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Cover Photo - Glassing for wild hogs mid day in Texas. Photo by Tim Nebel

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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President's Message

by Matt Schuster

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First, many thanks to Norm Johnson for his service as President. I know for a fact that he really did not want the job, but felt an obligation to serve the PBS, and he led our organization well at a time when some tough decisions had to be made. Norm's leadership made PBS a stronger organization in too many ways to list. Thanks also to Rob Burnham for his loyal service on Council and his stated commitment to continue to help out where he can. Congratulations to Jeff Holchin and Terry Receveur on their election to Council. Both are good men, dedicated bowhunters, and both have given countless hours to PBS already so are great additions to the leadership team. And special thanks to Greg Darling, Dennis Filippelli, and Preston Lay for putting themselves out there to run for office. Agreeing to run is never an easy decision and these guys stepped up when called.

Apologies to those who read our PBS Email blasts because this next paragraph will be a bit repetitive but is for those who do not have email or don't read the blasts. First, Council has decided to lower dues for Associate and Qualified Regular Members by \$5 – we can do this because we have lowered costs, improved the efficiency of our communications, and are steadily growing. Believe it or not, complaints about the amount of our dues is common, and we on Council know that our financial security is more dependent on a growing, active mem-

bership than by \$5 per member. Second, due to increasing demand for a membership list so that members, especially new members, can reach out to others, we are going to publish a membership list that will list each member by city and state along with an email address. No phone and no physical address will be included. Any member can opt out of this at any time by simply sending an email to Harmony Receveur at the office. We will not publish this list for a few months to give members plenty of time to opt out. I hope you all choose not to opt out – I can tell you, my email has been published for all my years on Council, and I do not get overwhelmed with emails. Could be that I am just so boring that nobody wants to contact me; however, it is more likely that folks won't contact someone unless they really want to talk with YOU about something specific. One of the great benefits of PBS membership should be the ability to reach out and benefit from the knowledge and experience of the other members.

In this issue you will find info on the 2020 Gathering in Springfield, MO – I won't dwell on it, but you will find it affordable and the lineup outstanding. You do not want to miss it and those that register early will enter a raffle for a custom-made Great Northern Bow generously donated by Bob Brumm (Thanks Bob!) of Great Northern Bows. You will also see the details of our 2019 Membership Drive – don't miss out on this either – sign folks up and get your name in the hat to win.

In my Candidate Profile, I wrote that my main goal is to keep PBS on the same track it is currently on with the focus on providing a quality product that members enjoy while focusing on growth and financial stability. An old friend (and admitted grumpy old man) sent me a cryptic text message saying, "So your agenda is basically to do nothing, right?" The answer to that is yes and no. Believing that we are on the right track right now, I don't have

any plan for major changes in our direction. Under that past few Presidents, we have accomplished a lot. The very popular and growing Regional Rep/Regional Hunt Program is strong and still expanding. The PBS/Tradgang On-line Auction was started at a time when we badly needed funds and has both raised money and awareness of PBS despite rather poor support from our own membership. The new office has been sending regular email blasts out helping us to better stay in touch with the membership and to be politically active where needed. In addition, we began targeting our marketing efforts toward social media: Facebook, Instagram, and several very successful podcasts, most notably The Push, The Stick-bow Chronicles, and Primitive Pursuits and each has exposed the PBS to a lot of younger bowhunters. If you have not listened to any of these, you should give them a try – I am as technologically challenged as most 59-year-olds, but it only takes a couple of clicks, and I can listen to Monty Browning telling stories, get shooting advice from a number of crack shots, or hear Joey Buchanan give a lesson on bowhunting turkeys. Anyway, the point is that we are far from a static organization and continue to move forward in a lot of ways. That will not change. Finally, we need to increase our political activity now that we can easily reach our members through email blasts. If you have a local issue on which PBS can lend expertise or help, let us know and if we can help, we will.

One final subject. It is important that the PBS control our logo, so please get permission from Council through Harmony at the office before using the PBS logo on any sort of custom artistic items including t-shirts, caps, etc. We have some incredible talent in our organization, and I have yet to see anyone use our logo in a way that permission would not have been granted. This is a legal issue and in most cases written permission will be given quickly to those wanting to use it. After all, our goal is to promote PBS and putting our logo out there is a big part of that, but if we as an organization don't own it, and control it, the possibility exists, remote as that might be, for someone to come along and take it from us.

I wish you all a great spring chasing turkey, bears, hogs, or whatever else you can get after. If you have a good story and pictures, please share them with us so we can share your success too.

Matt Schuster

We need your email address!

In the future, PBS will be sending out email blasts on a regular basis. Not so often as to be a bother, but enough to let you know what is going on with your organization. If you have not received an email from the PBS President in the last month then we do not have your correct email address. *(Be sure to check your junk mail folder as well as sometimes your email system may filter them as spam.)*

Please email Harmony your best email address at professionalbowhunters@gmail.com to be added to our email list!

Vice President's Message

by Terry Receveur

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First of all, thank you to everyone who voted for me. I will do all I can to validate your confidence in me. This had to be a very hard decision to choose a candidate as you really couldn't lose. Dennis Filippelli is a great guy and would've done a fantastic job. Also, a special thank you to Rob Burnham for his dedicated service to the PBS and to Greg Darling and Preston Lay for their willingness to serve. These guys are the real deal! While I'm thanking folks, I just can't say enough about Tim and Cindy Denial and their entire family. Tim opened up his PA property for the 2019 Odd Year Gathering to over sixty archers. The amount of work that went into all the preparation and operation of the event was truly staggering. The event was blessed with good weather, great friends, a well planned 3-D course, excellent food, raffle donations beyond belief, and other fun events. The event was a success by any measure, but the icing on the cake was over \$2,200 added to PBS' coffers. Thank you Tim and Cindy and I for one sure hope you invite us back. I had a wonderful time. PS, I'll try to convince Sean to park a bit better next time.

One of the biggest responsibilities of the VP is to help Council organize and coordinate the Biennial Gathering. As you will see in this magazine, Council is all over the March 12 – 15, 2020 Gathering in Springfield, MO. I had the pleasure to visit the host hotel and area recently and believe you will be pleased with the facilities. The hotel section of the venue is a bit dated and instantly reminded me of Las Vegas in the 70s, but it is clean and the staff

are the most friendly and accommodating that I have ever encountered. On the flip side of this is the conference area, which is attached via hallway connector. The conference area appears to have been recently renovated and is very nice. We will have the entire area to ourselves and can spread out as we wish. Fortunately, everything is pretty compact, and we are setting it up so you can flow from area to area very easily. Another awesome perk to the 2020 Gathering is the reduced cost of the hotel rooms and banquet pricing. Take a look at the enclosed registration form and I'm sure you'll be pleasantly surprised. Despite the reduced cost, the value you are getting for the money is exceptional. Just look at the lineup! There will be a tour of Black Widow bows, some pretty awesome seminars by Gene and Barry Wensel, Monty and Annie Browning, Dr. E. Don and Lori Thomas, Gene Hopkins, Rob Patuto, Ethan Rodrigue, Jesse Minnish, Tim Nebel, Brad Jansen, Jeff Springer, Thaddeus Stager, and banquet speakers Dr. E. Don Thomas on Friday night and Saturday we will be entertained with a recap of Bryan Burkhardt and Jim Eeckhout's 60th Anniversary Little Delta Bowhunt. Besides all of the great speakers and seminars we will have a great exhibit area with some of our favorite vendors sharing their wares. Top this off with the opportunity to pick up an amazing hunt from all over the world, bows from the best bowyers anywhere, knives by true craftsman, some of the most beautiful custom arrows imaginable, clothing and gear from all the top manufacturers, and beautiful handmade custom items donated from our generous membership, you



can see it is an event you won't want to miss. I am honestly a little worried we will sell out the hotel, so please make your reservations early. Also, just as added incentive to register early, take a look at these advantages of signing up before December 31, 2019:

- Be one of the first 150 to register and have a chance to win a custom Great Northern bow. A hinged or snake skinned bow will be additional cost to the winner.
- Receive a hard plastic printed name badge for each adult attendee. Registrants after December 31, 2019 will receive a stick-on name tag.
- Receive an additional 50 free "General" raffle tickets for each Full or Half Draw Package.

I don't want to get too long-winded, so I better stop here. I hope you are enjoying your spring and have had success on your turkey and bear hunts.

Aim small and miss small!

Terry Receveur

Professional Bowhunters Society® Council

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Senior Council's Report

by Ethan Rodrigue
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pecting a great turnout!

Aside from the banquet we are doing our best to continue to spread the word about PBS. Most everyone will be attending various shoots and functions around the country. We have plans to have a booth at many of these functions so be sure and stop by and say hello, or better yet spend an hour or two manning the booth. It's always fun and a great way to meet new people and introduce them to our organization.

Another way we are very actively trying to promote PBS is through social media. I know everyone is always preaching about the benefits of this these days, but it's very true. As a guy in his early 40's I can definitely relate to not wanting to get involved with social media. But the majority of people these days, and the vast majority of younger people get almost all of their news this way. The interest and questions generated from a strong media presence can not be overstated. Andrew Houke has done a great job with the PBS Instagram account. But one thing I can tell you for certain is that it isn't easy always coming up with new content. If you have any pictures you wouldn't mind sharing, please email them to Harmony at the home office and she can get these to An-

drew. Pics can be anything from "hero pics" with game, wildlife scenes, trail cam photos, youngsters shooting, or just a cool pic of your bow leaned against a tree. The quality does not have to be professional level and any cell phone pic will work. The important thing is to just have content to put out. This is a very easy and simple way everyone can contribute to PBS. It will make Andrew's job much easier and PBS's job as well!

And while we're talking about contributing, please consider writing down a story of one of your adventures and sending it in to the magazine. You don't have to be a professional writer, or in my case even a good one! I'm absolutely positive everyone in PBS has plenty of campfire stories. Why not take a little time to write one down and send it in? We're always looking for content and who doesn't love a good bow hunting story? They can be as simple as slipping through the woods looking for squirrels to anything else you can imagine. Maybe you really like tinkering with arrow set ups and tuning your bow. Jot down some thoughts and send it, we'd love to print it and I'm positive many members would love to read it!

Ethan Rodrigue

Spring is here and so is turkey season! Even though, I'm already wishing for fall I hope everyone has been having a fantastic spring and enjoying the warmer weather and greener views. Bear seasons will be starting soon and I'm sure I am not in the minority in saying I can't wait! As usual, Council has been very busy making arrangements for our upcoming gathering in Springfield. There are many things to be done and many members other than council have been busy as well. If you have never been, I not only encourage you to try to make it but feel safe in saying it will not be your last. This is always a great time to meet up with friends we do not see often enough as well as forge new friendships. The venue is perfect for our needs and we are ex-



Council's Report

by Tom Vanasche
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superior unit next year for hopefully the "elk hunt of a lifetime." It has only happened because I have applied for eighteen years incrementally.

I recently saw a friend I had not seen for six months. He had lost 100 pounds. When I asked how, he replied it was quite incremental. He just stopped drinking caloric beverages and lost twenty pounds, then he cut out carbs and another thirty fell away. Basically he ate a balanced diet but small portions and gradually it added up just like my elk points.

