednesday, hunt Thursday-Saturday, and depart on Sunday), there is no limit on the number of hunters who can join this hunt, and our own Jerry Russell will use his boat to shuttle hunters to/from the island. Contact Matt Schuster at matt@easterndynamicsinc.com to sign up.

## 6 January 2023

### Arizona Javelina Hunt

Arizona Javelina, mule deer and Coues deer from January 1, 2023 until about January 10th or 12th or 14th or whenever folks decide to head home. Rick guarantees warm clear sunny weather... and great food! Contact Rick Wildermuth at Rwildermuth2@cox.net if interested. Another classic Membership hunt.

**More possible dates to come. Visit [www.professionalbowhunters.org](http://www.professionalbowhunters.org) and click on the Member Hunts tab for an up-to-date list.**



# Regional Profile →

This is an ongoing 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.



## New Mexico

*The Land of Enchantment*  
(and Bowhunting Opportunity)



**By Mike Haynes**

I am fortunate enough to be a native of New Mexico, The Land of Enchantment, although I lived most of my life just across the border north of this beautiful state. I returned almost eight years ago after a forty seven year leave of absence and have enjoyed the beautiful mountains, deserts, rivers, and lakes New Mexico has to offer. New Mexico became the 47th state of the union on January 6, 1912. It is the fifth largest state by land area. Elevations range from 2,842 feet above sea level along the Pecos River near the Texas border to the towering Wheeler Peak at 13,161 feet above sea level in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico. With a mean elevation above sea level of 5,700 feet, New Mexico is the fourth highest state in average elevation. Colorado (where I lived for over half my life) is the highest state in the U.S. in more ways than one. The state capital of Santa Fe is not only the oldest capital city in the US (founded in 1610), but is also the highest in elevation at 7,000 feet above sea level. We are home to the village of Hatch, “chili capital of the world”, Smoky Bear (rescued in the Capitan Mountains of south central NM during a forest fire in 1950), the first atomic bomb (designed and engineered in Los Alamos and tested at the Trinity Site on the White Sands Missile Range in south central NM), as well as the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (the largest hot air balloon event in the world).

New Mexico is home to the US Forest Service’s first designated wilderness area in the United States, the Gila Wilderness. The famous conservationist, bowhunter, and arguably the father of wildlife management in North America, Aldo Leopold, spearheaded the designation of the Gila Wilderness in 1924. New Mexico has twenty-six wilderness areas, five national forests totally within its boundaries, parts of two other national forests that are mainly in Arizona, a national grassland, and a plethora of BLM land. New Mexico ranks ninth in the U.S. in the amount of public land, as a percentage of its total land, at 47.4%. That means opportunities for hunting and other recreational pursuits abound. Native American tribal lands account for over 10% of New Mexico’s total land area. New Mexico’s dry weather and high elevation account for wide swings in temperature and precipitation. The

record high temperature for New Mexico was 116 F in 1918 while the record low temperature was -50 F in 1951. Precipitation can average from a low of about six inches in the southwestern part of the state to over thirty inches in the mountainous areas of the state. Average annual snowfall is also quite variable from about three inches in the southern deserts to as much as 300+ inches per season in the northern mountains of the state.



Wildlife is abundant in New Mexico. Among the huntable species are mule deer, white-tailed deer, Coues deer, elk, black bear, pronghorn antelope, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, desert bighorn sheep, jave-



lina, mountain lion, Merriam's, Rio Grande and Gould's turkeys, and the imported free-ranging Barbary sheep, oryx, and ibex that inhabit parts of southern New Mexico. New Mexico is also home to over a hundred Mexican gray wolves which were released into the southwestern part of the state beginning in 1998.

Most mountain lion, turkey, and bear licenses can be purchased over the counter. There are a few that you will need to apply for through a draw. Applications for the draw can be done on the New Mexico Game and Fish website, <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/hunting/>. In 2022, the deadline date for bear and turkey applications was February 9th.

Over the counter Barbary sheep licenses and ibex licenses are available, but as a rule they are not quality hunting opportunities and are designed to keep those exotic species confined to particular areas of the state where the Game and Fish department wants them. The quality Barbary and ibex licenses are again available by draw only. There are archery only licenses available for both species. These draws take place at the same time as all the other big game license drawings take place. In 2022 the license application deadline was March 16th.

All deer, elk, antelope, bighorn sheep (both Rocky Mountain and desert), oryx, and javelina licenses are limited and available by draw only. Again, these draws can be applied for electronically on the Game and Fish website, <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/hunting/>. All of New Mexico's draws are random draws, meaning there are no preference or bonus points given out for unsuccessful hunters. This can make for some tough draw odds for many of the quality hunt units in the state. But it also guarantees that each year you have a chance to draw one of the premier elk or mule deer hunting licenses in the entire country.

New Mexico does have a unique system where each applicant can apply for three choices on their license application. The way the draw works is each applicant receives a random number and the system looks at the first choice to see if that number is low enough to draw that choice. If not, the system continues to the second and third choices. In other words you may not draw your first choice but if you use an easier to draw unit for your second and third choices, you may very well draw one of those choices if you are unsuccessful for your first choice. Here is an explanation of the draw system directly from the New Mexico Game and Fish website:

### How New Mexico's Draw Works

New Mexico's big game drawing is subject to a quota system. In accordance with state law, the draw attempts to distribute a minimum of 84 percent of the licenses for each hunt to New Mexico residents, 10 percent to residents or nonresidents who've contracted with an outfitter and 6 percent to nonresidents who have not contracted with an outfitter (this does not prohibit nonresidents in the 6 percent pool from contracting with an outfitter if they are lucky in the draw).

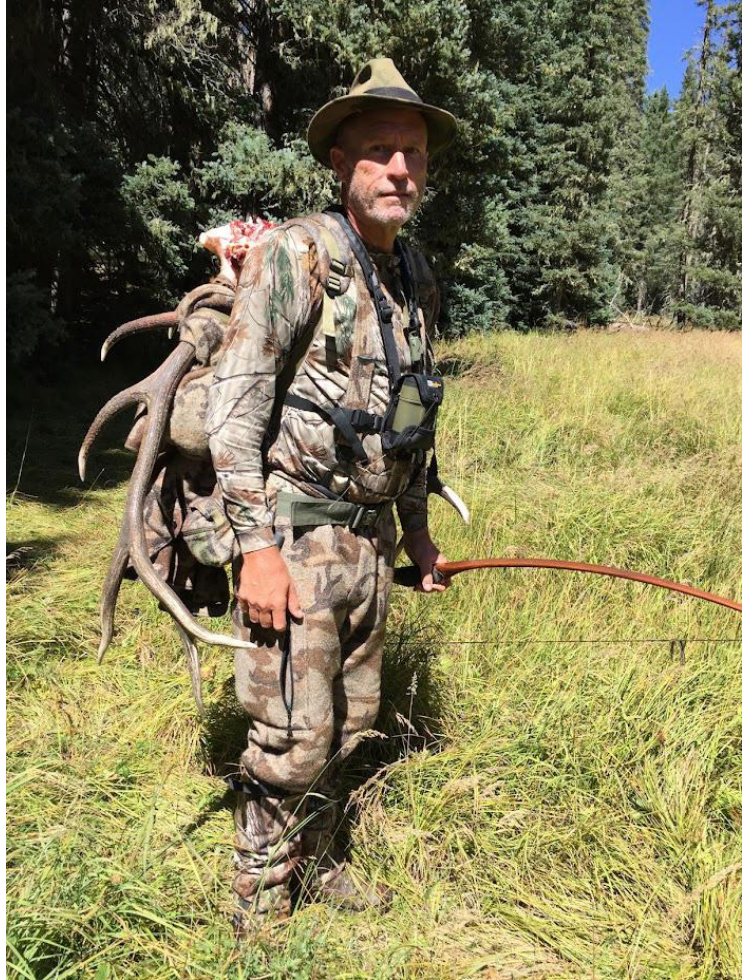
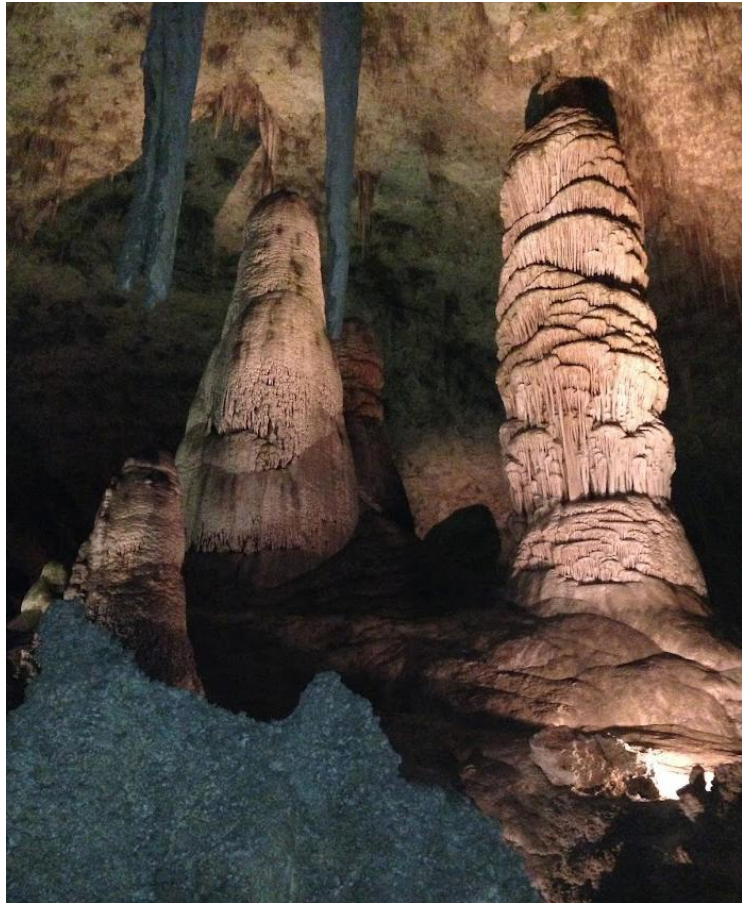
All drawing applications are randomly assigned a sequence number. A computer program then examines each application in the sequence in its entirety, prior to moving on to the next application. When an application is examined, the computer attempts to fulfill the first hunt choice, subject to the quotas described above. If the first hunt choice is already filled, the computer will try to assign the second choice to that application, then the third choice.

If the quota for all applicant drawing pools has been filled for all three choices, the system will not issue a license(s) and will move on to the next application. Residents who apply with one or more nonresidents will be issued a license only if there are licenses available for both the resident and nonresident pools.

After all deer and elk applications have been examined, a second drawing distributes any remaining deer and elk licenses to those who designate a fourth choice on their application. Only those willing to accept ANY deer or elk license should indicate a fourth choice. An elk hunter drawing a fourth choice could









receive a license for an antlerless bag limit (if eligible), even if their first three choices were for bull licenses. The fourth-choice assignment will always be for the same sporting arm type as the first choice on the application.

Because the order of an application in the sequence is the determining factor in drawing success, it is possible for an applicant to receive a license for his or her second or third choice before a first choice applicant for the same hunt is even considered. The earlier in the drawing sequence an application is, the better the chances that a first, second or third choice hunt will still be available.

Big Game Drawing Odds Summary Reports are also available on the website so you can do some research to see which units you would have a good chance at for your second or third choices. The website also lists several phone numbers where you can talk with a Game and Fish staff member who is well-trained in helping folks apply for the annual big game draw. My experience is that the folks staffing the help lines are very friendly and helpful.

With the wealth of information available online from various hunting forums and social media outlets, even if you head out to New Mexico with little or no experience, you will be able to glean much of the knowledge you need for a successful hunt from these resources. There are also many great outfitters that specialize in working with bowhunters. The New Mexico Association of Outfitters and Guides can help match you with a qualified outfitter for your hunting or outdoor adventure. If you long to experience the excitement of a western elk or mule deer hunt, or see some of the largest pronghorn antelope bucks in the west, do some research and apply for the New Mexico big game draw. If a Merriam's turkey is on your bucket list, those licenses are available over the counter for the most part and many areas of the state have

beautiful public land hunting. Obviously bighorn sheep, both Rocky and desert, are a dream species for almost all of us. If you don't enter the draws in the states they inhabit you may never get the chance to chase these magnificent critters with your bow. New Mexico should be on your sheep hunting application list. Whether you're a trophy hunter or just want a chance to hunt many of the western big game animals, New Mexico gives you great opportunities and as beautiful of a landscape to hunt them in as any other western state.

Whether you want to hunt or you just want to get outdoors and see the incredible country that is New Mexico, I would invite you to visit soon. New Mexico has great places to hike, camp, backpack, fish, hunt, downhill ski, cross country or backcountry ski, boat, mountain bike, river raft, kayak, four-wheel, snowmobile, and experience many unusual cultural activities (not to mention the great New Mexican food). Come check out our state. You won't be disappointed!





# A Moose for Ben

**By John Vargo**

I settled in to my stool in the hastily built ground blind alongside a grassy meadow waiting for prime time for game movement. I was hunting bull moose in a bird sanctuary near Edmonton, Alberta with outfitter Ryk Visscher. My guide, Gerald Wrubleski, was sitting comfortably twenty five yards behind and off to my side next to the burlap moose decoy that he hung from tree branches. Gerald told me that he would begin calling about an hour before dark and it was only mid-afternoon so we had a few hours of waiting time. A lot of time to sit and think.

It was during such contemplation that I glanced off to my right side for a look at the hillside. Standing there was a giant bull moose looking down the hill into the meadow where I was sitting. This bull was big! There would be no second guessing whether this bull was big enough to shoot on day two of an eight-day hunt. After a few moments he started down the hill to the meadow. It quickly became obvious that hunter and bull moose were about to converge at the same point in time and space. As the bull closed the distance, I eased up to a crouched standing position and gripped my longbow, preparing for the shot that I had only dreamed of for years. Wearing full camo and nestled in next to a poplar tree with waist high brush in front of me, the bull had no idea I was there.

Bull moose was sitting at the top of my bucket list. I had retired from work three years prior and was not getting any younger so it was time to thin out that bucket. Ryk Visscher was highly recommended for archery hunts for moose. He runs hunts in a bird sanctuary just outside Edmonton as well as a few hunts to the north in the farming country of the Edmonton bow zone. His bow hunters have an outstanding record for bull moose, nearly seventy percent over the past twenty-plus years that he has been running moose hunts. Ryk's hunts are very reasonably priced in comparison to what outfitters in northern British Columbia, the Yukon, and Alaska charge. Moose are plentiful but in general do not get very big in this part of Alberta. Any bull over 40" is considered a good

one and most will be smaller.