We are going to have an outstanding gathering next March and now is the time to start planning. You can see the ad in this magazine to see how well we will be entertained. Room rates will be lower than before and we do have some early bird registration values. If you start planning now and do some incremental saving in the piggy bank, you will be all set to go and also hopefully bid on some great auction items. This is our main fundraiser to keep PBS alive and functioning. Sure it is a great time to reconnect with old and new friends and enjoy

the camaraderie, but also think of something you may wish to donate.

Pat Cebuhar has been building his donation item (a beautiful solid wood bow and arrow cabinet) on our PBS forum. These hand crafted items from our talented members are very special and much sought after. Hopefully we will have some magnificent handmade knives and bows again as well. If you failed wood shop and just are not a craftsman (like me) think of something you can bring to the party for one of our auctions or raffles. All donations are welcome. This might be a somewhat used item hanging around the house in your man cave or even possibly a week at a vacation home! We will have a contact in Springfield if you wish to mail something in if you are unable to attend.

If you have something in mind, let me know as I'm in charge of donations and can give you further info and document your gift.

Start thinking and planning now because you know, it's all incremental.

Tom Vanasche

Incremental. We know what it means but few do much about it. It basically means little by little. That might be a positive or a negative. We probably first think of those holiday pounds that are easy to add on, but difficult to lose, at least for me. Seems like a lot of things in life are like that, though I suppose if you win the lottery or draw that big-horn sheep tag, that is a mega change. Spring is the time to put in for western tags and believe me that is an incremental process. I have eighteen elk points in Arizona and can draw a

Council's Report

by Jeff Holchin

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For my very first column as a PBS Councilman, I want to begin by thanking the previous Council and the PBS members for having the confidence to nominate me and then vote for me. I didn't expect to win this time around because I know Preston Lay from his good work as a Regional Representative and articles that he has written for our magazine; I appreciate him being willing to serve if elected. This is a huge honor for me and I am humbled when I think of all the great PBS members who have served on Council before me, and the important guidance that they provided to the PBS. The business of the PBS requires a lot of attention and hard work, and sometimes very difficult but necessary decisions. I happen to appreciate and agree with the tough decisions made by recent Presidents and Council, and hope to become a valuable member of the PBS Council in the coming months. I definitely agree with the direction that the PBS is going now and will do my best to continue these improvements and build upon them. As I suspect most of us would agree, it is a lot more fun simply planning and attending bowhunts, than dealing with the business of the PBS and the many challenges we face, but that work must be done along with serious planning for the future. My main task for the upcoming Banquet is to secure donated hunts and similar outings, such as fishing trips, kayak adventures, etc. Please contact me if you can help with that effort — everybody enjoys banquets more when there are numerous quality hunts and outings to bid on, and lots of good raffle items to try to win. Please make every effort to attend the next Banquet.

Having attended every Banquet since 2000 and watching the extreme level of stress they inflicted on the Council and volunteers (although it was considerably less in 2018 in Madison), and the vast amount of time and energy they required, I have been hoping for years that the PBS would develop some

other means to raise the funds needed for this organization. The solution would require a combination of significantly cutting our expenses and developing other fundraisers besides the Banquets. Thanks to leadership from past presidents Jim Akenson and Norm Johnson, and the associated Councils, we are a much more lean and efficient organization, and we have developed additional fund-raising mechanisms. For example, several online auctions with PBSer Terry Green's Tradgang.com are helping. Raffles at recent Odd Year Gatherings (OYG) in Baltimore led by Larry Schwartz and NW Pennsylvania led by Tim Denial have also provided some funds, along with opportunities for fellowship, campfires, good food and arrow flinging. Increasing member numbers also provides more funds for the PBS, but we will need to retain those members while we recruit new members that are a good fit with the PBS. When I read old PBS magazines and when I am with groups of my PBS friends, the topic "whatever happened to ___ - he or she used to be so active, but they have disappeared or faded away" often occurs to me or is brought up by somebody. I have personally reached out to some of those folks and asked them what happened; the responses are varied but most appreciate somebody from the PBS caring enough to reach out to them. Some of them have adopted a "wait and see" attitude regarding the PBS while others have simply given up on us and left. This problem has been recognized by Council and we are working to fix it.

I want to end this column with some words of advice. Are you ready? Here goes: "Be like Tim." Now before you begin to wonder if you have wasted your vote on me or call President Matt to request a special recall election, bear with me. I think we have a lot of "Tims" within our ranks, in fact I was one who stood on the sidelines for many years and didn't get very involved — these are serious bowhunters who like the PBS and want it to succeed, but over the years did not really do



much more than send in their dues, read the quarterly magazines, maybe post something on our web site occasionally. Then something clicked and they made a firm decision to become more involved and give back to the PBS. In Tim's case, he started by committing to and attending one Membership Hunt, then another and yet another, and started helping out more with those hunts. His circle of friends (and influence) increased. Tim started a topic on the web site and became a regular poster and commenter, and even wrote an article for our magazine. Tim volunteered at the PBS booth at ETAR, and then stepped up to be in charge of the booth last summer. Then he decided to host the OYG at his property in NW Pennsylvania this year, which required a huge amount of time, expense and effort. He often contacts his fellow PBS members with letters of thanks and encouragement, and contributes to his state report for the Regionally Speaking column in the quarterly PBS magazine. Tim has personally signed up many new members for the PBS, and talked up and encouraged those new members to become more involved and participate in Membership Hunts, OYG events, Banquets, etc. So I say "thanks" to Tim Denial and all the other PBS members who have similarly helped the PBS in the past, and "Be like Tim" to you fellow PBS members who can and are willing to do more to help the PBS.

Aim small, miss small, and DON'T miss low!

Jeff Holchin

Regular Membership Candidates

We list the following names of members who have applied for regular membership in PBS and have been approved by the Council. These individuals have completed a lengthy application and are currently in their one-year probationary period. If you are a regular member and see any reason why any of these applicants should not be accepted, please send a signed letter stating your reasons to PBS Senior Councilman Ethan Rodrigue, 30786 S.R. 30, Pikeville, TN 37367.

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


David Kretschmar, Somersworth, NH • Scott Hartenstine, Russell, PA • Manuel Cervantes, Bentonville, AR

Chaplain's Corner

by Gene Thorn

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A DRINK OF WATER!



It was a hot day and I was thirsty. I did not have enough water with me as I climbed upwards to the top of the ridge. I longed for a drink that I could not have till I would get back to camp after dark. I was hunting wild boars with my bow in the rugged mountains of Boone County, West Virginia. There are four counties in Southern WV that have a population of pure Russian boar that originally came from Tellico Plains, Tennessee. I finally made it to the low gap and found an abundance of tracks and a large wallow with fresh mud on the oak trees where the trail left the wallow to go down the ridge and off a point to the valley below. As I was stealthily walking slowly along the trail I noticed a blowdown tree with the roots protruding from the ground, higher than my head, just off to the side. I slowly stalked up to it and peered back into a cavellike hole created where the roots had once been. I spotted eyes looking out of the darkness! All of a sudden there was an explosion of snouts and brown hair coming at me. Five pigs bailed out past me within three feet. Wow! Now that was a bit of excitement! There was no chance for a shot. They were a blur of motion and never hesitated or looked back. In seconds they were gone. I worked my way on down the main ridge that stretched out into the distance. There was little side hollow that went off to my right and I could see the high ridge on the other side. I listened as I drew closer and it sounded like somebody noisily eating Fritos Corn Chips. The crunching sound got louder and louder as I cut the distance. I looked down below me and near the bottom of the hollow was a large dark tree. The sound was coming from the base of that tree. The wind shifted to an evening downdraft just

then and carried my scent in the wrong direction. All of a sudden I saw a huge boar appear, right where I was looking, from behind the tree and run up and over the ridge. I walked down to the tree and there was a hollow cavity on the other side, with a pile of old dry hickory nuts laying in it. There were fragments of nut shells on the ground at the base of the tree where the boar had been eating them. He had popped them as easily as we eat popcorn. Question answered. That was a sound I had never heard in the woods before. The evening shadows were growing as I walked back down to camp. Man I was thirsty.

John 7: 37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When I got back to camp I drank my fill of water and it never tasted better. I quenched my thirst. Spiritually we may be dry. We are made to have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are trying to do life on our own, we have a hole in our soul that cannot be filled. We can drink in everything that this world offers, and it does not satisfy. Jesus said if you thirst, come to Him and drink. You will never have spiritual thirst again.

John 6: 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

Jesus was not talking about natural hunger and thirst. He was talking about filling that hole in our soul. I am glad I came to Him when he called. He may be standing at your door and knocking right now. Will you open the door to your heart and let him in? He will have a spiritual feast for you and living water to wash it down.

Those of us that have drunk of the living water are always called to draw closer to Him. Let's take a step closer to Him today. He promised that out of our heart would flow rivers of living water. Let's spread the living water around! Give **A DRINK OF WATER!**

A NEW START!

The Stickbow Chronicles is a podcast hosted by three longtime PBS'ers who are as passionate about bowhunting as everyone in the PBS. On our podcasts we focus on one thing and one thing only, BOWHUNTING ADVENTURE! Join us as we talk to some of the best and most hardcore bowhunters around. Ask any PBS member and they'll likely tell you that some of the most accomplished bowhunters around are guys and gals that most folks have never heard of. But they're out there, pursuing our passion with the highest ethics, and utmost dedication. That's the kind of people that make up PBS and that's the kind of people we feature on The Stickbow Chronicles.

There is adventure to be had with bow in hand in every corner of the world. It could be on the tundra in Alaska, the South-

ern Alps of New Zealand, or on the back forty near home. We want to bring you the stories of the guys and gals getting it done in all of those places for all the right reasons. No pro-staffs, no celebrity hunters, and no fluff. Just bowhunting, pure and simple.

Join us for our campfire stories and share the adventures on iTunes, Podbean, Stitcher, or simply go to the PBS website and click on The Stickbow Chronicles tab! You can follow us on Instagram and Facebook and as always, let us know what you think and what you want to hear!

Thank you,
*The Stickbow
Chronicles*

The STICKBOW CHRONICLES



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Michigan

By Steve Chappell

My fascination with all things wild, outdoors, hunting and bows goes back as far as my memory will take me. Much of my outdoor interests were instilled in me growing up with a father who was an avid and passionate hunter, outdoorsman and bowhunter, therefore it was imprinted on me from birth. Sadly, my father and mentor passed away two weeks after his 61st birthday after a courageous fight with cancer. He's been gone well over fifteen years but his memory and teachings remain strong. Fred was also a Regular PBS Member. As a young child my idea of a fun day was spending every daylight hour in the woods exploring and catching animals and reptiles. I yearned for the day I could join my father and actually bowhunt myself.

One childhood Christmas, Santa rewarded me with my first Daisy BB gun and fiberglass bow. It still stands as the most memorable and best job Santa has done by me. It was that Christmas that opened the door to my future as a hunter and bowhunter. I carried a bow or BB gun most days afield from that day forward. My father did take me afield bowhunting with him from time to time, but I was far too fidgety and nothing was seen. Looking back, those hunts were for my benefit not his.

My path to becoming a traditional bow bowhunter included a few transitions over the years. I started out with a traditional bow (that was all there was back then) then went to a compound bow after I received one as a high school graduation gift. Several years later, it was back to traditional. After a second more serious rotator cuff surgery, I went back to the compound. Even as a compound shooter, I never gave up my traditional bows or shooting them. Hunting with a compound brought much success from a

A Michigan Bowhunter's Perspective

game harvested standpoint, success I had not experienced with a traditional bow, but increasingly it did not deliver the challenge or sense of accomplishment I began to yearn for in bowhunting. It had become too easy. In my early 40s, after a lot of soul searching on what I wanted from a bowhunt, I gave up the compound for good and have been 100% traditional bow since. When I made this transition, I made the commitment that my first traditional bow kill would be a buck. In my fifth bow season I took my first buck, a very nice ten point. Over those five years, many of my good friends who shot compounds and met with consistent success, would poke me hard for giving up the compound when my hunting season ended with no harvest. What they did not realize was my definition of success had changed materially and I was actually achieving my vision of a successful bowhunt.

My path to the PBS and Regular Membership was sparked in part by my father. He would go on and on about his times at the Biennial Gatherings. Over the years, at archery events, I began to meet a number of people who were PBS members; people I looked up to as ethical bowhunters. It took me until my early fifties to finally take a deep dive into what the PBS really is. Once I read the by laws and learned the kind of bowhunter PBS is seeking and serving, I was committed to whatever time and effort it took to become a Regular Member. When I read about who PBS was, I felt as though I was telling someone the kind of bowhunter I strive to be. To me bowhunting is all about taking the time and putting in the effort to outwitting the animal ethically in their environment and getting very close. It's so exciting and rewarding when it all comes together. Brian Cole, a person my father had become very close friends with, sponsored me for PBS.

2019 is a year of milestones for me. On April 29th, I celebrated thirty years of marriage to my wife, Pam. We have two grown children; our son Cody, 27, and our daughter Hunter, 24. My son is very much into archery and shoots a longbow. My daughter has been a vegetarian since age 5 and while not a hunter or meat eater is OK with hunting...since

her dad and boyfriend both are avid bowhunters. In October I will celebrate my 60th birthday. Being married to a passionate and avid bowhunter, I can tell you first hand, is no easy task, especially when your wife is not a hunter and does not shoot a bow. This should give you an idea of how blessed I am to be married to Pam. In September I am headed to Colorado for what I will coin my annual out state hunt. I will be doing a DIY pack in bowhunt for elk with my very good friend and hunting buddy Chad Graham from WUDARAZ. Chad is an accomplished artist, arrow maker and bowhunter. There is something about elk hunting that brings a thrill level to me like no other game animal. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy hunting pretty much all North American game and get plenty of thrill from these hunts but there is just something about bowhunting bugling rutting elk I cannot get enough of. I have had many thrilling and successful bowhunts for elk, but have yet to harvest one of these magnificent animals with a traditional bow. Hunting in the mountains at 9,000 feet and higher is the most physically demanding hunting I have done to date, and I just love it. As a gainfully employed Michigander, I am able to hunt elk, or whatever game, about fourteen days in a good year. My goal is to have the ability to hunt from opening day to closing day of elk bow season some year.

I have been fortunate to bowhunt moose in Alaska and British Columbia, elk in Colorado and Montana, bear in Northern Manitoba, whitetail and turkey in Michigan. While I have harvested moose, elk, whitetail and turkey with a bow, the overwhelming majority of my hunts do not end with the harvest of an animal. Most of the time it is fate but many times it is by personal choice. Regardless of this, the experiences I have had bowhunting are all priceless. When I look for a place to hunt an animal, I am also looking for a place where it will have an adventure because for me the experience of the hunt far outweighs harvesting game.

One such hunt was in 2018 in the Bob Marshall Wilderness of Montana. A good friend, John Leahy and I booked with Montana Wilderness Lodge and

Outfitting for a 2x1 guided elk bowhunt in early September with the owner, who shot traditional archery. The fact he shot traditional was a big reason why I selected him. I had always wanted to hunt the Bob! It took us six hours by horseback through stunningly beautiful country to make it to the main camp where we hunted from for a few days. On day three we packed back up and headed up the mountain by horse and mule. We were hunting during the forest fires so as we looked to the north we saw the smoke from the active fire; it did not look far away. It was a nail biter ride up the mountain through vegetation, woods and rough terrain where I would have sworn a horse and mule could not go. There were many blown down trees; most we maneuvered around but many we had to stop and use a saw or axe to clear because no modern tools are allowed in the Bob. My horse slipped and dropped to its knees a few times in tough terrain, causing me to somewhat freak out, but it was back up like it was no big deal. The steadiness and agility of the mountain horses and mules is incredible. As we popped out of the woods we saw a badger running away in the rocks and several mountain goats feeds on the side of a mountain in the distance. A hundred yards or so later we were standing on the west edge of the Continental Divide. The view was breathtaking. We sat and watched a herd of forty plus elk that were at the bottom of the east side climb up and cross the divide and ended up at the top just north of us. I was amazed these elk were able to climb up and

over what looked to the eye as impenetrable. We set up and had our first close encounter with one of the bulls...but no shot opportunities.

We spent three nights up on the Divide hunting. Our sleeping quarters consisted of a panniers, which are large squares of canvas that are used to cover gear when strapped to a horse or mule for transport. It is quite an experience sleeping out under the stars in country as big and vast as the Bob. We had a few close encounters with elk during that hunt, but nothing panned out for shot opportunities. The country we covered up on the divide along with the terrain we took the horses and mules through was nothing short of stunning. I am in awe of the Bob. We also had another encounter with a second badger and saw a grizzly bear, a black bear and color phase black bear on this trip. I did not harvest an elk, but I had one of the best bowhunts I have been on to date. All I could think my whole time I was there, and as I rehash the hunt to this day, is that is exactly the kind of hunt I had hoped for...a great adventure while hunting. I want to go back!

My father would always talk about balance when it came to archery, bowhunting and my family. When your spouse does not hunt or shoot archery and you have very young kids, bowhunting a lot can bruise a strong relationship. Things can get sideways in a relationship if you do not find the right balance. In my younger years I was not as good as I should have been at balance and it caused issues that

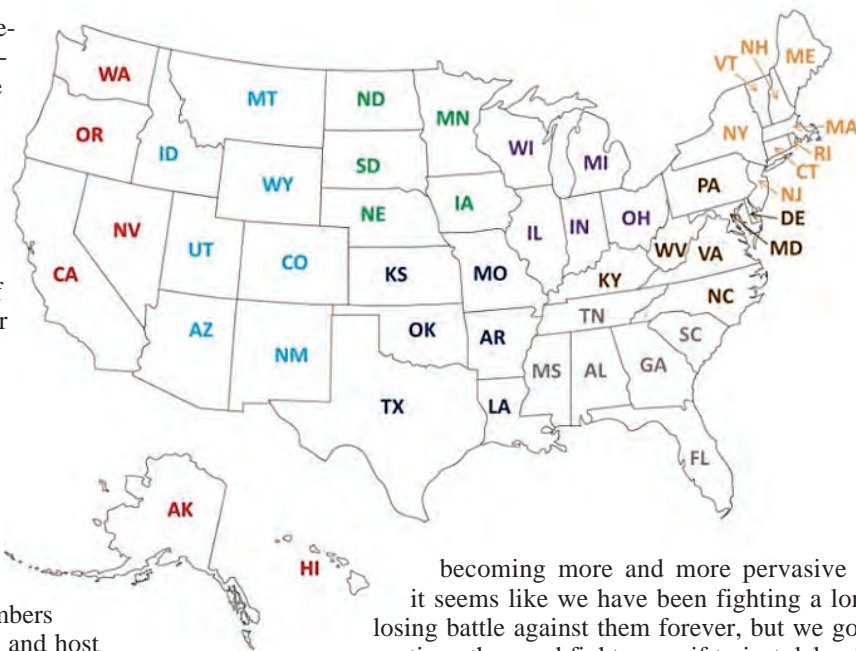
as I got older I got better at managing. Having a son who also likes to shoot archery and wants to hunt creates some of my best memories as we attend weekend archery shoots together while my wife does things with my daughter. Now that the kids are grown, I have a lot more freedom but I always heed my father's advice and keep a balance that allowed a marriage like mine to last these thirty years.

I have lived my entire life in Michigan. I went to college, got married, raised children and have worked all my life here. Michigan is a great state to be raised in and raise a family. My business partner and I own an independent insurance agency with several branch locations throughout Michigan. I maintain memberships in just about every archery association that supports traditional archery and am a Life Member of Compton Traditional Bowhunters. I have also served as a council member and treasurer for the Michigan Longbow Association. I have also organized a winter traditional archery league at a new shooting facility managed by Michigan State University. Even MSU did not think much of traditional archery until our league became the largest most popular league at their facility. I feel truly blessed from all that archery has given back to me. I have a strong network of friends who were all brought together because of a love for archery...traditional archery for us. I am also an avid traveler, scuba diver and golfer, but my passion remains to this day... traditional bowhunting.

PBS – Regionally Speaking

by Jeff Holchin - Second Quarter 2019

This is my final column as Chairman of the Regional Representative Program — Randy Brookshier of Virginia has the necessary skills, time and willingness to take over for me as I focus on my duties as a Councilman. I think the PBS will be in better hands because of Randy's excellent organizational skills. Note that we are still looking for a Rocky Mountain Regional Representative. One of Randy's first tasks will be to standardize the reports and get the entire column down to a maximum of four pages, with just a brief listing of highlights and important dates and bowhunting or PBS-related events for each region. The spring turkey and bear seasons may still be in progress or wrapping up by the time you read this, but that means the summer archery shoots and fall archery seasons are drawing closer. I hope that you have some exciting bowhunts planned for this coming fall and winter, with perhaps a Membership hunt on your schedule. The 2019 OYG hosted by Tim Denial in NW Pennsylvania was a big hit — we'd like to have multiple OYG events in various regions in 2021 so that more PBS members can attend them. We're looking for PBS members in the various regions that may want to follow Tim's lead and host their own OYG. Its a win-win for all involved! If you take the time to read the various state reports, you will notice that crossbows are



becoming more and more pervasive — it seems like we have been fighting a long, losing battle against them forever, but we gotta continue the good fight, even if to just delay the inevitable.

~ continued on page 10

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

Chairman - Jeff Holchin (jeffreyholchin@gmail.com) next will be

Randy Brookshier (stykbow59@comcast.net)

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

Rocky Mountain West - Open (*please contact me or the PBS office if interested*)

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South Central - Preston Lay (longbow@cimtel.net)

Great Lakes - Tim Nebel (tnebel20@gmail.com)

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Southeast - Vance Henry (vhenry.ga@gmail.com)

International - Alessandro Fodera (alessandro.fodera@gmail.com)

Pacific West Report

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

Tom Vanasche – Regional Representative



Oregon: Crossbows may be coming back for another fight as always. Oregon is the only state they are not legal in any season. Hope to keep it that way. We are still trying to pass a wolf plan to keep our prey species from being decimated. The wolf lovers always keep moving the goalposts after biological sound practice is advocated. Seems like it is always a battle between science and common sense against the city dwellers and their emotions. A few cougar control proposals are in the legislature but whether anything passes is quite uncertain.