Ryk only takes eight bowhunters each season. We all stayed in a comfortable bunk house owned by Brian, one of his guides. Brian's wife kept us all well-fed during our hunt. A life size 3D moose target in the back yard was available for practice. The first evening in camp Ryk met with our hunting group and went over camp rules and introduced us to our guide for the week. All moose hunts are one guide to one hunter. Gerald Wrubleski was to be my guide. All of Ryk's guides are bow hunters that have intimate knowledge of the bird sanctuary that we would be hunting. Each guide had their own favorite area so even though we were all hunting the same sanctuary we did not run into each other during the day. In addition to our camp, there were a few local hunters in the same area.

For this hunt, I decided to use a new bow that I had purchased in June, a one-piece Hummingbird Kingfisher longbow. The bow was built by my friend Ben Graham. I met Ben and his wife, Linda shortly after moving



Ben Graham with a wild pig he shot while hunting with John in southern Georgia in the 1990's. Ben was using one of his Hummingbird recurve bows.



A welcome sign after many hours of driving.



from Michigan to North Carolina in 1988. I first met Ben and Linda at a local shoot where they were displaying the custom traditional bows that they were building. They both were big promoters of traditional archery and I would often run into them at traditional shoots and events in the area. We quickly became friends and I would often shoot with them on the 3D courses. On many occasions I made the hour drive to their home and shop building in nearby Mt. Pleasant where I would look over the new bows being built for custom orders or for stock/display.

I moved from North Carolina to Iowa in 2001. I would always see Ben and Linda in their Hummingbird Bow booth at the annual Compton Traditional Archers shoot in Michigan. I was shocked to learn that Ben was diagnosed with an advanced form of cancer and a few years later he passed. After his passing I realized that as much as I admired his bows, I did not currently have one. A check of the Hummingbird website indicated they did not have any left hand bows in stock. In 2021, I once again saw my friend Linda Graham sitting in her Hummingbird booth at the Compton shoot. She and her new business partner James Parker were displaying a few Hummingbird bows that James had built following Ben's meticulous building instructions for each model. In addition to the bows that James had built, Linda had a few bows on the table for sale that Ben had built. On that table was a left



My guide Gerald Wrubleski standing next to his homemade burlap cow moose decoy.

hand, one-piece Kingfisher longbow, 62" long and 52# at 28". Linda explained that Ben had built that bow for himself a few years before his cancer ordeal as he had injured his right hand and was concerned he might have to miss bow season that fall or use a left hand bow. Fortunately,

his hand healed in time for bow season so this bow was only shot in the back yard a few times. It was exactly the bow I was looking for. I gave the bow a test drive out on the 3D range and promptly closed the deal with Linda so that I could take the bow home with me.

Initially I had no intentions of using my new bow for my upcoming moose hunt. I had been shooting A&H Archery ACS bows for the last fifteen years and have been very pleased with both my shooting accuracy and with the bow's performance. Still, I could not resist the urge during the summer to pick up my new Hummingbird bow and end my daily practice sessions with this bow. With each passing day I became more comfortable and familiar with the bow. I could feel it talking to me. I could imagine Ben standing behind me, critiquing my bow form. "Don't drop that bow arm!", Ben would yell at me. I soon realized that it was destiny that I would take Ben and my new Hummingbird bow moose hunting with me.

That brings us back to hunter and moose converging at the same location one fine day in late September. The moose closed the distance to about twenty yards. My fingers tightened on the bowstring in preparation for the shot, just waiting for the right time and a good shot angle. The bull saw Gerald's decoy and turned



Backyard target practice with a life-size moose target.

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~ continued from page 13

broadsides walking up the hill to where it was hanging. At seventeen yards I decided the shot angle looked good and he was close enough. I focused low behind the front leg and came to full draw. "Let's make a good shot Ben!" I silently whispered to myself. Moments later the arrow was gone and hit the bull in the upper front leg. The moose jumped in the air and trotted off into the brush about fifty yards away where I could only see his antlers above the willow brush. At this point I was uncertain how to react as the arrow penetration did not appear to be very good. The moose stood there for about one minute uncertain of what had happened or what his next move would be. Finally he decided to head back towards the hillside from where he had come. He took several steps, wobbled, and collapsed to the ground. Big antlers thrashed on the ground!

Meanwhile my guide Gerald was nearly oblivious to what had happened. He never saw the bull until it was walking up the hill towards him at a distance of less than twenty yards. He knew I was sitting within shooting range so he hid and remained quiet behind the decoy. He heard me shoot but did not know if I had hit the bull. While the bull was still standing in the willows, we exchanged hand signals where I indicated I had shot him. Gerald kept replying with "big, big bull" hand signals. When the bull hit the ground I am uncertain who was more excited, Gerald or myself.

We gave the bull fifteen minutes and then crept up to where he went down. My single-bevel Abowyer broadhead had done its job. An autopsy done a few minutes later revealed a heart shot. Both Gerald and I stood there not saying a word. To say this moose was big would be an understatement. Gerald

had hunted moose in this area for most of his life and he said it was the second biggest bull he had ever seen. The two of us were unable to roll the moose onto

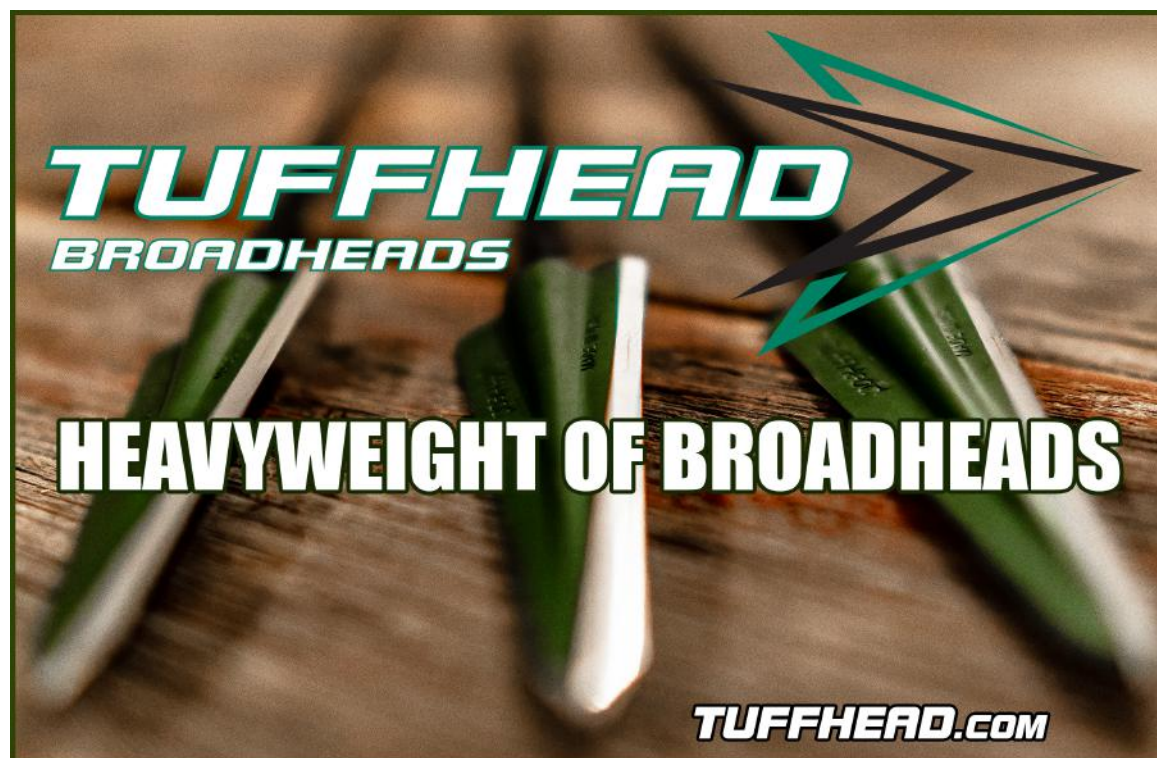


his back for field dressing so Gerald went to work on the bull as it laid on its side. Gerald soon put a call into Ryk to come out with an ATV and trailer to help us get the moose out. Ryk did not believe Gerald at first as Gerald tried to explain how big the bull was. An hour later Ryk arrived and we used a chainsaw to clear a path to get the ATV and cart to the moose. Even with three of us and after cutting the moose in half just in front of the hips, we were unable to load the moose. Finally we were able to tip the cart onto its side and

with considerable effort the three of us eventually were able to roll the two halves into the cart.

Ryk green scored the moose later that evening. He said the antler spread was about 53" and that it green scored about 182". According to record books kept by the Alberta Bowhunters Association it is about the twentieth largest moose taken by a bowhunter in Alberta and might crack the top one hundred for any bow-killed Canada moose. Ryk has been running moose hunts in this area for over twenty years and with over one hundred bulls killed by his hunters, this bull was the biggest.

That evening I stayed up late just trying to comprehend all that had happened that day. My bucket was a lot lighter to lift. I would have been happy to take any decent bull moose and did not dare to think that shooting a bull moose of this size in central Alberta was possible. I thought of my friend Ben Graham and the good times that we had at 3D shoots and the few hunts that we took together. I thought about how a bow that he made with his own two hands played a major role in helping me fulfill my dream. "Ben, we did good!"





# Leadville (my second home)

**By Joe Ellsworth**

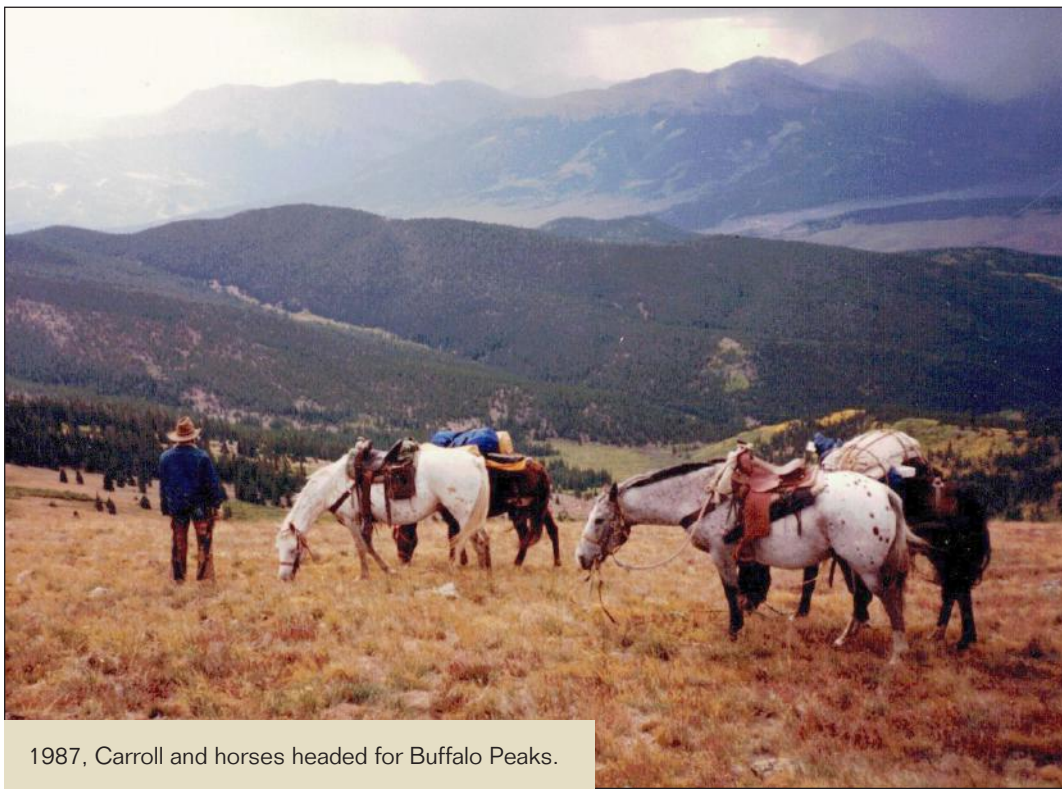
I went on my first elk hunt in 1977 and got hooked. Out of the twenty five elk hunts I have been on, fifteen were in the Leadville, Colorado area. The first time I hunted Leadville was 1987 and at that time I had never been exposed to big bulls that were not bugle shy. My early elk hunting years were spent on Colorado's Grand Mesa. Spikes and rag horns were the norm with an occasional small five point. I never had a chance to learn how to call in a bull. Leadville was not short on big bulls and I learned to call in bulls by trial and error. Other than Larry Jones tapes there were not that many "how-to" tapes available. I learned by making mistakes.

Many times bulls will just talk to each other. It's like they are compelled to answer another bulls bugle. I compare it to when a guy calls you up and tells you he's coming over to kick your ass but he really isn't coming. Talking to bulls and calling them into bow range are two completely different things and it takes years of experience.