Alaska: Spring black bear, grizzly and brown bear seasons are soon to open. Our representative there, Tim McKinley, will be in hot pursuit and hopefully will tag one and post a picture.

California: Turkey season is in full swing as this is written and Brian Morris has knocked another one down! Anytime is a good time to hunt hogs in northern California. The winter rains have unleashed a flurry of green growth this spring.

Washington: Spring bear by permit is in full swing now, with a fall season ahead. Elk hoof disease confirmed in the Blue Mountains of Walla Walla county. Legislative adds hunter pink to hunters safety options this year. WDFW plans on some controlled burn areas in Eastern WA. Hundreds of lowland lakes opened on April 27, sturgeon fishing opens on May 13 and salmon fisheries are set for the 2019-20. We had a mild winter so hopefully our deer and elk have survived, too. There is no longer a printed copy of our game laws this year so you have to do it online.



Great Plains Central Report

(North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa)

Mark Viehweg - Regional Representative

As I write this, there have been numerous reports of turkey hunting success or close calls amongst our members. We have had extremely high water in many parts of Eastern South Dakota and Nebraska since mid-March. How this will affect our game populations is still to be seen. South Dakota bowhunters have been working with our fish and game commission to look at restricting the number of non-resident bowhunters. With the September 1st start, the number of non-residents buying archery tags increased by 33%. Our hope is to improve the hunting experience for both residents and non-residents alike. I would like to at least see a limited draw on public ground. As of now the commission has voted to continue a guaranteed draw for non-residents. We will be holding the South Dakota mule deer hunt for members from September 14-21 east of Buffalo, SD. Please contact me if you would like to join us. Mark Viehweg 847-828-4413



South Central Report

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

Preston Lay – Regional Representative

I would like to congratulate

Jeff for winning the Council seat. I know we are in good hands with Jeff there. Thank you for all that voted for me in the last election and supporting a common goal for PBS. It's spring in Oklahoma and with that busy times. I so much enjoy hearing the distant gobblers and falling asleep to the music of the whip-poor-wills. One of my most treasured foods is morel mushrooms. It's a chance to exercise the dog and hone the shooting eye and bring home God's delight. This spring Koko and I bagged a couple big hauls.



Arkansas - Aaron McDonnell: As I write this, Arkansas turkey season is just wrapping up. As expected, it was another tough season as the overall population in the state continues to be lower than desirable. We've had multiple seasons of bad hatches according to the AGFC, but hopefully with great weather this spring we'll start an up-trend. I did see multiple Jakes this season so hopefully next season will hold an abundance of dumb 2 year old birds. With summer approaching, my focus like many others, turns to preparation for the fall seasons. Draw results aren't in yet for all western states but so far I've drawn a pretty good Arizona elk tag in a unit I've hunted several times. I'll be trying to fit in a few 3D shoots and work on my overall physical condi-

tioning since I know the unit I'll be hunting is a physically demanding one. Anyone in the state that's interested in shooting in some local 3D shoots can visit the Arkansas Bowhunter's Association website or Traditional Bowhunters of Arkansas' Facebook page for a schedule of shoots. Arkansas doesn't have a spring bear season, but I look forward to seeing some fellow PBS'er success stories this spring.

Texas - William E. Graves: As I'm writing this report, the Texas turkey season is in full swing and from reports it is a good spring. Texas had a wet but mild winter which has the state looking green. May 15th is the opening date to apply for the Big Time Texas Hunts. This is a great opportunity at a chance to win a once in a life time hunt for a multitude of different game species. Entry fee is just \$10.00, and no license purchase is necessary, unless one is drawn for a hunt. For more info visit, <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/bth/>

Regarding membership hunts in Texas this coming season. I will be hosting the Davis Mountains hunt in far southwest Texas in January 2020. This hunt is a great chance to see a part of Texas that few people get to see and a to share a camp with some great PBS folks. This year's hunt had to be cancelled due to some court dates that I had to attend and those who signed up for this hunt will have first go at it but be on the lookout for openings. Also be on the lookout for The Spike Box Ranch hunt hosted by John Vargo.

Hunting season is closing in on us fast and in many cases will be here before we know it. I am anticipating an upcoming moose hunt in Alaska with fellow PBS member Sean Bleakley. Sean and I met at the PBS Kodiak invasion hosted by Steve H. and have kept in touch ever since. The PBS member hunts are a great way to meet other PBS members and a great way to forge new friends and brothers. I would like to welcome our new members from the state of Texas to our ranks and to invite anyone with information they would like to share about archery events or hunting opportunities in the state of Texas to contact me at: williamgraves187@gmail.com and I can spread the word through our great publication. Till next time, keep honing those skills and introduce someone new to the PBS.



Rocky Mountain West Report (Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho)

(Open - we need a rep, contact Jeff Holchin or the PBS office if you are interested)

No report.



Great Lakes Report (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri)

Tim Nebel - Regional Representative

Ohio - Tim Nebel: Both resident and non-resident hunters in the State of Ohio were able to purchase their 2019-2020 hunting licenses on March

1, 2019. The license is good from that date until February 2020. For the upcoming license year, a non-resident hunting license will increase to \$180.96, up from \$141.50 last year. A non-resident either-sex whitetail deer permit will increase to \$76.96, up from last year's cost of \$41.00. These are both significant price increases in a one year period. For Ohio resident hunters, both hunting licenses and either sex deer permits will remain the same price as last year. Hunters checked in 172,040 deer during last year's 2018-2019 season, which was less than 2017-2018's total of 186,247 whitetail deer. Ohio has made a focused effort the last four years to regulate antlerless deer harvest across the state with the goal of growing deer numbers. This plan seems to be working.

Of the 172,040 deer harvested in Ohio during the 2018-2019 season, 46% of them were taken with archery equipment. Of all the deer harvested with archery equipment, 47% of them were antlered deer.

Illinois - Paul Ladner: Our new governor has made the political appointment of Colleen Callahan to lead the Department of Natural Resources as is tradition for our state government when administrations change. I don't know what effect this could have except to shift blame and create a smokescreen while the IDNR continues to stagnate and suffer budget cuts and staffing reductions. The crossbow continues to be popular. The crossbow accounted for nearly 40% of the deer harvest this past season in Illinois. I'm not sure it has recruited a single new hunter, but all the compound shooters are lined up to buy crossbows. If you have a used compound bow you want to sell-good luck! A big buck was shot in Illinois with a bow last season. We are now the home of the world record typical (Mel Johnson 1965) and non-typical (Luke Brewster 2018) whitetail deer. Illinois is "The Prairie State" but very little remains. Of twenty-two million pre-settlement acres of prairie about 2500 remain. Very little of that can be considered remnant prairie, meaning never plowed. The remnants are isolated tiny islands along railroad right of ways and homestead cemeteries not one contiguous tract of 2500 acres. Many are a fraction of an acre. It is one of the most endangered habitats in the world. Imagine the extirpation of all but 0.01 percent of the native plants in Colorado's Rocky Mountains and replacing it with the two cultivated crops, corn and soybeans. This is ludicrous of course, but imagine it. Illinois' native prairie habitat was no less dynamic and likely more diverse. The soil created by 10,000+ years of prairie growth is it's own curse; some of the most productive soil on Earth. I am honored to own a somewhat degraded remnant prairie and have planted a number of restoration acres as well with the help of CRP programs. I usually do burns a couple of days in late winter as part of prairie maintenance. They are usually great events and I get all sorts of people to help. It is an exciting introduction to the outdoors. I am sure many who have helped have gone to work on Monday with great stories that open up lines of conversation about conservation.

Wisconsin - Michael Theis: Crossbows - A recent Natural Resources Board (NRB) meeting caused quite a ruckus among bow and crossbow hunters. Some background first - within the initial enactment wording of the crossbow seasons legislation, the NRB directors and DNR biologists were to analyze the harvest data to determine the effect of the crossbow on the whitetail deer resource and hunting seasons. This is why the two seasons, bow and crossbow, run concurrent in Wisconsin. Both government bodies dragged their feet and delayed the analysis beyond the initial two-year trial season period. Crossbows have shown a significant advantage of buck harvest by % of crossbow licenses sold over other forms of weaponry, i.e. guns and bows. An information only request was finally made to the DNR by an NRB board member looking for statistics that would show several crossbow season adjustment scenarios. It was at a late January 2019 NRB meeting that seven potential crossbow season reduction scenarios were shared with the public. The resulting uproar of a potential crossbow season reduction caused some large letter writing campaigns by both sides. The NRB decided to table the reduction recommendation process for now and sanctioned a report to be completed by August of 2019. This DNR report is to be comprehensive, including all issues of a multifaceted topic. It is to include information from other states, as well as the Wisconsin experience to date. Leave it to the government to kick the crossbow can down the road. More to come on crossbow news in Wisconsin, but I believe some type of crossbow season reduction will eventually be enacted. No matter which side of the fence you are on, let there be no doubt that crossbows will disrupt the deer seasons in Wisconsin.

Chronic Wasting Disease - This disease is spreading within Wisconsin and I think that we are at a crossroad before an even larger scale problem surfaces in multiple locations. CWD positive tests have been recorded in the wild or among captive pop-

~ continued on page 12 ~

ulations in fifty-six of Wisconsin's seventy-two counties. In one area, infection levels are like a wave; others, it is but a ripple. The problems concern redirection of focus, functional action plans, and funding. This issue, we'll talk about focus, and how a 'wave' area developed. CWD was discovered in Wisconsin in 2002, near the Iowa and Dane county lines. Since then, a high infection rate area has grown to include parts of four counties adjoining this initial ground zero area. In the 2018 season, 84% or 886 of the 1050 positive CWD tests statewide have come from these four counties. Iowa county itself in 2018 accounted for 37% of the statewide total; Dane, 12%; Sauk, 17%; and Richland, 18%. This 4 county area is predominately privately owned farmland. Initially after the 2002 discovery, an Iowa county focused sharp shooting program was implemented. But since that early time frame, control has been left up to the hunters. A fact finding probe / analysis by a group called the CWD SAG (Stakeholder Advisory Group) concluded more conventional means of control were the way forward. There was disagreement within the group, but government policy followed the majority's recommendations. And so the focus of the government was redirected. According to the 2019 Iowa county CDAC harvest metrics report, 410 square miles of suitable deer habitat exists there. This calculates to a 2018 pre-season deer density ratio of seventy-eight deer per square mile. Add post-harvest population estimates to the harvest, one sees only a harvest rate of 17% of available animals. Prior to the discovery of CWD, Iowa county had harvest totals as high as 15,000+. 2018 was about 1/3 that high. That will not be enough for control or even maintenance, of CWD levels in this area. The other three counties in this 'hot zone' area of the state have similar statistics on the harvest % of 17%. And the infection rates keep climbing. The 'wait and see' focus of CWD management is failing. In Iowa county for 2018, only 27.2% of harvested deer were tested for CWD, with a 26.5% positive test rate of those tested. It is thought that the live deer infection rate for bucks in northern part of this county varies from 20-55%; and 15-30% for does. You would think that with such high rates of infection, more deer harvested from this county would be tested. I think that as the infection rates of deer in these areas climb, the hunters lose interest (focus) on harvesting deer and testing for CWD. The population grows, and so does the infection rate with more deer concentrated on under hunted private land. At some point, I think that the population of deer will succumb to the disease prevalence, and the population will implode. Remember the disease is fatal to deer, and the disease-causing prion lives on to infect other deer in the area. Perhaps complacency has reduced the focus on effective deterrence?