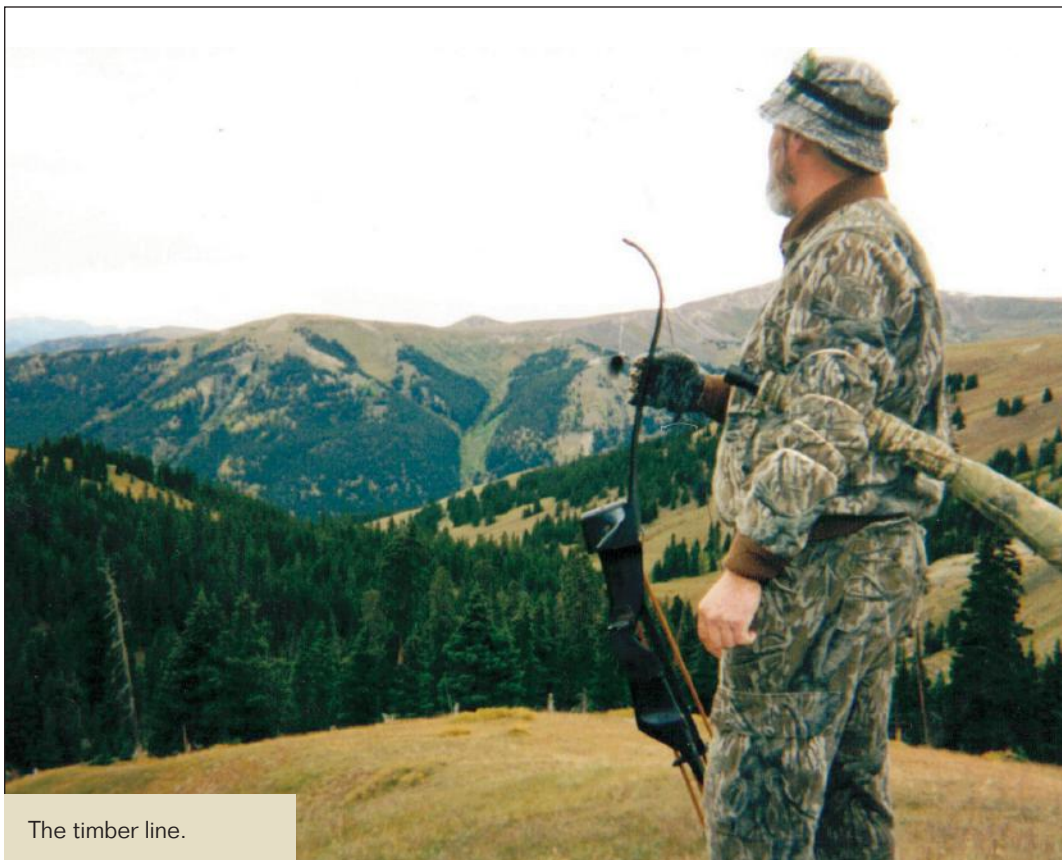
In 1987 Leadville was in, what I believe to be, it's first year of a new so called trophy area. Hunting licenses were limited and by draw only. I hunted Leadville many years without seeing another hunter. It was elk heaven. I have always told hunters that have never been on an elk hunt that the first time you are close enough to a six point bull to see the froth fly out of his mouth when he bugles you will be hooked for life. In my Leadville era there wasn't a day that went by in the course of a year that I didn't think about elk hunting in Leadville. I was absolutely obsessed with it.

Leadville is the highest town in the United States at about 10,200. Everything is up from there. The timber line around Leadville is at about 11,500 feet. If you are going to hunt at that altitude you must be in terrific shape. Hiking from one gulch to another can take you over 12,000 feet. All of my elk hunts were in September and were two week hunts. At that altitude, over a two week time frame, the mountains will

~ continued on page 16 ~



1987, Carroll and horses headed for Buffalo Peaks.



The timber line.



~ continued from page 15 → beat you up even when

you are in shape. I have told friends that went to Leadville with me that it didn't matter what you did to get in shape it was not going to be enough. Hunting in Leadville was very different than hunting the Grand Mesa where you had air to breathe. Most hunting on the Mesa is between 8,000 and 9,000 feet. There is a forty percent difference in available oxygen between 8,500 feet and 11,500 feet. There are times your legs just quit. Some people get altitude sickness being over 10,000 feet for a period of time. Hunting the high country for elk can be challenging but elk don't live in ugly country.

It's cold in Leadville in September and you will get snow. There are only three days in Leadville that it doesn't freeze at night, July 4th, the day before and the day after. My longtime elk hunting buddy, Carroll Johnson, owned Ma and Pa's Stable outside of Leadville. One year they arrived to open the stables the weekend before Memorial Day to find twelve feet of snow against the barn door on the north side. I like to hunt elk in my running shoes. One morning before daylight I headed up the mountain and wound up hunting in my running shoes in eight inches of snow. It was just another inconvenience while elk hunting in Leadville.

I prefer to hunt elk alone and I am a much better hunter/killer when I am by myself. Unlike a certain friend of mine that likes to do the whole hunt solo, I like to have my hunting buddies in camp with me but I don't want anyone near me when I am hunting. I enjoy the company in camp and luckily my hunting companions have great cooking skills as well as hunting skills and having some buddies along is also helpful to pack when you need it. I have, however, had some great experiences calling for some buddies after getting tagged out.

The more years you hunt an area the better your chances are for success. After years of hunting the mountains around Leadville it was like my second home. It was like hunting my backyard. My fifteen elk hunts in Leadville left me with fond memories. Getting into rutting frenzies that were so wild it's difficult to explain them. Being on top of Missouri Hill after dark in the most intense electric storm I had ever seen while in the midst of a bunch of bulls who let out bugles of terror every time the thunder clapped. I should have my head examined for even being there. Could have died that night. The many four mile walks



1996 bull.



High country.

in the dark back to camp after working a bull right up until you couldn't see to shoot. Backpacking over 12,000 feet from Weston Pass into Low Pass Gulch. Field dressing a bull with a flashlight in my teeth and during a snow storm. Lots of memories.

I was once charged by a big bull that just couldn't take the challenger pressing him and yelling at him anymore. His guard hairs were up on his back he was so mad. Another time I was making a move on a 300 class bull in the middle of a rutting frenzy when a bigger bull, that was up above us, was running around acting crazy, bugling, hooking cows and running off other bulls. He saw the bull I was

stalking and charged down the hill, lowered his head and ran full speed into that bull. The bull got hit in the hind quarters and went down and the charging bull was shook up but didn't go down. The bull got up and they both staggered off in different directions. It was an awful wreck. I often wondered if that bull lived or died. This all happened about sixty yards from me. I only needed to close another twenty yards but that's hunting. I doubt that many elk hunters have ever seen something like that.

In 1987 Carroll and I went on a nine day horseback hunt starting on the Leadville side of Weston Pass, traveling south above timberline across the tundra to the Buffalo



Peaks Wilderness area. We moved camp four times looking for a good bull. That really was a hunt of a lifetime. I am so glad I got to know Carroll Johnson. A very tough man who grew up in the mountains, the last of a breed, plus he owns horses. Carroll became one of my best friends.

My obsession with hunting elk in Leadville was all consuming. I remember one year sitting near the top of Mount Zion looking across the valley at the two highest peaks in Colorado on the last day of my hunt, and feeling tears coming to my eyes knowing that it would be a whole year before I could do this again. It's good and it's also bad to get that passionate over hunting.

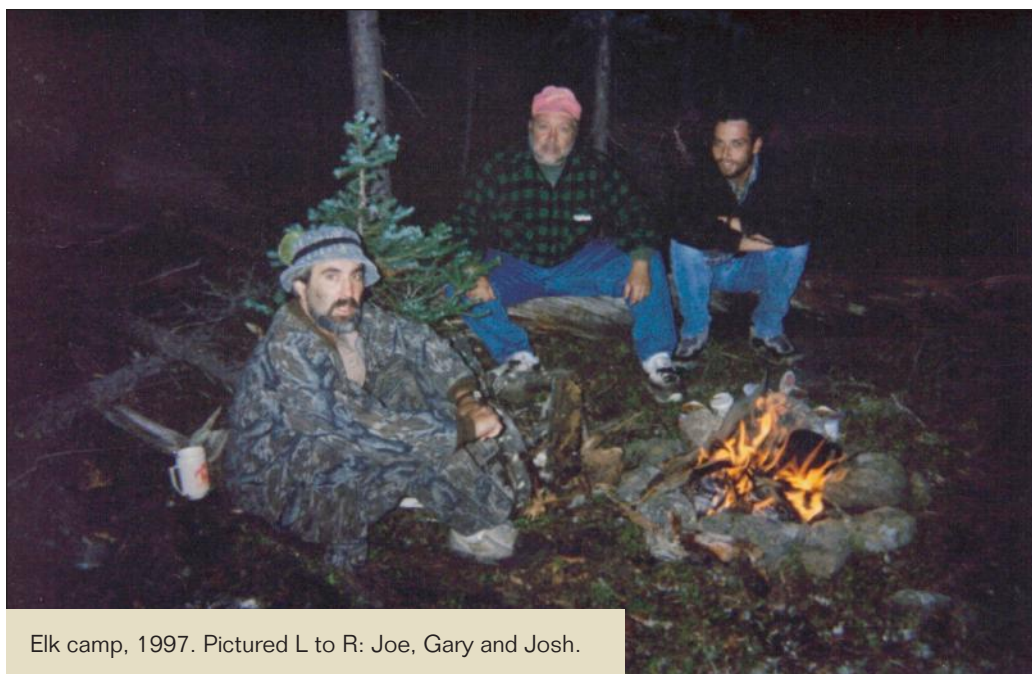
In 1992 I took my first trip to Alaska. Carroll and I spent almost a month there. We were sitting at the campfire one afternoon on the Brooks Range and I said, "Carroll you know what I'm thinking about?" He said, "Yes, hunting elk in Leadville." There I was in Alaska, a bow hunter's dream and I was thinking about being in Leadville hunting elk. Sometimes I think I'm not normal.

I think the happiest I have ever been is when I was in the mountains, hunting elk alone in Leadville.

I miss the place terribly but feel blessed to have had the experience.

Nothing seems to last forever and the elk hunting in Leadville was no exception. The first year I hunted Leadville the state issued only 105 archery permits for unit 49 (never saw another hunter). Near the end of my time in Leadville they were issuing 355 archery permits. (Saw a lot of hunters). The rifle and musket permits went up at the same ratio. Musket and archery seasons overlap so that just magnified the problem.

My buddy Carroll moved to Wyoming and I have hunted elk there five times but it's not the same. It takes three years to get a tag in Wyoming where we hunt. Maybe one more elk hunt?



Elk camp, 1997. Pictured L to R: Joe, Gary and Josh.



Joe and Gary hitching a ride, 1996.

## Welcome new members to the PBS family!

### APRIL

Derek Yost - Hines, OR  
Tim Mullins - Slidell, LA  
Douglas Wolfe - Forked River, NJ  
Ronald Jeffrey Roberts - Maceo, KY  
Andy Reed - Hamilton, MO  
Tracy Vilwok - Hanna, WY  
David "Monty" Montgomery - Spokane, WA  
Matthew Montgomery - Spokane, WA  
Chase Snider - Trafalgar, IN

Jacob Mckenzie - Eagle, WI  
Gregory Purnsley - Hampstead, NC  
Maribeth Kulynycz - Princess Anne, MD  
Juan Rojo - Montebello, CA  
Joel Turner - Eatonville, WA

### MAY

Christopher Jordan Morris - McNary, LA  
Harry Eldred - Mobile, AL  
Sean Craig - Pineville, LA

James Falke - Holcomb, KS  
Caleb Medina - Bloomington, IN  
Kent Hendershot - Warfordsburg, PA  
Michael Brasher - Morris, AL  
James Rogers - Nashville, TN  
Nathanael Paulino - Friendswood, TX  
Richard Kirschner - Hopewell Junction, NY  
Chad Bauman - Waseca, MN  
Mark Warner III - White Bluff, TN



# OCTOBER WHITETAIL

By Ross Pennebaker

It was the third day of the 2021 PBS Land Between the Lakes Hunt and I was ready to shoot any deer that came by that evening. Over the past two days I had hunted two promising trails, but with no success. It is hard to hunt deer in October as food sources are everywhere and the deer have little pattern. Back at camp there had been misses and passes on a few deer and I really wanted to shoot my first buck while on this cool hunt. I wasn't sure I could get a buck on this trip, but at 4:10 I heard a noise behind me and looked to see a deer coming up on my left. As it moved into my ten yard shooting lane, it got nervous and turned around, but it calmed down. It was slowly moving away and got into my twenty yard shooting lane and stopped, while looking away. I drew back, anchored, aimed for the heart, and released. The arrow flew good, but seemed to drop right below its heart. As the deer ran, I saw that it was a small buck.

I started to get mad at myself for missing that shot but as I thought about it, I realized that the buck ran like it was hit. I thought we would have to look for blood. About one hour later, Mr. Scott came in from my right. He told me that the deer came running in from the field and stopped about ten yards inside the woods, got wobbly, and bedded down. It then got up and moved four more times, each time moving about seven yards. We slipped out because it was probably a gut or liver hit. We decided to come back in the morning. Back at camp, the fellow PBS members encouraged me and told me we would find it in the morning.

The next morning Mr. Scott Record, Mr. Dennis Jackson, and I went looking for my arrow and a blood trail. As we walked towards my arrow, we could hear crows calling loudly nearby, so we knew my deer was close. We went looking for my arrow anyway and I found it with green all over it. We found a little blood on some corn stalks and on the ground. Inside the woods, we found a good amount of blood in every place it lay down. As we neared the thicker brush, the blood and tracks seemed to stop so we started to walk toward the spot where Mr. Scott had seen it last. As we slowly walked, I looked to my right and saw it twenty feet away with its head down. I said, or yelled, "There's my deer!" After many congratulations and pictures, we field-dressed the deer and got it in the truck.

Back at camp, I learned that I would receive a beautiful armguard made by Mr. Randy Brookshier for shooting the first deer of the hunt. That night when Mr. Randy presented me with the armguard, I thought

there was no other hunt or group of bowhunters that I would rather be with to shoot my first buck. I would like to thank God for Mr. Scott and all of the other PBS members for this memorable hunt.

*EQUIPMENT NOTES: I took this buck with a #42 takedown recurve, a Gold Tip blemished arrow and a 200gr Woodsman Elite broadhead.*







# UNITED WE ACT

## for Preserving Bowhunting's Traditional Values

It is the purpose of the Professional Bowhunters Society® to be an organization whose membership consists only of persons who are considered Professional Bowhunters in ATTITUDE, and who vow:

- That by choice, bowhunting is their primary archery interest, and their ultimate aim and interest is the taking of wild game by bow and arrow of suitable weights in a humane and sportsmanlike manner;
- To share their experiences, knowledge and shooting skills;
- To be a conscientious bowhunter, promoting bowhunting by working to elevate its standards and the standards of those who practice the art of bowhunting;
- To provide training on safety, shooting and hunting techniques;
- To practice the wise use of our natural resources, the conservation of our wild game and the preservation of our natural habitat.

## Associate Members receive these benefits:

- A quarterly magazine, The Professional Bowhunter
- Participation in PBS programs
- Use of the PBS Information/Education Services
- Free use of the lending library, including videos and books
- The opportunity to defend the sport against anti-hunting forces

### Associate Member Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Hunting Bow Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

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Chuck's bow that was gifted to me after his death. As promised, I took one javelina with it and now it will be retired and displayed on my wall.