Other studies show that property values in Iowa county have trended downward. This information was from two retired biologists who have and are, studying the CWD issue. Iowa county is part of what is called the driftless area in Wisconsin; beautiful wooded valleys that escaped glaciation. But it is a scenic area that has a serious deer disease problem. One could surmise CWD has had an effect on the value of this land. Investing in wildlife conservation pays off to more people than just hunters. All land owners need to focus on recruiting and granting more access to hunters, and hunters need to step up and focus on reducing the herd to stem the wave of CWD. The alternative could be again, a sharpshooter solution. It may be too late to 'fix' Iowa county, but the seeds of the Iowa county problem have sprouted elsewhere in Wisconsin. Remember fifty-six of seventy-two; all CWD focus needs to be expanded statewide! Would you want to own land right now in Iowa county? Beware of the CWD ripple becoming a wave through the deer herd. Do what you can to combat the spread of CWD. Get your deer tested. Talk to other hunters and landowners. Minimize carcass movement. Focus on getting involved and educated. Note that I will be posting links to some of my data sources on the PBS website. That information is too much for this simple column. A good reason to check

in with the PBS website now and then. And it is an advantage of PBS membership!

(Editor's note - Gun Lemke will be hosting a Membership Deer Hunt in south-central WI during the first week of November at a WMA - contact Gun at gunlemke@gmail.com for details)

Indiana - Jake Hawkins: At the conclusion of the 2018-2019 deer season, the overall deer harvest was down compared to previous years. There are many anecdotal reports from hunters that the deer numbers are down and that hunting quality has suffered. I have noticed the changes in my neck of the woods and have documented the deer numbers from my hunts. According to the latest Indiana white-tail deer report, the 2017-2018 season harvest was 113,595 and the 2018-2019 season harvest was 111,252. In the 2017 season, 17,070 deer were killed with archery equipment and 14,774 were killed with crossbows. The inclusion of crossbows in addition to the liberal antlerless tag availability are the spearhead of the decline of the Indiana deer herd. The state documents six types of weapons used during each deer season. In the report, handgun, muzzleloader, and shotgun all saw decreases in use. Archery equipment, compounds and traditional bows stayed consistent from the previous season. Rifle and crossbows both saw increases with the crossbow having the largest at a 31% increase. The state has been really pushing for hunters to complete the annual surveys at the end of each season. I would encourage all of our Indiana members to do the surveys. The 2017 whitetail deer report used information from those surveys to determine the management plan for the next six years and also surveys hunters on the effects of crossbows in Indiana. In the report it states "In conclusion, hunters in general believe that the inclusion of crossbows as hunting equipment has had a positive effect on hunting." This conclusion is based entirely off of hunter surveys so this season make sure you are letting the state know your thoughts and fill out the survey! Summer is the time to prepare our upcoming fall adventures. I'll be heading back into the wilderness for a solo elk hunt again this year so I'll be spending a lot of time with my pack on my back getting ready. I hope to see some of our members this summer at 3D shoots so don't be a stranger! Shoot straight!

Michigan - Steve Chapell: February 28, 2019 was the last day Michigan hunters could hunt using their 2018 Michigan hunting licenses. For many of us Michigan bowhunters, pursuing turkeys is our next opportunity and that began for some on April 22. Turkeys have made a remarkable comeback in Michigan. When the DNR first opened them up to hunting it was on a very limited basis; only three licenses were given out in each of four spring seasons in the unit I hunted in lower MI. Fortunately, back then not too many people hunted turkeys so those who did were able to draw pretty much every year for many years until the popularity started to soar. Today, anyone can hunt turkeys as long as they buy a license. Like many other states, Michigan is facing a number of issues that impact us Professional Bowhunters including CWD, antler point restrictions and the crossbow. CDW has now been found in three areas of MI; Lower, Northern and the UP as follows:

Deer Management Unit (DMU) 333 is in the Southern Lower Peninsula Region (SLP). It currently consists of seventeen townships in Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, and Shiawassee counties and makes up the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) core area.

Deer Management Unit (DMU) 359 is in the Southern Lower Peninsula Region (SLP). It currently consists of six townships in Mecosta County (Mecosta, Austin, Morton, Aetna, Deerfield, and Hinton) and three Townships in Montcalm County (Reynolds, Winfield, and Cato) and makes up the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) surveillance area.

In the Upper Peninsula a white-tailed deer shot this fall in Dickinson County, Michigan, tested positive for chronic wasting disease, the first documented case of the fatal deer disease in the state's Upper Peninsula.

Antler Point restrictions: Michigan has a number of areas that have been under Antler Point Restrictions (APR) and while the DNR

states, “There is no overwhelming evidence indicating a herd managed with APRs is any better off, there is also no overwhelming evidence indicating any serious harm may result from existing APRs” so hunters must be pushing for more APR areas. Five new counties in the SE Lower Peninsula that will be evaluated for APRs in 2019: Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Lapeer and St. Clair.

Crossbows: Crossbows have been allowed in archery season for several years in Michigan. 2018 harvest results are not yet available, however, the prior year numbers from the MI DNR shows the popularity and impact of crossbows on deer harvest in MI as follows (These numbers are from the Michigan Deer Harvest Survey Reports by year):

2014: About 174,558 hunters used a crossbow and harvested approximately 59,266 deer, total harvest all methods is about 329,000 so 18% were by crossbow.

2015: About 185,632 hunters used a crossbow and harvested approximately 65,988 deer, total harvested all methods is about 335,000 deer so 19.9% by crossbow

2016: About 193,137 hunters used a crossbow and harvested approximately 74,130, total harvested all methods is about 348,000 deer so 21.3% by crossbow.

2017: About 206,000 hunters used a crossbow and harvested approximately 93,000, total harvested all methods is about 376,000 deer so 24.7% by crossbow.

Based on DNR approximate numbers, crossbow deer harvests are up 56.9% from 2014 to 2017 and crossbow percent of total deer harvested is up almost 7%. Based on these numbers one can extrapolate the crossbow harvest for 2018 will be up even further. Hopefully the MI DNR is watching this trending, its impact on deer harvested, and considering actions to address its impact on bow season and hunting as a whole.



Northeastern Report

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

Terry Receveur - Regional Representative

Connecticut: Deer Harvest Declines

Deer harvest shows a slight decline over 2017. 2018 harvest at 11,106 compared to 2017 at 11,796.

Maine: Hunting Groups Oppose the Crossbow

Deer hunting is a way of life in Maine, where hundreds of hunters seek white-tailed deer every fall. But hunting groups said during a recent hearing that they fear adding crossbows to the hunt would reduce deer hunting opportunities for other sportsmen in the state. The Portland Press Herald reports the state's three largest hunting groups (Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, the Maine Professional Guides Association and the Maine Bowhunters Association) all oppose the crossbow bill.

Massachusetts: Bills Introduced to Allow for Sunday Hunting

A pair of Massachusetts state representatives have introduced two bills that would open Sunday hunting opportunities in the Bay State. HB 884, introduced by William M. Straus (D-10th Bristol), would allow for the use of archery equipment on Sundays. HB 887, introduced by Alyson Sullivan (R-7th Plymouth), would allow Sunday hunting during deer season. Massachusetts sportsmen should contact their state representative and ask them to vote YES on House Bills 884 and 887.

New Hampshire: Apply for Moose Before May 31, 2019

New Hampshire's moose hunt is nine days, starting the third Saturday in October. The 2019 hunt will take place from October 19-27, 2019, by permit only.

New Jersey: Common Sense Prevails

Princeton University has bowhunters hunting deer on campus. Princeton says the two main reasons for actively reining in the deer population are curbing potential cases of Lyme disease, and decreasing potential car accidents. A FAQ page said the town has, instead of kill-

ing deer, tried birth control strategies in the past. Unfortunately, killing deer has been “much more effective.”

New York: Good News in New York

2018-19 New York state deer hunt was up twelve percent and there have been no new CWD detections.

Rhode Island: Bill Would Prohibit Importing Big Game for Captive Hunting

A bill has been proposed in the current session of the General Assembly that would prohibit the importation of nonnative and domestic animals for use in canned hunting. The New England chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) supports the intent of the bill and has submitted a letter recommending legislators help advance a modified version of it. Michael Woods, a New England chapter BHA board member, recently told ecoRI News that once chronic wasting disease is introduced it's virtually impossible to eliminate from an ecosystem. Contact your legislature to support the bill to ban import of animals for canned hunting.

Vermont: One-Buck Rule Proposed by F&W Board

The most dramatic changes in Vermont deer hunting for some fifty years have been proposed for consideration by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board. “Rule Change Proposal” that would, along with other major changes, impose a one-buck rule for all but youth hunters and open eleven of twenty-one wildlife management areas to all legal bucks, including spiked bucks. Hunters may now take two bucks during any of the three adult deer seasons — the archery, rifle and muzzle-loader seasons.

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



Appalachia Report

(Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky)

Randy Brookshier – Regional Representative

Virginia - Randy Brookshier: Not a lot to report on regarding bow hunting at present time. Spring gobbler season is in full swing and bow fishing should be kicking off here soon. There are several new game law proposals that are on the agenda to be voted on for the upcoming season, a couple of which are of interest to VA bowhunters. The first is a proposal to include common interest communities (e.g., property owners associations) in the urban archery season. A lot of these communities are overrun with resident deer but are unable to participate in the urban archery season unless they lie in a county that is included in the state plan. This new proposal would allow any property owners association to opt into the program, with the Game Commission's approval, regardless of the county they lie in. Secondly, currently only select counties have two deer per day bag limits. There is a proposal to open all counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the two deer per day bag limit on private lands only. These and other proposals are currently open for comment on the VA Game and Inland Fisheries website.

Pennsylvania - Tim Denial: Statewide archery season opens October 5th and there are new fluorescent orange rules.

The new regulations eliminate the requirement to wear fluorescent orange at any time, while archery hunting for deer, bear and elk. This eliminates all the overlap periods when archery hunters were required to wear various amounts of orange while moving or post orange while at a fixed position while other seasons were open.

Also for the first time in over fifty plus years the PA gun season will open on a Saturday.

Maryland - Tony Sanders: The Maryland Department of Natural Resources re-

~ continued on page 14 ~

ported that deer hunters harvested 77,382 deer during the combined archery, firearms and muzzleloader seasons, from September 7, 2018, through January 31, 2019. The statewide harvest included 29,699 antlered and 44,249 antlerless white-tailed deer; and 1,609 antlered and 1,825 antlerless sika deer. The harvest was eleven percent lower than the 2017-2018 total of 86,542 deer, as multiple rain and ice events on key Saturdays limited success for hunters this season. Although the total harvest was down, the number of antlerless deer taken this year represented sixty percent of the overall harvest. Also, the statewide harvest of button bucks was down twenty-five percent this year, an important outcome for future buck hunting opportunities in Maryland.