# A PROMISE KEPT

By Ronald Bauer

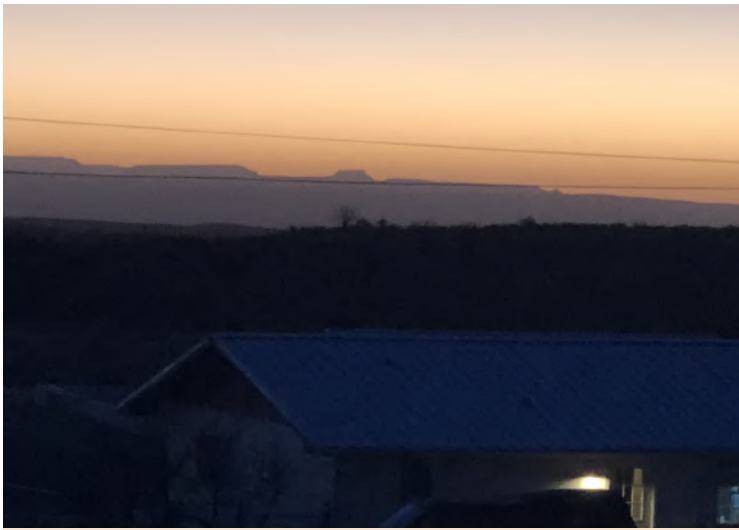
**W**ay back in the year 1972 BCP (Before Cell Phones), I started work at what was then Humble Oil and Refining in Baton Rouge, LA. (now ExxonMobil) The first person to befriend this bewildered twenty-two-year-old, was a young man my own age. Chuck helped me get my feet on the ground and for the next thirty-two years, we would be close friends both at work and in the woods. In the beginning, rabbit and squirrel were our focus but as deer populations and opportunities became more available, our attentions and efforts turned towards them. I have had a bow in my hands since before compounds became a thing and in just a couple of years as friends, I had him interested in archery and hunting with a bow. At my urgings Chuck was soon the proud owner of a Browning Nomad Stalker 1. A beautiful little recurve that pulled forty-five pounds at twenty eight inches and

was only fifty-two inches long. We spent many a day unsuccessfully chasing whitetails around the Louisiana swamps during our adventures together. The only animals to fall victim to our arrows were a few rabbits and a couple of raccoons. Although we remained close friends for my full thirty two years there, our work schedules changed, and our hunting opportunities together became exceedingly rare. I retired in 2005 while my friend chose to continue working for a few years longer and we lost contact with each other over time. Late in 2021, Chuck's wife contacted me to inform me that Chuck had passed away unexpectedly. She had no way of getting the news to those that we had worked with and wanted to know if I could help. I am proud to say that even after all the years, a lot of our old work friends showed up to pay their last respects. Talking to his wife at the funeral, it was brought up how Chuck had still talked about our days of hunting together and how I was the one that got him interested in archery. They had lost a lot during the 2016 flood as had most of us and

I asked her if she knew whether Chuck's bow had survived. She later contacted me to let me know that it had, and she and their two sons wanted to gift me with Chucks bow. I made the promise to her then, that I would honor Chuck by hunting with his bow until I took one animal with it, and it would then be retired to a prominent place on my wall. The little Browning bow was in like new condition, and I immediately started getting it ready for my annual Marfa, TX javelina hunt with my PBS friends, set for February of 2022. Dressed up with a new string and a half dozen Gold Tip 500's tipped with Zwickey No Mercy single bevel heads that brought the total arrow weight up to 530 grains, it was ready to hunt.

As much as we hate it, this hunt is a closed hunt on a working ranch. We do not have the option to offer it to others. We have been blessed to hunt there since 2016 but it is by invitation only for our original group and is a year-to-year thing for us. This year's adventure started for me when Bo Slaughter and Bill Terry, Sr. pulled into my drive late evening of





Waiting on daylight.



February 9th. This was the fifth year in a row that these two fine gentlemen have blessed me with their company for this adventure. It is a standing obligation for me and my other south Louisiana PBS brothers to see to it that Bo, Bill, and any others that might join us, become completely satiated with our great Louisiana seafood and our Cajun cooking. It was a tall order this time because we only had one day to pull it off before heading out on our adventure. February 11th found us loaded up and on our way. Chuck's bow and my own Acadian Woods bow were safely stored in their cases and ready for action.

What a difference a year makes. Last year

it took long dangerous hours driving on snow and ice to get to the ranch and then we had two, four-inch snow events during our seven-day hunt with seven-degree mornings. This year we had sunshine, lows in the low thirties and reaching the high sixties each day. Saturday is always our "get settled in" day with Sunday being the day for scouting and for the stragglers to finally show up. Monday starts seven days of hunting fun and adventure. With us having so much history on this ranch, we have all figured out our favorite places to start our hunts. Mine is a dry creek bed that through the years has cut its way down to a depth of about ten feet and is close to twenty

yards wide. I have built and rebuilt a natural blind between the creek bed and a steep ridge in this same spot each year since 2016 and have taken six javelina over those years from it. This blind was my destination with Chuck's bow in hand, for the first morning's hunt. After a very uneventful morning, I headed out to pick up Bo and Bill on the way back to the ranch house. With a little rest and a quick lunch, we were back on the hunt for hog and javelina again. It takes a full thirty minutes of driving on rough ranch roads to get to where I hunt so by the time I dropped my friends off, it was about 3:30 when I got to my blind. After adding a few more limbs to the blind I then settled in and got my equipment ready for action. I have never used a string tracker, but I was so intent on taking and recovering an animal with this gifted bow, that I had strapped one to it just to help ensure success. Javelina are notorious for leaving a very sparse blood trail and being tough little rascals to put down. I was hopefully improving my possibilities of a successful recovery with the tracker. Being almost deaf, I depend on movement to alert me of approaching animals and about thirty minutes before dark I caught my first glimpse of javelina. Five of them were above me and about fifty yards from me across the dry creek bed and coming in fast. Within seconds they were in front of me and the largest of the five, gave me a perfect broadside shot at fifteen steps. As if on its own, that little bow put my arrow exactly where I was looking. As if it was happening in slow motion, I watched the arrow hit and upon impact the fletching kicked toward the javelina's head. My immediate thought was that the two blade Zwickie had hit an entry side rib and glanced off as it traveled through the animal. Suddenly, I had javelina going in every direction, and I've never heard so much jaw snapping and woofing in all your life. They

~ continued on page 22 →



Took javelina #5 & #6 this year from this natural blind I rebuild each year.



~ continued from page 21

would run away, then run right back with their hair standing up, popping their teeth, to help their wounded comrade, and that whole time the line was playing out of my string tracker like crazy. I decided it was best to give my full attention to one particularly upset individual that was headed straight for my blind. As is normal for these little critters, he quickly decided that flight was a better decision than fight and at ten feet, he reversed course and left the country in a hurry. I'm surely glad he did because I thought I was fixing to have to give him my Waldrop Pacseat, which I would have hated to do because I really like that little chair. While all this was happening, my javelina disappeared behind some brush, but he circled it and came charging back past me, close enough that I could have reached out and hit him with my bow if I would have been quick enough. Woofing with every lunging step, my arrow banging on the brush and the white string following him, he charged at full speed up the steep ridge behind me and through the thick brush like it was not even there. As soon as he disappeared over the top of the ridge, I heard something that sounded like him crashing into a bush, and the string quit playing out. Thinking that I for sure had my javelina, I sat my shaking self in my chair trying to calm down and waited for a good twenty minutes without the string ever moving again. As darkness set in, I started from where he was standing at the shot and began following the string. Being careful to follow to the side, I was picking up small spots of blood until the string disappeared as it headed up the steep ridge, in brush too thick for me to get through. I circled back down the creek bed until I reached a place that allowed me to reach the top of the ridge, then slow walked with bow at the ready back towards where I thought I would find my string and javelina. I found my string tangled and broken off in a bush, but there was no javelina in sight. From that point on I was tracking pin sized drops of blood by headlight and marking them with toilet paper so I could determine his line of travel. It was closing in on eight o'clock and with two friends waiting in the cold to be picked up, I decided to leave it until morning and come back with help to take up the track again. It was already below freezing and headed down to twenty-four degrees for the night's low, I was not worried about spoilage, but I had my fears about the hogs and coyotes finding him first. I had this happen in this very spot once before and all they left me was hair and a torn-up hide. Back to the search as the sun came up, I had Bo and Bill's experienced eyes to help me unravel the trail. Using the toilet paper trail I had left as a guide, we started searching in



My second javelina of the hunt. Taken with my Acadian Woods longbow this time.

the direction he was last headed. We were finding a small spot of blood every few yards and we would sometimes lose it when he would change direction but one of us always picked it back up. After what I estimated to be about one hundred and forty yards, and headed up hill, the blood sign got a little better. Just a few yards further, Bo looked up and spotted my dead javelina with my arrow still in his side and the fletching pointing to the sky. A good estimate is that he traveled about fifty yards after the string broke and a total of about one hundred and sixty yards. Upon examining the hit, you could tell that the arrow had indeed hit a rib and glanced off, angling back through the liver and intestines instead of where I intended for it to go. Thanks to the determined effort of my two compadres, we recovered my javelina and my promise to take an animal with Chuck's bow had been fulfilled. Only thing left was to make a plaque and display it in Chuck's honor on my wall. Bill volunteered to take the skull and two back feet home with him and when he is through with them, they will be used to help display Chuck's bow. My promise has been kept. But that was not the end of this adventure for me.

My second day of hunting was a repeat of the first. Nothing in the morning but a different story during the evening hunt. A little after five I had two large, mature javelinas making their way towards my blind. They came to full alert and locked up when they reached the place where I had spent considerable time picking up the tracking string from my previous success. Their eyes are not the best

in the animal kingdom, but you cannot fool their nose. After a few minutes they turned around and ambled on back to the east, in the direction they had come from. With an hour of daylight remaining, I caught movement in the brush to my west and a lone javelina came cautiously working his way up the dry creek bed. When he hit the area that we had crossed in our efforts to recover the first one, he too locked up and stood for a moment with nose in the air, trying to pinpoint his dreaded enemy. Uncomfortable with the situation, he reversed direction and faded off into the brush. This happened a third time that evening when two more came in and this convinced me that my hot spot needed a rest. The next day I spent my morning helping Bill Terry and Kevin Bahr find their javelinas from the previous evening's hunt. After two long and eventful tracks, we were successful in finding them both. I would love to talk about these recoveries but that should be left for them to do.

Returning to my blind for the evening hunt, I was carrying my Acadian Woods longbow because I had placed the gift bow back in its case before anything could happen to it. This bow is forty six pounds at twenty six inches, and I shoot Gold Tip 400's with Woodsman Elite 200 grain heads on them for a total weight of 630 grains. Impressed with the results of the string tracker, I had mounted it on my longbow for this hunt also. Now over the years, this blind has proven to be most productive in the evening and it held true for this day also. As had happened before, a little after five o'clock I had two javelinas



approaching my blind. Knowing how skittish they were the day before; I was prepared to take the first shot that presented itself. One of the two refused to continue past and stood off in the bushes looking around. Letting this area rest and settle down since the evening before paid dividends because the other one continued on past me. At about fifteen steps and in almost the exact spot where I had shot the first one, he became suspicious and did an about face, stopping where he was. This gave me the opportunity to send an arrow on its way. I was completely surprised when as he spun at the shot and began to run straight away from me, I could see blood spraying. This one ran straight across the dry creek bed, and I lost sight of it as it headed up the bank and through thick brush with my white string in hot pursuit. When I next saw him, he was on top of the bank and moving parallel to the creek. After only a few steps he came to a stop but was not sporting my arrow any longer. Trying to continue, he started wobbling and fell over, but I could no longer see him because of the lip of the creek bank. I gave him the customary thirty minutes before getting up to follow the string and the blood trail. No string tracker was necessary for this one. His reaction at my shot caused him to turn just enough that the arrow caught him in the neck instead of at the elbow, tight against the front leg. Those two hundred grains of three blade Woodsman Elite did terrible things to the big veins in the neck and left a huge blood trail the complete length of the short forty yards that he covered in his death run. It was the third day of this seven-day hunt and I had reached my two javelina limit in Texas. Now I would have plenty of time for good food, and good fellowship with eleven of the greatest friends and fellow PBS brothers that a person could ask for. A footnote here would be that our band of twelve brothers that have been labeled as the Marfa Marauders, were successful in taking a total of fourteen javelinas. Thank you, Lord, for a promise kept, for keeping us safe in our time together and for giving us once again the opportunity to enjoy each other's company while strengthening our bond with one another. Hopefully, this will not be the only story told and you will be reading more about this hunt from the other guys soon.



Javelina #1 that I took with Chuck's bow.

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# One Hundred Years on The Mountain

By Jeff Hall

**W**ho in the world keeps calling me? I kept asking myself this question as I sat wondering if I needed to dig my cell phone from my pack again. After all, I had looked at it earlier and did not recognize the number that popped up on the screen. I did not see the need to respond immediately, especially at that very moment, right after I had just settled into my tree stand. I am not overly concerned about my phone while in the deer woods. I do carry it for safety and the sometimes-needed communication it allows between myself and my hunting partners. About thirty minutes earlier, the phone had begun vibrating. I had stopped walking, dug it out, glanced at the call log, and after verifying that I did not recognize the number listed, quickly shoved the phone back in its pocket and continued toward my chosen stand site. After locating several freshly crushed acorn hulls among multiple piles of deer droppings, I went to work getting set up for the evening hunt. I hadn't finished exchanging my sweaty shirt for a drier and hopefully less smelly garment when the constant vibration in my pack began again. After the phone went through a couple of ring cycles, I began digging in my fanny pack and again looked at the screen. I still did not find a number I knew. "Whoever is calling me will have to wait," I thought to myself and once again settled into a sitting position, hoping to cool down a little before the afternoon deer activity ensued. It was precisely that moment I heard a car horn in the distance.

"There is no way! They have not had time to get settled in yet." I continued arguing with myself. After all, less than an hour had passed since I had parted ways with my hunting partners. My cohorts included my seventy-three-year-old father and nineteen-year-old son. Before our split and after a quick discussion regarding the evening hunt plans, my son, Hunter, opted to follow his grandpa in a slightly different direction than what I had chosen. Hunter was not familiar with the area we were hunting, so Dad quickly volunteered to put him in his BEST spot. This fact alone may have helped Hunter decide which one of us he wanted to tag along, yet I still suspected that he often enjoyed Dad's more slow and straightforward approach to climbing a mountain. A cross-country athlete, and firefighter, Hunter was by far in better shape than Dad or me but often complained about racing up the ridges as I usually did.

We would be hunting in an area I had not been in for several years, although the mountain just to our west held fond memories for me. I smiled to myself as I remembered all the mornings I had followed Dad up and down these same ridges while searching for signs of deer and turkey. An aspiring young hunter, those days were special to me. Dad and I had shared many enjoyable days in the Ozark mountains. Now Hunter was joining us on one of our adventures.

Though the area had changed with time, I recalled the general direction of an old road that paralleled the path Hunter and Dad had chosen for their access to the site. Both routes departed from the U.S. Forest Service road on which our vehicles were now parked and switch-backed up the mountain into a foot travel-only access area. As is often the case, high



levels of effort can be rewarded with better hunting. The steep climb, combined with the warmer than average weather, would make for a challenging ascent to where we thought the deer might be feeding, but we all knew that the effort required would most likely prevent other hunters from interrupting our evening hunt plans.

Dad is not as spry as he once was, but he still hunts most every day of the early bow season. Unable to handle the cold temperatures that come later in the fall, my father works hard each autumn to get on deer before the approaching rut. Part of his routine is checking the same ridges he had scouted for more than fifty years, looking for new feeding signs and the rubs and scrapes that signal a buck is beginning to check out our local doe groups. Walking miles a day, he covers the ground, searching for the white and red oak acorns that our local deer concentrate around. While scouting a few days earlier, Dad had located several white oak trees beginning to drop along the higher benches of the ridge above us. Finding fresh deer sign amidst the newly fallen acorns, he hung a tree stand and exited the area. As we do almost every day during our early bow season, Dad and I spoke that night, and he quickly requested that Hunter and I accompany him on a hunt at the next available time. We gladly agreed and made plans to join him a few days later. Now, we were hopeful that Dad's find would allow us to get within the traditional bow range of one of our extra leery Arkansas whitetails. Three generations of bowhunters were looking forward to whatever deer sightings might come that afternoon.



My father began bowhunting in the mid-1960s. Very few people pursued deer with a bow in Arkansas during this era. He often relates that he could hunt for weeks without seeing another hunter, much less a bowhunter. With very little knowledge and far fewer deer than what are available now, Dad was unsuccessful in harvesting a deer on those early hunts. Yet, with determined perseverance, he continued bowhunting and eventually began to kill deer regularly. I can still remember him preparing for a hunt way back then. Dressed in his WWII camo and toting his trusty Ben Pearson recurve, Dad would appear from his and Mom's bedroom armed with a handful of Bear Razorhead equipped Graphlex arrows and began stuffing them into his bow quiver. Though too young to tag along on those hunts, I was fascinated with his stories of close calls and missed opportunities, and I could not wait for my chance to become a bowhunter. Even at such an early age, I dreamed of getting to join my dad on his bowhunting trips.

By the time I was around ten years of age, Dad had begun letting me shoot his beloved Pearson. Though unable to fully draw the old recurve and not knowing how to shoot the bow correctly, I would spend hours in our yard shooting arrows at whatever target I could find. I can even recall Dad allowing me to take his bow, along with field-tipped arrows, walk a few hundred yards from our home to a neighbor's property, and go deer hunting alone. I am positive that he shadowed me along the way, but I truly felt I was hunting all by myself. He would not let me carry broadheads for fear of hurting myself, and he obviously did not have any concerns about getting a shot at our local deer, but he knew how much I wanted to become a bowhunter and let me pursue my goals. I would sit for hours over a single rub or set of tracks, and although I never saw a deer while doing this, my appetite for our sport grew. To this day, my need to bow hunt only becomes more robust each year. As with many bowhunting families, the desire grows with future generations, and Hunter is no exception. He, too, is bitten by the bowhunting bug.

When I was thirteen years old, with funds saved from hauling hay during the summer, Dad, Mom, and I drove to a local archery shop, where I spent my hard-earned money to purchase a bow of my own. The Ben Pearson Shadow, bow quiver, and three Easton aluminum arrows, would hardly leave my hands the rest of the summer. A few days before the season opener, I had enough money to buy three Satellite broadheads which I screwed onto the now worn and shiny shafts. The following Saturday, on my first morning as a REAL bowhunter, I sat on a nine-foot-tall ladder stand and excitedly waited for a deer to appear. About an hour into the morning hunt, a doe came easing up behind me, paused long enough for me to squirm around to face her, and a few seconds later, I had released my first arrow at a live deer. I think the deer laughed as she ran off, but the incredible excitement I felt that day let me know I would always be a bowhunter.

I thank Dad for teaching me what bowhunting should be. He and I get to hunt together quite a lot now and have shared many adventures in several states. I have been fortunate to harvest a few animals while Dad and I were together, but the most outstanding trophies are the cherished memories of these adventures. I would not trade those recollections for any amount of antler or number of animals.

When Hunter was born, Dad and I both knew that it wouldn't be long before our new little partner joined us in the woods. While he was still in diapers, we began taking Hunter to the bow range. He was soon shooting a bow and tagged along with us in the deer woods. As my son grew older, it became harder to tell which of us was more excited at the prospects of him becoming a bowhunter. By six years of age, much to the chagrin of his mother and grandmothers, Hunter began practicing his ascent and descent of trees in our yard. Following ground-level instruction, I belayed my soon-to-be treestand buddy while he climbed up and secured his safety harness to the tree. At the beginning of the season, Hunter was sitting in a stand just below my position while patiently awaiting a deer's arrival. Without a bow in hand, my son was learning to be a bowhunter, and by the time he could hunt with his bow, he had spent dozens of afternoons

sitting in a tree beside me. He would join his Papa in a ground blind at other times, often sharing in other exciting hunts. Hunter soon developed enough strength to draw a legal weight bow, and at twelve years of age, on a frosty October morning, I watched as he overcame a severe case of buck fever and arrowed his first deer. I do not know who was prouder that day, Hunter, Dad, or I, as the recovery of his button buck cemented Hunter's entry into the bowhunting fraternity.

As the years passed, Dad, Hunter, and I looked forward to each day we spent bowhunting together. With Dad being retired and my work schedule finally settling down a little, Dad and I were getting to hunt together more frequently. Unfortunately, Hunter's work schedule, combined with a full complement of college courses, left him little time for bowhunting and even less opportunity to share hunts with both of us. Though we all knew that the chance for one of us to kill a deer might present itself, this afternoon's hunt was more about the opportunity for three generations of dedicated bowhunters to share a hot, sweaty, mosquito-infested afternoon. The sighting of a deer would only be icing on the proverbial cake.

As we often do, we each agreed that should someone shoot a deer; he would first attempt to call everyone else in our party. Knowing that cell service was frequently spotty, we also agreed that should the phones not work, the lucky hunter would return to the trucks and sound the horn periodically until we all got together. Joining up would allow us to be involved with the blood trailing and recovery effort. Hopeful, yet realistic, none of us much expected that we would be getting back together until after dark. We would then rehash the afternoon's events. As I grabbed my gear from the truck, I was pleased to watch my two favorite hunting partners drive down the road a few hundred yards and begin gathering their gear for their hot climb.

An hour later, I was beginning to wonder what was going on as I once again listened to a vehicle's horn blowing in the distance. Once again, I convinced myself that I needed to stay put in the tree. A minute or so later, the sound of the horn came again. I tried to convince myself that the sound was coming from too far away, but I knew the thick early October vegetation would make things sound farther than usual. Though the direction of the sound was close to where I had parked, I was not optimistic the noise was originating from our trucks. Doubts continued to run through my head as I pondered whether to start descending my perch and head back down the mountain.

Hearing the horn again, I decided I had better climb down, head

~ continued on page 26 ~



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down the mountain, and check out what was going on. Twenty minutes later, I saw my truck through the vegetation and was surprised to see Dad and Hunter standing beside it. They had just placed a written note on my windshield and turned to leave when I owled softly to gain their attention. Turning toward me, they both headed my way, smiling ear to ear.

Both excitedly began talking as they described the last hour's happenings. After departing the truck, they began easing up the mountain. As promised, Dad had dropped Hunter off near a fresh scrape on the old road they had walked up. Hunter quickly placed his stand and climbed onto the platform. Dad had barely gotten out of sight when Hunter heard running on the bench above him. Looking up, he saw three does heading his way. Being perfectly content to shoot one of the ladies, Hunter began readying himself when he heard a buck grunt directly uphill from his position and was surprised to see a very nice ten-point coming down the hill behind the does. A few seconds later, the deer passed directly under him. When the buck hit an opening at eight yards, Hunter grunted softly, stopping the buck in its tracks. Already at full draw, he released the string on his 40 lb. Bear Montana longbow, burying his Zwickey-tipped carbon shaft to the feathers just behind the buck's shoulder. Shortly after that, the deer disappeared, running flat out, headed downhill. Hunter listened intently for any indication of where the deer had gone, but within seconds the pine needled covered ground, wind, and thick vegetation had swallowed up all sounds of the buck's escape.

Hunter quickly reached in his pocket, pulled out his phone, and called his grandpa. It only took a second or two for Dad to answer. Hunter began relating his story as Dad headed back his way. My father hadn't even reached his stand before Hunter called with the good news. By the time Dad arrived at Hunter's location, the excited young man had exited the tree and began trying to contact me. Due to the poor cell service at my location, my phone did not identify the calls as being HUNTER's CELL, and I did not recognize the number as belonging to him. After I failed to answer, the two decided to return to the trucks and use the horn to notify me they needed assistance. They were about to give up and began trailing the deer without me when I finally arrived and got all the good news.

After a short discussion of the circumstances, we began our trip back up the mountain to search for what we all believed was a dead buck. Arriving at the shot location, we started our search but had yet to locate a single drop of blood after about thirty minutes. Hunter knew where he had last seen the deer, so while Dad and I continued looking for blood, he began circling below where he had lost sight of the deer. Minutes later, I heard Hunter yell that he had found the buck.

Just as he thought, Hunter had shot entirely through the deer with almost perfect arrow placement just behind the deer's shoulder and half-way up the deer's body. To this day, I do not know why we were unable to find blood, although I suspect the combination of failing light, pine needles on the forest floor, and speed at which the deer was running, combined for a very minimal blood trail at best. Although we searched hard, we were unable to recover the arrow either. We were perplexed but relieved. We were overwhelmed with emotion at the recovery of a beautiful buck. The deer was Hunter's best deer ever, and his first deer killed while his grandfather was present. I have been fortunate to watch him harvest several deer, including his first deer with a gun and bow and his first deer with a longbow. Dad, too, had been a part of another first, as Hunter had taken his first branch antlered buck with a bow. The buck was a heck of a deer to boot. We sat admiring the deer, enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime moment for three bowhunters. We each knew how lucky we were to share the woods as family, friends, and fellow outdoorsmen. As we sat quietly, thanking God for our opportunities together, I realized that we shared over 100 years of bowhunting experience. The way I see things, one hundred years on the mountain is something to be proud of.



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## Regular Member Profile

# Chad Slagle Dillon, CO

I grew up in a bowhunting family. My father opened Big Sandy Sports Shop in 1979 and we were a full archery dealer until he sold the business in 1996. Our family farm sits just south of the Mason Dixon line in West Virginia, but we regularly hunted Pennsylvania and Maryland, as well. I took my first deer, a small spike, with a bow at the age of thirteen. I took a spring turkey with my bow at sixteen. I was a competitive and sponsored compound shooter for several years. I shot and competed in Olympic style in college. After floating the Moose John with my dad in 1993 and meeting Jay Massey, I bought a Jerry Hill longbow when I got home and started building longbows and selfbows a few years later.

Bowhunting and archery in general has been a large part of my life. I met Fred Bear in 1985 when I attended the ATA trade show with my father. I learned to shoot instinctively by our friend and local minister, Rev. Stacy Groscup while in college. While other kids my age looked up to sports stars as their heroes, I was looking up to people like Judd Cooney, Chuck Adams, Paul Schafer, Paul Brunner, Gene Wensel, and Dwight Schuh. I have taken over sixty whitetails with a bow, three species of turkeys, mule deer, black bear, elk, javelina, antelope, and hogs, as well as numerous small game and predators.

I am a member of the Colorado Traditional Archery Society, the Colorado Bowhunters Association, Compton Traditional Bowhunters, The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Ducks Unlimited. I am involved with the youth program and youth hunts through CTAS. I have also worked with groups like Hunting for The Cure, Christian Bowhunters of America, The National Wild Turkey Federation, and Hunting with Heroes. I am also past president of the Tennessee Traditional Archery Society.

In 2006 I released an album called "High, Wild, and Free" to try to capture what traditional bowhunting and the outdoor lifestyle means to me through music. I followed it up with "Nights Like This" in 2008. I am very proud that these songs have been used as anthems for many bowhunters across the world, and with songs about Jay Massey, Fred Bear, Bart Schleyer, and others, I hope that I have been able to keep their stories and contributions alive for the next generation of bowhunters and outdoorsmen.

Having been involved with various hunting groups and organizations throughout my life, when I attended my first PBS banquet in 2010 in Nashville, I knew instantly that this organization was different. I saw a group of people concerned about how they conducted themselves in the field who were dedicated to helping others be successful and concerned about the future of the sport.



Many of the members were bowhunters that I had idolized since I was a young man, but they all seemed accessible and willing to take the time to help others and pass on their knowledge.

It will be a great honor to be a Qualified Regular member of this organization, but more importantly to me will be the honor of passing on what I have learned over the years to the next generation of bowhunters. To be able to sponsor Associate members and help them on their journey is my main reason in wanting to become a Regular member. Many of my mentors are gone now, and many others are along in years. I feel an obligation to give back to bowhunting, and the PBS seems like the best way for me to do just that.