Delaware - John Dieterick: Although not a lot to report, it appears the weather cooperated thru the season to create another record setting deer harvest. The extra Sundays and even a bit of an extension into February helped with the harvest. I've got to do some extra research but there are some reports of Sika harvested in the lower part of the state that have moved up some of the river systems from Maryland.

West Virginia - Gene Thorn: In West Virginia 659 deer were taken during the new January 2019 Mountaineer Heritage Season. This season was limited to recurve bows, longbows, and flintlock & caplock muzzleloaders.

Kentucky - Scott Record: Kentucky archery season opener is September 7th and continues through January 20th. Unfortunately crossbows will now be allowed in all but the first two weeks of the season. Time will tell what effect this will have on bowhunting in the commonwealth. On a positive note; the third annual PBS LBL membership hunt will be here soon. Several folks have already committed to this hunt and it should prove to be a great time. It's scheduled around the first two weekends in October. Contact myself or Mark Wang for additional information.



Southeast Report

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

Vance Henry – Regional Representative

I would like to recognize and welcome the following individuals as new members as of March and April: Craig Walters, Sam Roberts, Floyd Phillip, Charles Crutchfield and Douglas Campbell. Congratulations to all of you and welcome aboard.

Alabama has a new baiting law effective immediately. It states “Hunters in Alabama can now hunt white-tailed deer (when in season) and feral pigs (year round and in daylight) with the aid of bait on privately owned or leased lands if they have purchased and are in possession of an annual bait privilege license issued by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.”

As for the rest of the southeast, nothing new to report as of now. If you are enjoying time in the field, it's extremely hot so stay hydrated when you're out chasing wild hogs, scouting or foraging for mushrooms. The 90 degree temps act as a minor irritant, much like a gnat in your ear, but still well worth being in the woods.

International Report

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

Alessandro Fodera – Regional Representative

First off, I would like to welcome new members 2018/2019 International Region: Lucio Tremolizzo, Claudio Fodera, Italy; Daniel Banting, Tim Greer, Michael Slatnik, Travis Bower, Canada; Bradley Randle, Au. I hope I haven't forgotten anyone, if I did forgive me. I would also like to thank Gun Lemke for making the international report section possible. I really hope to introduce you to some new international friends in the future. Thank you for your membership. I would like to take a minute to tell all new International members that PBS and I will appreciate any kind of news about bowhunting or bowfishing in your country. We need your help. Please think about what you'd like to know if you wanted to go bowhunting in your country and let me know; just a few lines are enough. Please feel free to contact me if you have anything you would like to contribute. Thank you! Write me an e-mail: alessandro.fodera@gmail.com

Italy - Alessandro Fodera: The year 2019 opened with another fatality due to car incident caused by a wild boar. In the year 2018 there were 240 people injured and 18 dead due to wild boars. In the last 20/30 years an inept management of nature by a political class that has never wanted to know environmental issues, the management of wildlife and the environment ones; and that has always used their energy on the “defense” of animals for political advantage, has produced not only the undermining of the hunt, not to mention the bowhunters seen exclusively as barbarians and savages, but also the progressive destruction of the natural wildlife and flora. New species have been introduced into the national territory causing the almost total destruction of native species, creating enormous damage to agriculture and causing discomfort and accidents to the population. Some think, “But the environment is so beautiful, full of animals, new plants and flowers are so beautiful and fragrant; and the territory no longer cared for by man is so wild.” The incredible result obtained is that at minimum rainfall the territory landslides, the rivers overflow, agriculture is prey to animals that devastate it and the farmers no longer know how to cope with the damage caused by wild animals, firstly boar and wolves which are now the masters. Wild boar were introduced from Hungary and east Europe: they are bigger and more reproductive than the Italian ones. And there is no plan to control the population. If you are a rifle hunter you can go hunting for boars only at certain times of the year and in large hunting teams. In some regions bowhunting wild hogs is performed in drawing and solo hunting. The situation is very alarming. There are politicians who do not understand that if a single wild boar, and in eastern Europe there is swine fever and the virus travels, comes into contact with the pigs for the production of the ham, the export doors would close immediately.

An idea of how the absence of a control plan, given the impressive presence of the wild boars in the nation, is given by the images that probably all of you have seen of wild boars that roam freely and are unafraid of humans in Rome! And it's the capital! There are wolves that were introduced from east Europe. They are bigger than the Italian ones and with a different and devastating hunting method for the wildlife and the sheep-farming; so the smaller Italian wolf is driven from its territories, there are forests of chestnut trees now very dangerous to be in and the food sector is in crisis. The shepherds have been told that to prevent attacks by wolves they must take special dogs and recesses with high protections in the pasture areas; all obviously at their expense. The population of wolves in the Apennines is estimated in 1,580 animals on average with values ranging from 1,070 to 2,472. In Italy there is about 9-10% of the wolf population in Europe (except Russia) and 17-18% at European community level. In essence, the presence of wolves in the Alps has almost tripled in three years. This data should have triggered an alarm bell, but this was not the case. “But wolves are so beautiful, tender and sweet and you don't have to be afraid of them, there are no wolf alarms in Italy.”

Following the above mentioned accident caused by wild boar, finally a strong voice has turned on the light on the state of things and

on the remedies to be put in place. The person who gave voice to the requests of hunters, farmers and citizens is Barbara Mazzali. Barbara Mazzali is the Regional Councilor of Lombardy — a great supporter of rural values, from the agricultural world to the environment, mountains and hunting. She is dialoguing, but always determined in affirming her positions. The close and confidential relationship with people and the territory comes before anything. Born and raised in a family of hunters, she breathed the passion, the values, the joys and the pains of this category. “In addition to a passion, hunting can also be a solution for environmental problems: we must not forget that hunting generates 1% of national GDP, supports thousands of families linked to the induced sector, but above all, through censuses and hunting, the hunt helps to contain some species, so called harmful for agriculture and man,” she said. To try to put a stop to the situation that came about thanks to a harmful mismanagement of the territory, Barbara Mazzali proposed a resolution for the control of the wild boar and other harmful species. At this point a great bowhunter, Luca Marchi, contacted her to talk about bowhunting and the bow as a tool for selection and control. She found the bow and bowhunting extremely interesting, and being that the bowhunting already provided for in the national 157/92 law and in other regional laws that permit bowhunting in selection, she studied all the documents concerning bowhunting until it became one of her arsenal and introduced it into her motion. At the political opposition responsible for the mismanagement of the territory that has caused only damage to the environment, and that not knowing bowhunting stamping it as barbarism, she answered: “I hope that the wild boar emergency may have the necessary attention and consequently the availability of all the instruments required by law. As far as the bow is concerned, there is evidently no knowledge of this instrument, which has not only been a means of hunting for thousands of years, but is also a discipline that teaches rigor and attention.”

The motion presented and approved in the Lombardy Region, better known as “Resolution No. 132” is fundamental as it proposes a revision of the national 157/92 law, introducing the figure of the hunter specially formed for containment activities. And for the Italian bowhunters it would be the best possible result. Thanks to the reduced distance of engagement, the high presence of wild boars near inhabited centers or travel routes, without forgetting the agricultural areas that offer a great source of livelihood for the wild boars that devastate them, bowhunters may be employed in all those circumstances where the use of the rifle will not be possible or be too dangerous. “The bow can reasonably be offered as an alternative method of selective reduction in all those areas of particular criticality where the use of the fire arms may not be easy, appropriate or contrary to laws and regulations, such as areas destined for natural parks or close to residential areas”.

Here is the extract of the resolution:

“RESOLUTION

To approve the text of Motion n. 132 concerning the boar management method. Noted that the wild boar has been included in the list of one hundred very harmful species, drawn up on a planetary level by the IUCN, namely the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, a non-governmental organization considered as the most authoritative international scientific institution dealing with nature conservation; engages the President and the Regional Council 1) to be open active among Lombard parliamentarians and the national government so that they may be active for the rapid modification of 157/1992 law aimed at recognizing the figure of the voluntary operator, that is, the hunter specially trained for the containment activity under the guides of provincial police forces; 5) to evaluate the inclusion, in the context of the methods to be considered for the control of populations, also the use of the bow as the most ecological tool to carry out the picking in selection.” The progress of the resolution and its implications will be the subject of one of the next reports.

Canada, Alberta - Gun Lemke: Just a few things going on here in

Alberta that may effect hunting opportunities in the future. Last fall the environment minister announced plans for a brand new wildland provincial park on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains that will connect Banff and Jasper national parks “Bighorn Country,” a proposed 4,000 square kilometre conservation area includes new and expanded provincial parks and protected areas. The current Liberal Alberta government is comparing the idea of protecting Bighorn Country to that of Kananaskis Country created in the late 1970s. The idea of Bighorn Country isn’t new, with Albertans lobbying previous governments for protection on the lands for several decades. The area proposed includes a majority of the headwaters for the North Saskatchewan River, which is the source of drinking water for 1.5 million Albertans, including the residents of Edmonton. It would also protect important landscapes for species at risk like grizzly bears, bull trout and wolverines. A campaign over the past two-and-a-half years has seen 20,000 letters of support and signatures for the creation of Bighorn Country. There is still work to be done through the public consultation period before the change is officially made and a management plan drafted. In addition to a new wildland park, the announcement includes proposals for new land use designations that support continued traditional use of the land by Indigenous Peoples, high-quality outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities. The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA), Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and Alpine Club of Canada all celebrated the idea of preserving the areas as a gift to outdoor enthusiasts who share a common appreciation for the Rocky Mountains.

The proposal, if successful, includes an investment of \$40 million over five years in operations and capital infrastructure. It will establish the Bighorn Wildland Provincial Park to allow low impact recreation; creating three new provincial parks – the David Thompson, North Saskatchewan River and Ya Ha Tinda provincial parks – with front-country experiences like campgrounds, hiking, paddling and horseback riding. It will establish three provincial recreation areas to accommodate off-highway vehicle access to designated trails. There is also expansion of the Shunda Provincial Recreation Area proposed, amending the Kiska/Willson public land use zone and establishing a new West Country public land use zone to permit industrial development such as forestry and energy uses. In addition to refurbishing 240 existing campsites, the changes will create 150 new ones along with parking lots, trails and staging areas. Random camping would be allowed, along with the creation of rustic camping spots, similar to the Castle Provincial Park. Existing designated trails for off highway vehicles would be maintained in the Bighorn, and opportunities for new designated trail systems were proposed. There is also no change proposed to active industrial leases in the proposed public land use zones and there would not be any forestry tenure within the parks and protected areas.

And some recent news: The government and the Metis Nation of Alberta just signed the new harvesting agreement on March 18, 2019. They have been in negotiation the last bit – all of this is federally driven based on Supreme Court rulings. The province has no influence ie: they are mandated to recognize the Supreme Court decisions. This new agreement is extremely broad in the harvesting areas. Prior, there were areas around recognized Metis settlements that recognized Metis harvesters could hunt, fish etc. That area was a 160km radius of that settlement. You could not harvest outside of the settlement area you lived in/were recognized as being member of. That has changed significantly – now we have four huge areas that those Metis harvesters who are recognized as being part of, can actively hunt, fish etc. The areas are from Red Deer north to the territory’s border. Two of the areas overlap. Metis harvesters have to go through a screening process in order to get that status. Not every Metis will be a recognized “harvester”. At an AGPAC meeting we were briefed a bit on this stuff. Right now there are approximately 1,800 recognized Metis harvesters. The areas they can now hunt, fish etc just got incredibly bigger, as will their impact on wildlife.

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Welcome new members to the PBS family!

February

Lucio Tremolizzo - MB, Italia
Martin "Ed" Gonzalez - Alice, TX
Raymond Lyon - Traverse City, MI
Nate Miller - Polk, PA
Bryant Hodges - Winchester, MO
Todd Mendenhall - Decatur, IL
Glenn Rupe - Alturas, CA
Corey Minnick - Hagerstown, MD
Samuel Kuntz - Spokane, WA
John Halfhill Jr - Emporia, VA
Tim Koski - Lowman, NY
Cash Hairston - Dixon, CA
Justin Stevens - Great Falls, MT
James Pierce - Wantagh, NY
Dave Steigerwald - Gerard, PA
Jeff Kent - Mercer, PA
Daniel Banting - Canada EFY-1E7
Matthew Senesac - Freetown, IN
Ron Balowski - Coldwater, MI

March

Michael Jarrell - High Point, NC
Daniel Raney - St Louis, MO
Claudio Fodera - Italia
Craig Walters - Clemson, SC
Mike Haynes - Los Alamos, NM
John Glassburn - Litchfield, MI
Dan Hicks - Galesburg, IL
Matthew Perrault - East Berne, NY
John Warford - Grangeville, ID
Sam Roberts - Douglas, GA
Phillip Floyd - Crossville, TN
Mark Stevens - Brookings, OR
Gordon Morey - Las Vegas, NV
Charles Crutchfield - Hendersonville, TN
Lad Duncan - Charlotte, NC
Todd Maxey - Telephone, TX
Russell Trusty - Xenia, OH
Wesley Willard - Cassville, MO

April

Brian Kauffman - Thompsettontown, PA
Douglas Campbell - Ft. Mitchell, AL
Scott Sisamis - Costa Mesa, CA
Gordon Butler - Calgary, AB Canada
John Holloway - Hershey, PA

Paul Coenen - Richland Center, WI
Michael Komro - West Bend, WI
George Corignani - Bradford, PA
Gary Copple - Cambridge Springs, PA
William Moran - Bridgewater, MA
William Donaldson - Indiana, PA
Bryce Olson - Lubbock, TX

May

Paul Schnell - Chino Valley, AZ
Bill Nash - Overland Park, KS
Greg Pleasant - Giddings, TX
Abe Weaver - Apple Creek, OH
Kari Dailey - Greer, SC
Todd Cook - Cartersville, GA
Alexander Ribar - Liberty, ME
Bruce Wilder - Albuquerque, NM
Phillip Morrill - Orlando, FL
Brian Nuth - St Paul, MN



Regular Member Profile

David Kretschmar Somersworth, NH

I am 63 years old, born and raised in Somersworth, New Hampshire. I am married to Heather, we have been married for twenty-three years. We have two kids, our son Hunter, age 22, who is a business major at Plymouth State University, and daughter Avery, age 20, who is in her sophomore year at Norwich University in Vermont. (She is majoring in neuroscience, still not sure where the brains for that came from). We also have two Akitas, Gunner, a male, and Ohkami, a female. Both are rescues we picked up in New Jersey, and are great additions to our family. I have been a police officer for almost forty years now, with the first three of those being in a small, remote Indian village in Alaska, and the last thirty-six being right here in Somersworth. I have been a serious bow hunter since 1990, hunting with a compound until the year 2000, when I switched to totally traditional. Why did I switch? Simply because I wanted more of a challenge, I wanted to force myself to get close to animals. I can say I have never regretted the change. My other interests are golf and fly fishing both of which I do often throughout the year. I am a baseball nut, having coached at the high school varsity level for 4 years before a promotion at work forced

me to give that up. While I most always have a chance to kill an animal here in New Hampshire, I relish trips for white-tails to other states with friends that bowhunt.

I have been asked by a couple of people about applying for Regular membership in PBS. My answer was pretty much always the same, I wasn't ready to commit. It just didn't feel right to me. While that answer is difficult to explain, it's truly how I felt. Those questions came from Regular members, guys I have hunted with and respect. What changed? All I can say is that I came to this decision as a result of the culmination of my hunting career in general, but what pushed it over the edge was a thread on the Bowsite website about the PBS. I read that entire thread a couple of times, and the responses from both Regular and Associate members of PBS was what ul-

timately did it for me. The informative, factual, well formed responses said everything I ever needed to know, and made me realize that I needed to take the next step and do what I could to become a Regular Member. It not only feels right to me now, it IS right.

Finally, I most often hunt alone. I don't have "hero photos" of every animal I have killed with a bow. In most of my "hero shots" you will see that the photo will be of the animal and the bow used to kill it. Those are my favorite images, not ones that include me in the photo, as I believe the animal is what should be honored and remembered.



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- 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;
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*BARRY WENSEL: WHITETAIL STRATEGIES

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PBS 2020 BIENNIAL GATHERING SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

Ticket Order Form
March 12 – 15, 2020

Name _____ Regular Life _____ Regular _____ Associate _____

Spouse/Guest's Name (if attending) _____

Children's Names (if attending) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ Email _____

Individual Pricing:	Friday Dinner & Auction	# _____ @ \$45	\$ _____
	Saturday Dinner & Auction	# _____ @ \$45	\$ _____
	Regular Life Member Breakfast (Friday)	# _____ @ \$20	\$ _____
	Thursday Social	# _____ @ \$25	\$ _____
	Ladies Luncheon & Auction (Saturday)	# _____ @ \$30	\$ _____
	Ladies Tour & Luncheon (Friday)	# _____ @ \$20	\$ _____

Half Draw Package:	1 Friday Dinner & Auction Ticket		
	1 Saturday Dinner & Auction Ticket		
	100 "General" Raffle Tickets	# _____ @ \$100	\$ _____

Full Draw Package:	2 Friday Dinner & Auction Tickets		
	2 Saturday Dinner & Auction Tickets		
	200 "General" Raffle Tickets	# _____ @ \$200	\$ _____
	Additional "General" Raffle Tickets		
	100 for \$50; 35 for \$20; 15 for \$10	# _____	\$ _____

Sat Dinner Choice: ☐ Steak ☐ Fish ☐ Veg (G.F.) Ladies Luncheon Choice: ☐ Chicken ☐ Pork ☐ Fish (G.F.)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

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- Be one of the first 150 to register and have a chance to win a custom Great Northern bow. A hinged or snake skinned bow will be additional cost to the winner.
- Receive a hard plastic printed name badge for each adult attendee. Registrants after Dec 31, 2019 will receive a stick-on name tag.
- Receive an additional 50 free "General" raffle tickets for each Full or Half Draw Package.

Please register online at www.professionalbowhunters.org or make all checks payable to PBS and mail to: PBS, P.O. Box 22631, Indianapolis, IN 46222. For questions call (801) 888-3802.



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Deadline for receiving this form in the PBS Home Office is March 1, 2020. Tickets will be picked up at the PBS registration desk in Springfield. Tickets will not be mailed.

Pennsylvania Turkey Hunt

by Jeff Kent

May 3rd
2019

Having taken the day off work for my oldest daughter's junior prom, what bowhunter in Pennsylvania wouldn't take advantage of a free morning in the woods? It started with a 4:00 a.m. wake up and a forty-five minute drive to my hometown. A short walk into the woods and I was in the perfect spot. With the blind set up and two decoys placed well within my comfort zone, I was ready for the morning sun to light up the forest. With the sun came the sounds of mother nature waking up. At 6:50 a.m. the familiar sound of a distant gobble got my full attention. It didn't take long to become engaged in conversation with him. The next thirty-four minutes seemed like forever. And then he appeared from what seemed like nowhere in full strut. Fortunately for me his path to my decoys led him directly past the blind. After sending my first arrow over his back I thought for sure my gig was up. Rather than run he chose to stand his ground and teach my half strut jake decoy a thing or two. It was my turn to recover from my miss and deliver a second arrow where it belonged. And just like that, a well placed cedar arrow from a Bear take down sealed the deal.



ODD YE HOW TO CLEAN YOUR BARN OUT

Prologue: Saturday night the stars were shining and two camp fires were going with lots of tales being told. Some were even true! It was nice to see Brian Pennington up and about. He was the grand prize winner of Sir DeGobble donated by Rod Schaeffer. I was surprised with the amount of people that wanted to take a live turkey home with them. I am so glad I got to meet some new folks, got to talk with some that earlier I had only shared a brief hello to in past meetings. I am especially proud of my family and friends that give me so much support. It was a lot of work but well worth it — please consider hosting such an event some time. Lord willing, we'll do it all again in 2021.



by Tim Denial

“I would like to host a PBS Odd Year Gathering in 2019.”

Now those who attended this event know that I am married to a saint, because I did not spring this on her until after I committed to it, like some guys might try. To be honest, after almost forty-four years of wedded bliss, nothing I do really surprises her any more. So about a month before April I started to think — Hey I better get busy, and so I did. My son Tim and his friend Doug took care of setting targets. Nick Sernik, Mike Obrien, and George Hvozda came up on a Saturday to put some finishing touches on the barn. A lot of treasures were thrown on the burn pile — you know, that half-completed project that you picked up from the neighbor when he cleaned his barn out twenty years ago, GONE!

Back in the summer when you think of hosting this endeavor, it's dry out; not so in March and April. I know that, it just did not sink in until March and April. But hey, that's nothing fifty tons of gravel can't fix. The Thursday evening before the shoot, Andy Houck and his friend Kevin arrived and, well you come early and you get a job. They jumped right in willing to do whatever. On Friday, folks started showing up at about 9 a.m. Randy Brookshier and Duane Means were early arrivals and you don't even need to ask them for help, they just jumped in with helping Cindy, my wife, with whatever needed done, like setting out bucket raffle items and getting shooters registered, which was a little overwhelming at first. During this time I was trying to get people parked and camped. Believe it or not

there was a method to my madness due to the wet weather which everyone just took in stride. I was a bit worried about the mud, but earlier in the week while on the phone with Harmony, she said, “If they are worried about a little mud, they're not PBS material,” and no one gave the rain and mud a second thought, especially Sean Bleakley from NYC. I rented my log cabin out for this event and it is about 14'x16' inside. Rod Schaeffer and four other guys came with enough gear and food to outfit everyone who attended. I kept reminding them that it was only a one story cabin. Had they got snowed in they were good for a month! Besides the cabin, I also rented out a wall tent with stove, with proceeds going to the PBS.