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# FIVE GUYS I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW

## TALES OF A 2022 PBS MEMBER HUNT

By Mike Haynes

“Five guys you don’t even know?” That was the response from my wife and various other relatives and friends when I explained my plans to participate in my first ever Professional Bowhunters Society Member Hunt. I had read several articles about this backcountry hunt held in the beautiful and rugged Davis Mountains in what I’ve always referred to as “Deep West Texas.” I have traveled through this country north of the Big Bend many times for my job and always admired the beautiful peaks, some reaching over 8,300 feet above sea level, and the rugged cliffs and canyons. Many folks are shocked to learn of the towering mountain ranges in this part of Texas. These mountains are home to a broad spectrum of wildlife including white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, a few desert bighorn sheep, mountain lions, javelina, the exotic but free ranging Aoudad sheep, and even a few black bears, as well as a good population of wild hogs. The lower foothills are typical desert country, but the higher you climb in elevation, you will see pinon, juniper, and even Ponderosa pine, making one feel he could be in the foothills of the Rockies. The Davis Mountains and nearby Fort Davis, Texas, were named after former U. S. Secretary of War and later Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The area is full of interesting sites to see including the Fort Davis National Historic Site. Fort Davis is a very enjoyable place to visit and one of the best existing examples of an Army fort in the Southwestern United States. It was founded in 1854.

Prior to committing to the hunt, I first contacted William “Bubba” Graves who has been the organizer of this hunt for the past six plus years. He told me about the 9,000 plus acre private ranch where the hunt was held. It was to be an early February hunt and he said we would backpack in several miles, camp for six nights, and hunt the better part of seven days. Bubba told me the hunt was very popular and was almost full so I needed to make up my mind quickly. There was a small fee (an absolute bargain these days) to allow access to the ranch and after clearing it with my wife I mailed a check to Bubba. A week or two later Bubba would send out a list of equipment he recommended and I soon began to sort through my camping and hunting gear to see how I could survive in the “high country” of west Texas during the middle of winter. Bubba was the **first guy I didn’t know**. But, boy would I be happy that I got to know him as the hunt unfolded.

As we got closer to the hunt inquisitive minds (mainly mine) began to ask questions, probably more questions than Bubba wanted to answer.



1. On the road to the ranch.



3. John and Duane setting camp.



2. Hunters (l to r) Bubba Graves, Duane Krones, Mike Coss, Colby Farquhar, John Bochenek.



4. Bubba in front of his tipi.



5. Mike Coss prepping for the hunt.





Photo by Bubba Graves.

6. A complete group photo (l to r)--Bubba Graves, Duane Krones, John Bochenek, Colby Farquhar, Mike Haynes, Mike Coss

Soon our group got an email from the **second guy I didn't know**, Duane Krones from Iowa. Duane had been on several of these hunts and has a gift for writing. So he penned an eloquent email (a very long email I might add). It consisted of thirteen points with numerous sub points under each of those. One of my favorites was 6 (e): "chapstick is good to have in your shirt pocket." Who would have known? Anyhow, the lengthy email also contained directions on where exactly we would meet when we arrived at the ranch on Saturday before the hunt, but apparently me and **two of the other guys I didn't know** failed to read those directions. They were on page six of the email.

As it turned out, the **five guys I didn't know** all had longer drives to reach the ranch than I did from my home in northern New Mexico. Even Bubba who lived in northeast Texas lived a good hour farther from the ranch than I did. Saturday night we were to meet at the ranch, go out to a small town down the road for dinner, and spend the night in the ranch "bunkhouse" before backpacking into camp on Sunday morning. I pulled into the parking area of the ranch headquarters

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7. Mike Haynes's home for the week.



8. The Needle.



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on Saturday afternoon right on time. I was immediately greeted by a **third guy I didn't know**, John Bochenek from Michigan. John told me he'd been there for fifteen or twenty minutes and hadn't seen anyone else. John had flown into El Paso and rented a car to drive the three hours to the ranch. We talked for a bit and I then decided I'd take a little hike around to see what sites were near the ranch headquarters. After about fifteen minutes of looking around, I ventured up toward a house that looked like where the ranch foreman might live. As I did, I was greeted by a couple of cow dogs and a genuine west Texas cowboy, the ranch foreman named Keith. I guess Keith was **technically the sixth guy I didn't know**, but he didn't really count as he wasn't a PBS member.

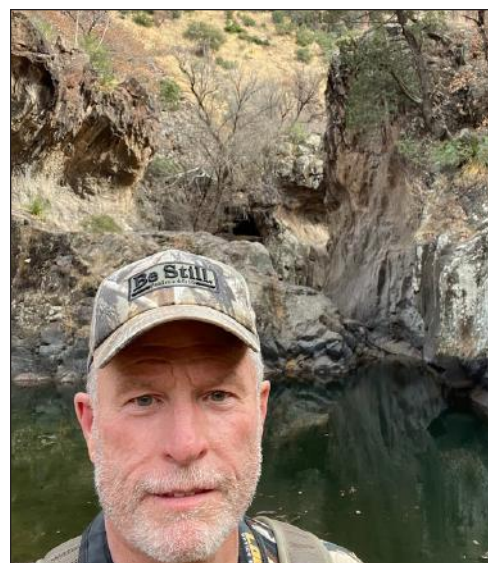
Keith promptly took me to the bunkhouse where Bubba, Duane, and Colby Farquhar, **the fourth guy I didn't know**, were gathered in the living room talking. I then proceeded to take a ration of grief from these guys (all of whom I had just met) for not reading Duane's email point 9 (a): "Stay to the left as you come in the main drive then you will have to turn right (west) and go up a small hill to the building on the south side of the drive. This is where we stay at." Bubba said they thought they had heard someone pull up earlier but I guess John and I weren't important enough to come searching for. Neither John nor I had read to the end of Duane's email and had been patiently waiting in the parking lot down below the bunkhouse.

When I hiked back down to the parking lot to retrieve my vehicle and tell John where the other guys were, Mike Coss from Ohio, **the fifth and final guy I didn't know**, had just pulled into the parking lot. I don't think he had read point 9 (a) either and he was glad to know how to get to the bunkhouse as well. Once at the bunkhouse, we quickly got situated with bunks in our sleeping quarters for that night at the ranch. Soon we were all gathered downstairs in the living area discussing important subjects like broadheads, extreme FOC, brace height, and the like. Bowhunters really enjoy talking about their equipment and the anticipation of the impending hunt was building. All **five guys I didn't know** seemed to be very likeable fellows and I could tell this hunt would be enjoyable whether we made meat or not.

Shortly thereafter, we headed to town to eat some Mexican food at La Cueva de Oso (the Bear's Cave). Keith and his wife came along and new relationships began to be forged. The chips and salsa brought out even more stories of our hunting prowess and by the time we finished our excellent Mexican dinner (even by New Mexico standards) we were well on our way to forming the friendships that the PBS is all about. To top it off, on our way back to the ranch, in our headlights, we spotted a couple of hogs and a javelina in the bar ditches along the



9. The Springs—a source of water in dry country.



10. Mike Haynes at The Notch pond.



11. "The High Country" in the Davis Mountains consisting of Ponderosa pine, alligator juniper, pinon, several oak species including live oak, various species of yucca, agave, and plenty of cat claw.



12. Wild hogs shredded this yucca.



road, raising the level of excitement. Back at the bunkhouse, we visited a bit more but hit the rack early to get rested up for our morning pack in.

The next morning we all finished packing our backpacks, had some breakfast, and up the canyon we started. On our way to the trailhead we spotted a sounder of several hogs and some small piglets so spirits were high for a great time pursuing our prey. The weather was just about perfect the first few days with highs around 60° F, and lows maybe slightly below freezing. After a fairly easy hike up the canyon, we arrived at a small oak flat to set up camp about mid-morning. A beautifully clear creek flowed down the canyon. It played “cat and mouse” as we ascended the trail, popping up above ground for several hundred yards and then mysteriously disappearing into the gravel creek bottom, traveling underground for long distances. Just below camp it flowed clear and pure and each of us made sure to filter enough water to fill our water bottles for both staying hydrated and cooking our freeze-dried meals in camp.

Once camp was set, sleeping pads inflated, down bags laid out to fluff, and gear was organized for camping and hunting, we each headed out with our chosen weapon (longbows and recurves) to explore the incredibly beautiful and rugged country God had created called the Davis Mountains. On this hunt, I chose to bring a pair of 1961 (my birth year) Bear Archery recurves. I left a really cool factory camo Grizzly at the ranch house as a backup bow and carried my Grayling green 1961 Kodiak, 60# at 28”, about 69# at my 31” draw length. Both the bow and I were just over 60 years old and I had been trying my best to kill something with that bow for the past year, without success. During that Sunday evening’s hunt most of us spotted hogs but no shots were taken. We returned to camp but Jeff Davis County had a burn ban and therefore no campfire was allowed for socializing at night. That’s where Bubba stepped up.

Three of us brought typical backpacking tents, but Bubba and Duane each brought their Seek Outside tipis. Each had its own ultra-light titanium folding woodstove. The heat of those stoves would prove invaluable as the hunt progressed. Bubba’s tipi, a large eight man version, became the meeting place each morning for breakfast and each evening for dinner and conversation—the place where those PBS friendships would be cultivated.

Although I thought I had set my tent quite far from the crowd, I discovered the first evening that I was still lulled to sleep at night by snoring that was reminiscent of some old episodes of the “Three Stooges”. The only problem was I couldn’t reach out and slap the annoying parties like Moe would famously do to Larry and Curly. “Hey, wake up and go to sleep!” Moe always said. Once I did fall asleep, the first night in camp was full of visions of sounders of wild hogs and squadrons of javelina. Morn-

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13. Author's wild hog killed with his homemade ash arrow.



15. Spring fed creeks filled the canyon bottoms and provided filterable water for drinking.

14. Mike Haynes and his hog.



16. PBS camp featuring the Seek Outside tipis.



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ing came early and soon everyone was gathered by the woodstove in the tipi eating freeze-dried eggs and instant oatmeal and discussing their plans for the day's hunt. That is except for Duane who managed to slip off well before first light each morning; although I'm not sure why since you can't see the pigs in the dark. Anyhow, we each made plans that morning to explore some promising areas. We compared topo maps and headed out to the steep and forbidding country that lay above our camp.

That first morning, I teamed up with Colby to make a fairly steep climb into an area known as Nehemiah's Bedground. Colby was about twenty five years my junior and served to coax me up the hill about 1,500 vertical feet to a large flat bench area with a small livestock tank that looked very promising for game on our topo maps. Shortly after we had stopped for a snack at the pond, we split up to hunt on our own. I hadn't gone too far since parting ways with Colby when I saw a nice black hog cross the trail in front of me. The wind was blowing steadily up the hill in the direction the black pig had gone. I began to parallel him up the hill, but soon realized he would cross my scent and probably wind me. My thought was to circle out wide, out of sight (and hopefully out of scent range) of the hog and scramble up the hill to get above and downwind from this critter. I did just that, but wasn't sure where the black hog had gone. I was pretty sure I had beat him up the hill, but I had lost track of him as I circumvented the hillside.

I began to slowly still hunt my way down the hill toward the draw that I figured he would be working up. After sneaking down the side-hill about forty yards I caught sight of some movement. It was the black pig. As I began to move his way I just happened to look through a grass patch above to see a lighter colored hog standing in front of me with its head buried in a shrub. This hog was a mere twelve paces in front of me and would make an easy shot. As every archer dreams of, I had my target in close and totally unaware of my presence. I instinctively drew my bow, anchored and released my homemade ash arrow, tipped with a sharp two-blade Grizzly broadhead. The arrow hit exactly where I was looking and the pig let out a blood-curdling squeal. I immediately ran to the top of the ridge to watch the action as I was sure my arrow hit perfectly. When I spotted the sow I realized she had been facing the opposite direction from the way I thought she was standing. My arrow had hit significantly back just in front of the rear leg rather than just behind the front shoulder. Fortunately it had broken one rear leg and significantly injured the other. She seemed to be bleeding pretty hard as well. I continued to follow the pig and watched as she bedded twice, hoping she would expire in her bed. Finally, I sneaked up and finished her off with an arrow to the vitals. I was one excited hog hunter. The



25. Is this really Texas?



27. A beautiful west Texas snow-covered agave.



19. After Mike Haynes's hog harvest, a backstrap and tenderloin dinner was in order.



20. The author making friends with the ranch's horses who had been turned out in the mountains for the winter.



weather was beautiful as were the views from the kill sight and my skinning and quartering job went quickly.

The trip back down the trail to camp was a bit dicey with the added weight of the meat and skull. The Davis Mountains are steep, the trails are not well marked, and much of the trail was filled with scree, small loose rock making footing difficult. I had a couple of slips that bruised my pride more than my butt, but I finally made it back to camp. The next morning I packed the meat down to the ranch to store in the freezer and returned to camp to process and saute up some backstrap and tenderloin for my newly made friends. In hopes of killing some game, I had packed in a small skillet for my Jetboil along with some olive oil and pork rub for just such an occasion. When everyone else returned to camp, the hot out of the skillet wild pork disappeared in a hurry. Nothing beats some freshly harvested camp meat, especially when the alternative is a packaged dehydrated backpacking meal.

That evening, Colby came back to camp with news that he had killed a javelina near the spot I shot my hog. A squadron of skunk pigs came in to water and Colby used his longbow to collect a beautiful boar javelina. The next day the weather turned nasty with cold and snow for most of the rest of the hunt and Colby and I wound up being the only two in camp to make a kill. I think everyone saw hogs almost every day, but javelina eluded all of us but Colby.

Thanks to the hospitality of Bubba, we all managed to survive the west Texas "polar vortex." Bubba graciously allowed us to meet in his large tipi for breakfast and dinner as he kept the fire in his woodstove stoked and allowed us to enjoy the warmth when we weren't out hunting or snug in our sleeping bags. A nice down bag with an added liner proved to be the ticket for me as I slept cozy and warm in my small backpacking tent each night. Two of the nights had lows in the single digits so getting in and out of my bag proved to be a chilly adventure. And, once inside it was all I could do to unzip the next morning to dress for the day's hunt.

Breakfasts and dinners with my other fellow PBS members around the woodstove turned out to be a great time of fellowship and camaraderie. Hunting stories were shared and friendships were kindled in that warm tipi. The main purpose of these member hunts is for building relationships and we certainly did that on this trip. It is always fun to kill an animal, but making friends with **five guys I didn't even know** was a true blessing. We have stayed in contact since the hunt and are already planning some other hunts, shoots, and archery related activities for the next few years to come. Thanks especially to William "Bubba" Graves for organizing this hunt in the rugged mountains of "Deep West Texas!"

I would recommend this hunt to anyone who is serious about meeting new bowhunting friends and spending a few days packed in "off

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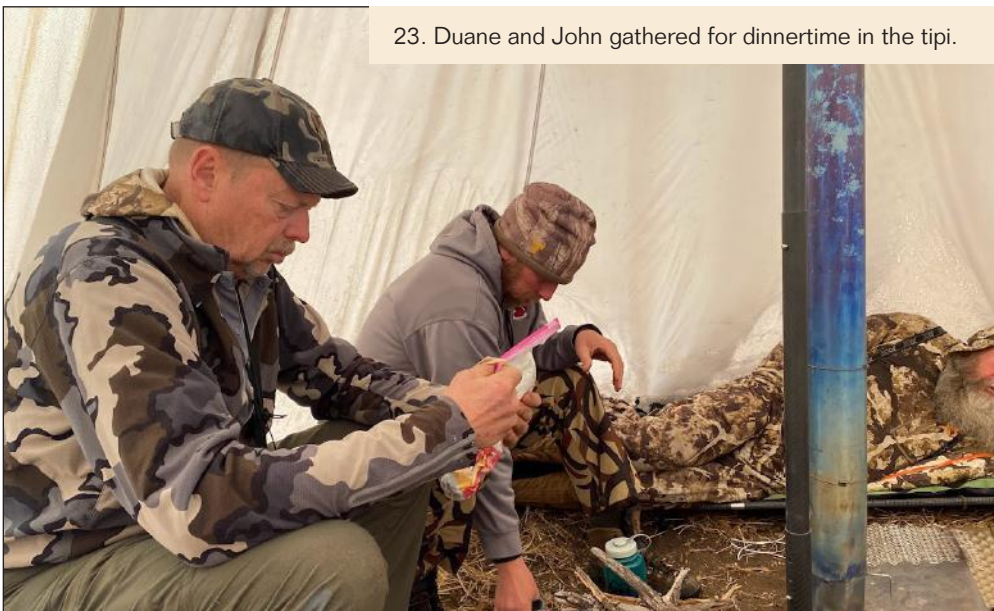
28. Mike H. posing on a bluebird day after the snow.



22. Mike H. enjoying the woodstove in Bubba's tipi.



30. Nothing like a stop in the warm sunshine after a couple of cold and snowy days.



23. Duane and John gathered for dinnertime in the tipi.



the grid”.. It is always fun to hunt with folks that share your love of the bow and arrow and your fondness of the great outdoors. At Bubba’s suggestion, I have also committed to becoming more involved in the PBS and am now applying for Regular membership. I have already made plans to attend another member hunt during this coming year and hope to meet at least **five more guys I don’t even know** to share a camp and a great hunting experience. Thanks Bubba for organizing and leading this incredible PBS member experience!

**Equipment Notes:** Mike carried his 1961 Bear Kodiak on this hunt, 60# @ 28”. He used heavy ash arrows of his own making tipped with 160 grain Grizzly single bevel broadheads. Mike carried his gear in an Osprey backpack. His back-packing equipment included a Big Agnes 15° down sleeping bag and insulated Air Core pad with a Big Agnes down bag liner, a Nemo Hornet 2P tent, and an REI Quarter Dome SL Tarp. Mike also used a Katadyn Hiker Pro water filter and a Jetboil Flash cooking system. Some high tech merino clothing and a sturdy pair of Lowa boots rounded out his equipment for this winter hunt in the Davis Mountains.

**About the Author:** Mike Haynes was born in Albuquerque, NM. He spent his childhood in New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Texas, before moving to Colorado to attend college. Mike has been married to his lovely wife Laura for almost thirty six years. They have three grown children and two young granddaughters. Mike and his family owned a hardware store and lumberyard in southwest Colorado for more than thirty years. Mike and his wife moved back to New Mexico about eight years ago and now reside in Los Alamos on the mesas along the edge of the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico. Mike has been a PBS Associate Member off and on since about the mid-1990’s. Mike also belongs to the Colorado Bowhunters Association and the Colorado Traditional Archers Society.



31. Jed Clampett (Mike Coss) packing out, back to the ranch.



32. Mike Haynes packing out after six nights in the majestic Davis Mountains.



34. Colby Farquhar with a nice west Texas javelina boar  
Photo by Colby Farquhar.



35. After returning home the author turned his hog into some sausage and enjoyed it with some scrambled eggs and biscuits with wild hog sausage gravy.



# SPRING RITUALS

By Chad K. Slagle

**S**pring is a magical time of year, when the cycles of birth and regrowth begin, and the world comes back to life. Countries and cultures around the world have been celebrating the emergence of spring through various rituals since ancient times. Thousands gather in Thailand each year for the world's largest water fight. Bosnia has the Festival of Scrambled Eggs (a celebration I could certainly get behind), and people gather at Stonehenge in England to celebrate the spring equinox. Personally, I leave the light robes, flowers in the hair, and dancing around large bonfires to the pagans, dirty hippies, and members of Congress. For this God-fearing bowhunter, my spring rituals have remained virtually the same for the past 30 years, give or take, and is as much a celebration of a strange bird as it is of the rebirth of our local flora.



Now, I know for many of my bowhunting friends, turkey season is just a good excuse to get out after a long winter, enjoy the woods coming back to life, and loosen up those shooting muscles. In other words, it's a casual thing. Some may say, "Slagle, you take this whole turkey hunting thing too seriously." (My wife has threatened an intervention in the past). I say it's time to grow up and get serious about turkey hunting, and one of the best ways to start is creating a set of rituals around it.

Of course, the rituals you create will depend widely on the area you live, the type of hunter you are, your personality, and a host of other variables. What the exact rituals are is not important. What is important is that these rituals are out of the ordinary of your daily routine. They can only be practiced during the magical time of year. That's what makes them sacred. Now, I cannot guarantee that creating such rituals will make you a great turkey hunter. I can only guarantee that you will appear to others as a serious turkey hunter, which could cause them to consider inviting you to the family farm to call for them...and you will be happy to do so on the condition you can hunt there, too. Or people may just think you're strange. But, either way, you will still be considered a "serious" turkey hunter.

Springtime in the rural West Virginia of my child-

hood meant two things: fishing and spring turkeys. Fishing came first, and much of that time was spent with my grandfather along the banks or in the Coleman canoe on Big Sandy River. I was twelve or thirteen when my grandfather casually asked me, "So, what grade are you in?"





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“Well, you are basically a teenager, huh?”, he continued. He reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a can of Skoal. “Here...try a pinch of this,” he grinned. I all but lost my lunch over the side of the canoe, but my momma always said I was stubborn. After about the third or fourth try that spring, I got to where I could handle it. “Now remember, don’t ever tell your mom about this.” He continued, “It’s a man thing and she wouldn’t understand. Neither would that wuss of a dad you have,” he finished. I never picked up the habit full time, but each spring I would pick up a can of snuff or two. I traded in the Skoal for organic pipe tobacco years ago, but just like the dip cans, I only get it in the spring and rarely touch it after June 1st. I do smoke it in Grandpa’s old pipe, of course.

Another important ritual that usually takes place around February is the “Gathering of The Calls.” This is critical. With over thirty years chasing turkeys I have amassed a large collection of calls—slates, boxes, locators, reeds, and a host of one-offs that I probably wouldn’t carry into the field if I knew what they were actually worth. Once I have the calls all laid out on my workbench, I begin with the slates calls by roughing them up with a scouring pad. Once that is done, I pull out my array of strikers to give them a test run. I like to carry three slate calls with four to six strikers that will give me the gamut of hen talk... from young and sweet to old and raspy. Next are the box calls. I always carry one larger, deeper sounding box and one smaller lighter sounding box. Each box call is chalked and tested. Occasionally I will sand and tune a box call, but most of my old standards are exactly where I want them. Next, I double check the crow calls, owl hooters, gobble shakers, pileated woodpecker, and coyote calls to be sure the reeds are working properly. Finally, I pull my mouth calls from the back of the refrigerator and give them each a test run. I have my favorites, of which I always have two of each for the season. I pull any that may be getting worn out and buy new ones. Of course, I will randomly pick up new calls to try, but rarely hunt with them the same season.



Then there is the matter of decoys. I have a collection of decoys that would make most duck and goose hunters envious. This is mostly because I rarely ever get rid of any, even my old Feather Flex decoys that look like a bad yard ornament. Still, there are times when I am hiking back after those mountain birds that those decoys are best to carry. So, I make sure all my decoys are in working order and clean. Then, I pull out the oil paints and brushes and add detail and color to the ones that need it. Between turkey decoys and duck decoys over the years, I have learned to be a pretty good artist. With a little patience, even those old, rough decoys can pass as a good imitation.

And finally, we come to the smaller, more subtle rituals that are involved with my turkey seasons. When in the back-country hunting elk or mule deer, my pack will be filled with energy bars, dehydrated foods, and trail mix. But when it comes to turkeys, I get a hankering for the snacks my momma packed in my fanny pack when I was a kid. You can be sure that a box of Little Debbie Oatmeal Crème pies, orange slice candies, and some homemade no bake cookies will make their way into my day pack. My taste buds for beverages even change come spring. Typically, I enjoy a quality bourbon or whiskey from time to time. I have also been known to have a quality craft beer on occasion—dark brew, not the IPAs like the kids drink. (Intolerably Poor Attempt at beer) But again, I return to my roots for a couple months and can suddenly stand the taste of a Budweiser or Miller Lite.

So, I guess what I am saying is that every spring, when the dogwoods begin to bloom and the buffalo grass starts to green up, there is also a young man that emerges again for just a few weeks. He’s not as reckless as he once was. He’s a little more confident than he used to be. He appreciates more these days and he’s not in such a hurry anymore. Is it these sacred rituals that bring him back to life every spring? I can’t really say for sure, but one thing I am sure of, it is always good to see him again.



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# SWAMP BEAR



By John Stockman

“Are the black flies and mosquitoes always this bad,” I asked my bear hunting friend and guide Rod Hillegas. “No,” he replied, “They’re usually worse.” We had taped our sleeves and trouser cuffs shut to keep out the ravenous insects and applied insect repellent to every piece of exposed skin. Not to be deterred, a cloud of bloodsucking insects buzzed around our heads and crawled over our clothing probing for an opening. I knew from bitter experience how miserable they can make life for those who fail to take proper precautions.

This wasn’t my first bow hunt for bear, but it was my first with Rod. We had just hung my portable tree stand about six feet off the ground in a pine tree that offered both a clear shot to the bait tree and a background to mask my human silhouette. Rod, a bear hunting fanatic who had hunted this particular area of Ontario for several years, recommends that hunters take only close shots that will allow the broadhead to penetrate both lungs. Therefore, he places most of his stands about twelve to fifteen yards from his bait tree, and because they are so close, he keeps them low to get the best angle for a double hung shot. He recommends either a broadside or quartering away shot—nothing else.

As I was hanging my stand, Rod replenished the bait. Unlike most bowhunters who use meat scraps, fish and sometimes putrid carcasses for bait, Rod uses donuts and honey. In fact, he was known as the “donuts and honey guide.” Having sat over foul-smelling bait, I can say with certainty that I prefer the smell of donuts and honey.

Rod places his baits on natural travel routes and uses the strong aroma of honey to attract bears. Each day he pours a pint of honey down the trunk of the bait tree and then ties a plastic bag of donuts high up the tree trunk. When bears come in to the bait, they usually spend several minutes licking the honey from the tree. Generally, the bear then rips the bottom out of the bag of donuts which fall near the tree. This technique gives the bowhunter time to wait for the ideal angle while the bear feeds on the scattered donuts.

As Rod prepared the bait, I waited near my tree stand to avoid leaving my scent near the bait. After he finished the baiting, Rod walked on a large dead log that spanned the twelve yard space between the bait tree and my stand. We were through baiting and installing my stand by noon and Rod suggested that I leave and return

at about 5:00 p.m. He said that the bear had been hitting the bait daily for several days, and no one had hunted the location yet. My interest was piqued.

At 5:00 p.m. I quietly walked to my stand. The closer I got to my stand, the more cautious I was. My heart rate accelerated at the thought of surprising a feeding bear. A quick glance at the bait tree showed that the donut bag was still intact.

I climbed onto my stand, fastened my safety belt, leaned back and began to wait. Slowly, the small creatures whose home I had disturbed adjusted to my presence and resumed their normal activities. A squirrel deftly tore a small opening in the top of the donut bag and scampered off with a morsel. Two robber camp birds then took turns pecking at the bag.

About an hour later, I heard a large animal moving toward me through the heavy underbrush. It must be a moose I thought since we had seen several in the area. Suddenly, the brush near the bait tree parted and a huge bear appeared. Without hesitation, it walked directly to the bait tree. This is going to be a cinch I thought. I should have known better.

The bear walked past the bait tree without a glance. It stepped onto the log that extended from the bait tree to my stand. It then lowered its nose to the log and, trailing like a hound, walked directly to my tree. It was obviously following Rod’s scent from six hours earlier. I stood motionless with my heart thumping madly while the bear sniffed the base of the tree. Suddenly, it raised itself onto its rear legs and peered at my trembling form. I fervently wished that my stand was about three times as high. The bear swung its head from side to side, breathing heavily.

It stepped forward and sniffed at my stand. My heart raced. The bear woofed loudly and I jumped. If I hadn’t been tied to the tree, I would have probably fallen out into space. At my sudden movement, the bear dropped down and crashed off into the underbrush. I sagged against the tree shaking from excitement. After several moments, my legs finally stopped trembling. Unfortunately, nothing approached the bait tree after the bear departed. At dark, I descended to the ground and hurriedly walked to my pick-up spot on the road. Every bush and stump took on the shape of a large bruin. Several times, I



cast apprehensive glances over my shoulder at imagined noises.

Back at camp, I related the incident to Rod and my four other hunting companions. Rod said that my bear would probably return the following evening.

At about 7:00 p.m. the next evening, lodged comfortably in my tree stand, I heard something approaching through the underbrush. The bear from the previous day suddenly appeared. Again, it mounted the fallen log and walked directly to my tree. It immediately stood erect at the base of my tree and woofed loudly. Again, I nearly jumped out of my clothes and, again, the bear crashed off at my movement. It stopped about twenty yards beyond the bait tree and, in a rage demolished an ant hill. Several times I caught glimpses of it moving through the brush behind the bait tree. It woofed occasionally and popped its teeth. I winced each time it made a noise.

My walk to the road at dark was even more suspenseful (and quicker) than the previous night. At the cabin, I congratulated my good friend Clarence Shrewsbury on taking his first bear. Rod had spread a container of bacon grease on the bait tree where Clarence was hunting. Just before dark, a bear had quietly approached Clarence's bait and spent a half hour lying on its belly licking bacon grease and honey without giving Clarence the shot angle he wanted. Finally, Clarence said the bear stood up and reached for the bag of donuts. It placed one paw on the tree and raised its paw nearest Clarence to tear open the donut bag. It was standing broadside when Clarence calmly shot it through both lungs.

Rod suggested I move my stand to another area as I had spooked the bear and it probably would come to the bait after dark. I had helped him bait other stands and particularly liked a remote bait he had named "Swamp," so we placed my stand there for the evening's hunt. The mosquitoes were even more plentiful on the new stand, probably because of its proximity to the swamp. Rod had supplemented the donuts and honey with a couple pounds of bacon strips which he spread across a log in front of the bait tree.

With just a few minutes of daylight remaining, I saw a bear approach the log with the bacon strips treats. He quickly ate the bacon. The bear was broadside to me and I drew my bow and waited for him to move his nearest front leg forward. When he did, I released and noticed too late that he was turning toward me. When the arrow struck the bear, he went berserk! The arrow appeared to knock him off his feet and he fell on his back on the opposite side of the log. I futilely tried to nock another arrow while watching the bear flailing the air with all four feet and snarling and popping his teeth. I was glad to be out of his reach.

After a few seconds, the bear gained its feet and slowly walked into the swamp. I thought I saw it fall about thirty yards from my stand and I listened for its death moan; there was none. The woods were ominously silent. That disturbed me, since most bears make an audible moaning sound as they die. My shot had looked good except for the fact that the bear had begun to turn toward me as I released. Doubts began to creep into my mind. Had I only wounded the bear? I sincerely hoped not.

Darkness fell quickly. I decided to wait a few minutes before descending my tree. Rod had told all of us not to track a wounded bear by ourselves, especially in the dark. I knew I should walk out to the road and wait for my friend, Ken Sorrells, who was hunting a couple miles away to pick me up. I ignored Rod's advice. I just had to see if the bear was where I had last seen it. Bad decision! I turned on my flashlight and cautiously walked into the swamp. I was as taut as my bowstring as I approached the area where I had seen the bear fall. Initially, I saw nothing except dense underbrush and swamp grass, but I thought I heard raspy breathing. I wanted desper-

ately to believe the breathing I heard was my own, but when I held my breath I still heard it—close! I cast my light in the direction of the noise and saw the bear lying on its belly.

It can't be alive, I thought as I stepped toward it. The bear immediately rose to its hind feet. It snarled viciously and began to stalk me. "John," I thought to myself, "you have done some dumb things in your life, but this ranks as one of the dumbest."

I began back peddling and the bear continued to advance. He was closing the distance quickly and I didn't like his intentions—he was in a vengeful mood. I had an arrow nocked and I quickly dropped to my knees hoping to see his silhouette. Fueled by a jolt of adrenaline, I effortlessly drew my fifty pound recurve to full draw and launched what I hoped to be a fatal shot into the bear. I heard the arrow strike bone and saw the bear crumple to earth. It was over, and I suddenly felt weak and wobbly.

The wait for my friend Ken Sorrells at the pick-up point was a long one. Every creature that made a sound brought to life visions of a stalking bear. Back at camp, I was justifiably chastised by Rod for going after the bear in the dark by myself. He said we would wait for daylight to recover it. Fortunately, my friend Max Slade took some of the heat off me by telling us of his success that evening.

I spent a sleepless night. At daybreak, Rod, Ken and I went to the swamp to search for my bear. We found it where I last shot it. My arrow was protruding from its chest. The broadhead had severed the bear's spine. Ken remarked, "John, that was a great shot. You hit the center of that white patch on his chest." I said, "That was all I could see in the dark." Ken dismissively said, "Yeah, right. It makes for a good story." I just smiled.

Rod had been correct. He had told us that a double lung shot is the only shot a responsible bowhunter should attempt on a black bear. The black bear is a heavy boned, tough animal that can travel great distances if not hit solidly in both lungs. My first arrow had passed through only one lung and the liver. If we choose to hunt black bears, we owe them a quick, humane death. My friends Clarence and Max shot their bears through both lungs and their bears fell within a few yards and died within seconds.

I'll cherish the memories of my Ontario bow hunt—the intense excitement and suspense, the camaraderie I shared with my bowhunting friends, and the opportunity to observe a fascinating big game animal. I have a feeling that I'll add to those memories in future hunts, but not by tacking chances with a wounded bear. Listen to your guide; your safety, and indeed your life, may depend upon it.

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# The Compound Golf Club

By Gene Wensel, April 1973

Once upon a time, there was a big money golf tournament. Twenty-one of the world's top professional golfers showed up for a crack at the prize money.

Interestingly, one golfer didn't bring traditional golf clubs. Instead, he brought a new invention he called a "compound golf club." It consisted of pulleys, cables, rollers and a powerful trip hammer utilizing a set trigger. It also sported a digital wind gauge, an optical rangefinder, a precision altimeter, a barometer, a gyroscope, and an infra-red laser beam sight with an ultraviolet prism built right into it.

When it came time to play golf, the noble gent walked up to the first tee, set his instrument down next to a fresh golf ball, double checked his instrument readings and squeezed the set-trigger. Smash! The ball was hit with precision accuracy right up to the

cup, where it rolled in with a firm "plop." For eighteen consecutive holes, the smiling gentleman repeated his performance to a speechless crowd.

At the end of the tournament, when the money was passed out, several elder participants and quite a few bystanders protested to the eligibility of this newcomer with his invention. The winner just smiled and said with firm belief, "You men just keep on using your primitive golf clubs. This is progress; an era of technology. Look, I still had to measure, calibrate and set minor adjustments. There will always be the remote possibility of missing the cup. If you really want to be primitive, trade in your traditional clubs for a big stick and a round stone. You do it your way, I'll do it mine." With that, the smiling man collected his winnings, a beautiful trophy and drove his limo off into the sunset.

There were twenty-one professional golfers in the tournament that day. Thirteen of them vowed to buy themselves a compound golf club as soon as they could afford one. Three men wept openly, two vomited, two dropped to the ground shaking uncontrollably and one passed away of a massive coronary back at the clubhouse. Somehow, golfing hasn't been quite the same since.



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- The opportunity to defend the sport against anti-hunting forces



# BLACK WIDOWS AND BLACK BEARS

By Sean Bleakley

**A**fter the 200 pound bear walked off, I stood up in my tree stand to regain the feeling in my legs from fifteen minutes of sitting while enjoying a close encounter with one of Maine's many black bears. As the blood rushed back into my legs, I looked down to see that a much bigger bear had just walked directly under my tree. I grabbed my Black Widow PCH as the bear continued to track where the other bear had been. At about eighteen yards the 400 pound bruin offered me a great angle for a shot. I tried to imagine a dot against the black blob. I drew to anchor and released in one fluid motion. With a growl and roar, the bear took off like a shot. I had just filled my 2012 Maine bear tag on opening day.

Bear hunting has always been a passion of mine. My very first bear hunt came in the woods of central Maine in 1992. That was my very first trip to the Pine Tree State. I instantly fell in love with the sweet smell of the boreal forest. Since then, I tried to get up there any chance that I could.

A post by Bill Langer on Tradgang in 2010, lead me to another outfitter in northern Maine. A few traditional bowhunters were set to hunt with Tony Boucher of Squapan Mountain Outfitters and there was a spot open. I jumped at the chance. That hunt was actually my reintroduction to the PBS. Terry Receveur and his daughter Jen were there that same week. Terry did a great job of promoting and I signed up when I returned home from that rip.

Three other bowhunters in camp that year were Roger Fulton, Toby and Myles Essick of Black Widow Custom Bows. The Black Widow Boys had brought several demo bows for all to shoot. Now, I was in no great rush to buy a new bow as I had just ordered a new Widow earlier that year, but it was still fun to shoot some different models. It was a great hunt despite the unseasonably warm weather and a few bears were taken.

Opening week of the 2012 season would become the first annual "Black Widow Maine Black Bear Hunt" at Squapan Mountain Outfitters. And if bear hunting







~ continued on page 44 ~



wasn't enough fun, Roger and Toby give a new Widow for the biggest bear taken during that week each year. I was fortunate enough to take home the very first Widow for the biggest bear during the Widow Week's inaugural bear hunt. I've lost track of how many of the Widow bear hunts that I've been on over the years, but it has been one that I look forward to making any chance that I get.

I have met or attended bear camp with many PBS members over the last ten years. Brian Pennington and Nick Sernik both had taken home a new Black Widow for their bears taken in 2018 and 2019. I would stop in Portsmouth, NH to have lunch or coffee with David Kretschmar each year on my drive up, until 2018 when he attended the Widow hunt and we drove together from Portsmouth. Tim Denial drove up with Nick 2021. Tim is always fun in camp.

I would be remiss if I had not mentioned our traditional lobster feast. The highlight of each Widow week was when Toby would drive into town to get a price on lobsters. Everyone who wanted, would buy their share of lobsters and a good old fashioned New England lobster boil would ensue.

There were so many memories and funny moments from the hunts over the years that it's difficult to list them all in this article. Going through pictures for this article brought back many great memories of my hunts at Squapan Mountain, I hope to go back very soon.

The logo for Great Northern Bow Company is an oval containing two stylized evergreen trees. The text "GREAT NORTHERN" is on either side of the trees, and "BOW COMPANY" is centered below them.

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# MEMBER PHOTOS



Great time at the Jay Massey Memorial shoot again this year! Mike Harris enjoyed meeting some new people and especially enjoyed spending time with Dick Hamilton and Sterling and Krista Holbrook. Could've been hunting but time is much better spent with great people like these!

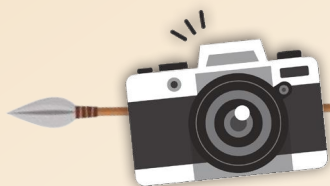


  
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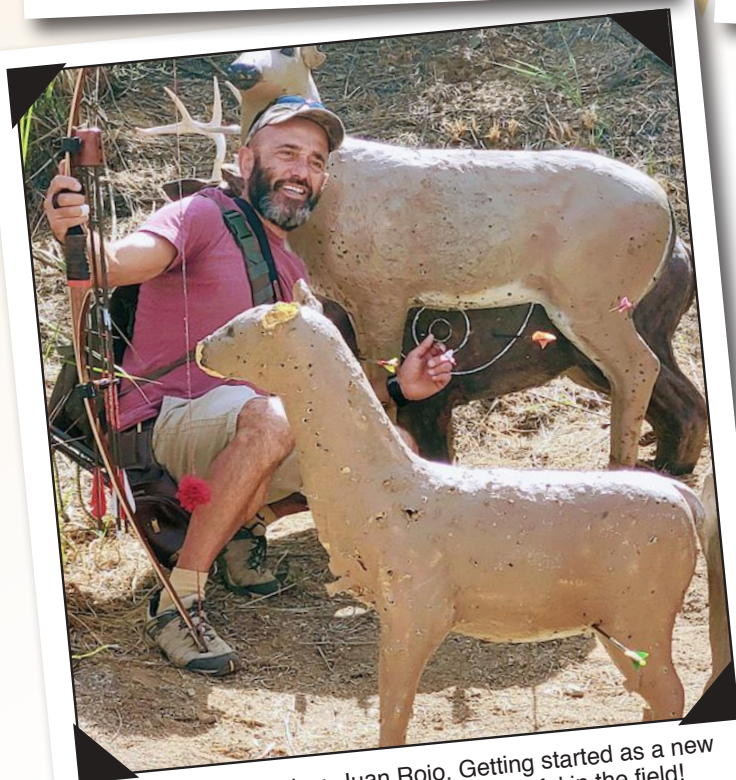
# MEMBER PHOTOS



Bob Lagone and his buck taken with a Schafer bow, cedar shafts, and Magnus head.



Luke Chase had a great end to the Iowa turkey bow season opener. A five yard shot, a fifteen yard recovery, and straight to the grill.



California member, Juan Rojo. Getting started as a new member and anxious to be successful in the field!



Bob Lagone in January 2022 with a late season doe.

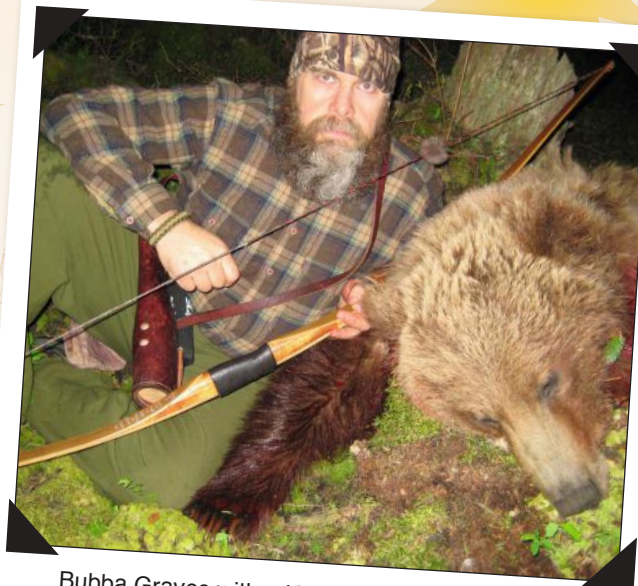




# MEMBER PHOTOS



Ethan Rodrigue with a Tennessee gobbler taken with one of his Little Mountain Bows.



Bubba Graves with a Kenai Peninsula brown bear spring of 2014. Wes Wallace longbow with 200gr Grizzly Broadheads



Mirko Rainer, Switzerland  
Muskox hunt in Kukluktuk, Nunavut on March 29, 2022.  
Self-made osage bow 64lbs at 26 cedar-arrows.  
Photo by Claudio Canonica, PBS Regular member



My name is Derrick. I am a 27 year old from central Illinois and I switched from compound 3 years ago to try my hand at traditional. I had drawn back on several deer but never shot because I didn't feel comfortable with the shot. Well November 1st, 2021 I got my opportunity on my first recurve deer and biggest buck of my life. I executed my shot process well and made a perfect heart shot at 18 yards! He ran about 90 yards and fell over! I am waiting to get him back from the taxidermist this fall so I can get him scored!



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