Saturday came with good weather and many more people, among them Bill Terry

AR 2019 T WITH ONE SIMPLE SENTENCE



and Terry Receveur who also jumped right in to help with shooter sign-ups and such. They were relieved when my daughter Maggie, daughter-in-law Dani and a childhood friend Judy showed up to help Cindy. They were very much appreciated — thank you ladies! I still took care of parking, campsites and visiting, knowing that the kitchen and sign-ups were all in good hands. The 3-D course had thirty-one targets and everybody flung some arrows at the targets. Sparks flew and arrows were destroyed at several of the more challenging targets such as the caribou hiding behind a huge glacial boulder and the metal deer with the foam vitals. Outback Bob put on a great primitive fire starting seminar that had us all wondering just how good of woodsmen we really think we are. Lunch time came and bowhunters are a hungry bunch, but luckily Cindy had made a wonderful soup with turtle, beaver, venison and pork which I call “watcha caught soup” — Yum! We also had

locally famous Smith’s hot dogs, along with drinks, brownies, cake and other food that people brought. Then to top that off, Bill and Terry were deep frying gator cakes and gator bites and the line was endless for them. The food didn’t stop there — Andy and Kevin then fried up some mule deer (taken by Andy on the SD Membership hunt) with not a morsel left over. After lunch we had a hawk throwing contest and Jeff Holchin, who claimed ignorance but under my tutelage, won the contest hands-down. He says he never threw one.... HMMM! Some of the older crowd compared him to Mingo AKA Ed Ames, for he put on a clinic while swearing he never did this before. Congratulations “Lucky Jeff.” That trick won’t work next time!

Then Jeff gave a talk on the ABC’s of hosting a PBS Membership hunt for a packed room. After which we took a group photo along with Sir DeGobble, who was one of the most unusual raffle items! Next followed the

bucket raffle drawing. I must say I was awe struck by the quality and quantity of items that were donated; you could buy a wing span of tickets and you did not have enough to put a ticket in each bucket. Hint — it’s better to find a really tall guy to measure the tickets, than a really short guy, just saying.....Bill! Then after the raffle drawing, Randy got up and thanked Cindy and me for hosting the gathering; a collection was taken for us to defray some of our expenses. With the deepest of gratitude, we were really touched by what you all did for us. That night we saw how much was in that bucket and words cannot describe how we felt. Sincerely Thank You! But we talked it over and we really could not accept that much, so I pulled forty dollars out for Cindy and I to go out to dinner and we donated \$420 dollars to Erie Homes for Children and Adults, from the Professional Bowhunters Society. We had something like fifty-five attendees from eight states.



New Start to

an Old Friendship

by Ronald Bauer

I lost count but I think the number was seven or eight years in a row. I didn't know it then but these hunting trips to Brush Country Bowhunters in Freer, TX was my introduction to the PBS. I had the privilege of being part of a group of great guys that made this hunt annually. Our numbers varied each year from as few as five to as many as nine once. I had never heard of the PBS back then and didn't realize that about half of our group were members. As a matter of fact, Stanley Rodrigue was a charter member of this group and Ethan made a hunt or two with us. According to the dates on some of my pictures life got in the way and we haven't been back since 2010. Glenn Smith (Smitty) is the owner, part-time cook, guide, provider of transportation and belly laughs plus all-around good guy of Brush Country Bowhunters. We would go bowhunt for hogs and javelina with him and he would come bowfishing with us in Louisiana. Our hunts evolved into yearly opportunities to renew our friendship with Smitty and after a lapse of eight years I was really wanting to go see and hunt with him again. For various reasons we couldn't seem to put a group together again so I made the decision to go solo. Through the magic of Facebook we had managed to keep in touch with each other so I contacted him about making a deer hunt. He said the week after Thanksgiving was the start

of the best deer hunting and put me down for that week.

I arrived early in the evening on the day before my hunt was to begin and we spent the time riding around the ranch letting me see how things had changed in eight years and just catching up on each other's lives. I get as excited as the next guy about a big set of antlers but my main goal is to bring home what I call a Freezer Trophy. If young and tender walks by before Bullwinkle does then I'm going to do my best to give that young thing a ride in my pickup truck. Even if there is nothing but skin on its head and it is legal. During our ride around, I noticed that Smitty had replaced all his tripod stands with shooting houses. His explanation was that so many inexperienced hunters would trim so much around the tripods that before long they were sitting out in the wide open and he was forced to quit using them. This concerned me because I have never shot out of a shooting house. All hunting on this ranch is over feeders because the brush is impossible to walk through. In this part of Texas if it doesn't bite you it sticks you and it is really good at it.

I hunted this ranch so often in years past that I knew every stand site by its number. My first morning to hunt I was dropped off at good old number 4. I had taken a javelina here in years past but it had really changed since I last sat there. I took the time before it got light enough to shoot to rearrange the chair and my equipment so that I was sure my sixty-two inch longbow wasn't going to hit anything. After several practice pulls I was comfortable with my situation and ready for the excitement to begin. It didn't take long.

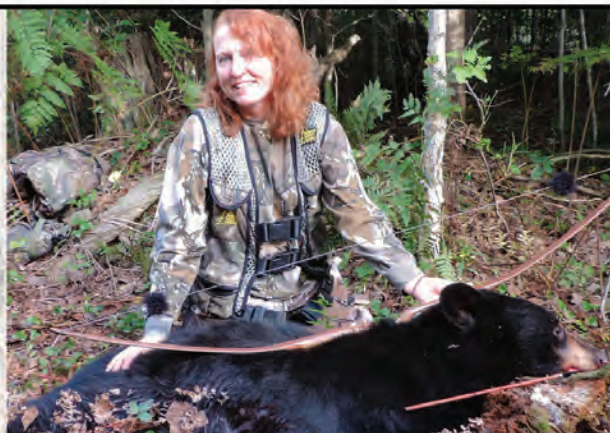
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Just before it was light enough to shoot, I could make out the outline of a deer walking the edge of the opening but couldn't make out what it was. A moment later a second deer followed it into the opening. They stayed about forty yards away for maybe five minutes and then walked out of sight the same way they had come in. It had gotten light enough to shoot when they came back once again staying about the same distance away. I could see that they were a small yearling doe and an eight point buck that was probably a second year deer. My self-imposed limit is twenty steps but my comfortable distance is fifteen to eighteen. A footnote here is that being a widower and living alone in a fairly big house, I have figured out that by opening a couple doors and shooting across several rooms I can practice indoors at about fifteen steps. My precious wife of forty-seven years probably flips over in her grave every time I do this in her beautiful home. On this morning it really paid off. My deer milled around for a few minutes and started to leave again when the feeder went off at exactly 7 a.m. They stood a moment then started slowly making their way toward the feeder. One of the reasons I dislike hunting over a feeder is that the deer are always on high alert and these two were no different. The buck walked past and out of my line of sight because of the limitations of the window. The doe made her way to the feeder but was so spooky that she was constantly yanking her head up looking around. She stopped feeding and started staring



behind my shooting house at something so I thought maybe the buck was making his way back around again. After a moment another yearling doe came in and went straight to the feeder. This seemed to calm the first doe down. They were both so young and small that I had made my mind up even though they were within my comfort zone they had a free pass and I just sat and waited. I took a chance and slowly leaned forward so I could see further in the direction the buck had gone and could just barely see the tips of his antlers as he slowly made his way back toward the two does. Getting my bow up and ready, I waited

what seemed like an eternity but he finally got in perfect broadside position and was kind enough to look away so I could make it to full draw and pick a spot. I was still staring at my spot tight behind his front leg when all of a sudden, my arrow was sticking out of it. I had practiced that same exact shot so many times in my house that I wasn't even aware of releasing the arrow. Looking at my watch I realized that the eternity I had waited for the buck to give me a shot was actually only five minutes.

Just prior to this hunt I had changed over to a Zwickey two blade single bevel broadhead from the Wensel Woodsman three blades that I have always shot. I had no idea how the two blade would perform and as the buck spun out of my sight it looked like way less penetration than I was expecting. I looked at my watch and called Smitty to let him know I had shot a young buck but was going to wait a good thirty minutes before getting out of the shooting house to check for blood, especially since I wasn't sure of the penetration. He showed up about thirty minutes later with his blood tracking dogs and we went to where the deer was standing when I shot. The dogs took off across the small clearing while we were looking for blood. There was no need for the dogs. A blind man could have followed the blood trail at a fast walk. Before we got across the clearing, we could see the dogs standing over my deer waiting on us. He made it about forty yards after a double lung shot that also clipped the top of his heart. I'm going to post a picture that is probably not so politically correct to show the damage the single bevel head accomplished. In the picture the arrow is at an awkward angle because the deer is laying on the other end where the arrow made it all the way through. If you can, enlarge the picture so you can see the entry hole made by the single bevel head. The exit was just as big.

I was able to fill my freezer with this buck and a young doe so I am set up for a while with some of the greatest and healthiest eating a man can have. The hunting was really good but the greatest part of this whole thing was the renewing of an old friendship. After just a few minutes greeting each other it was as if I hadn't been gone long at all. I'm hoping to make this a yearly event once again and who knows, maybe next year I can get some of the old gang to join me.





NEBRASKA SUPER TAG

By Zachary Welch

I will never forget hearing my first bugle; the big bull crested the hill and let out a bugle that broke the silence of opening morning.

It was enough to give even the most experienced and seasoned hunter chills, let alone a 21-year-old college student on his first elk hunt. Our first hunt of the season was off to a hot start, but it paled in comparison of what was soon to come.

Rewind two months. I had just returned from a weeklong vacation to Texas on a bowfishing trip and to Maryland to see some good family friends and do some bowfishing there as well. It was now officially the heart of the off-season, and bowseason felt like it was an eternity away. In the back of my mind, knowing that my name was in the hat for one of Nebraska's coveted Once-in-a-lifetime bull elk tags was about the only thing keeping me going as summer began to drag on. Though I knew my odds were already low, these hopes would soon be crushed when I got the infamous "denied" on my application status on draw day. My mom was texting me at the time, and I told her to tell my dad no luck on the elk tag. I jokingly said at the end of the conversation: "Oh well, maybe the Super Tag."

At the time, I didn't really know much about the Super Tag, but knew in the back of my mind that it was the only chance left for a Nebraska elk tag. I remember looking at the odds from the year before of drawing it, and saw that they were nearly 1 in 1600. I thought for a long time about whether to apply or not, and finally I decided that at the end of the day \$26 was not that much money, and if anything at least I could donate to Game and Parks. One of the last things I remember seeing on the Super Tag information page was that the winner would be notified by phone call, little did I know how much this would come into play later in this story.

A couple of weeks went by and I did not think

much about it besides the occasional visit to the Game and Parks website to check the draw status on my application to see when they shut off the draw. I knew the winner would be announced soon when I saw the application was shut off for the tag. I couldn't help to think that I was going a little bit crazy over this Super Tag; I couldn't quite put my finger on it, but had this strange feeling in my gut that I might just be the lucky winner. Needless to say, when I got a phone call just a few days later from an unknown Lincoln number, my heart began to race, only to be let down moments later when I found out it was just a telemarketing call. "Oh well!" I said to myself, "Did I really expect that to be the phone call I've been dreaming about?"

The next day I was in the exact same position, I was in the gym when my phone rang. It was my dad; I looked at it for a minute and thought about calling him back later. Something inside of me told me to answer this phone call, I had a weird feeling that it might be important. The conversation started just like any other, but took a turn when he said, "Guess who drew that Super Tag?" After already having had a tease the day before, I said "Who?..." thinking he was either about to play a joke on me, or someone we knew drew that tag. "You did!" he exclaimed. For the next few minutes I did not believe him and paced back and forth trying to decide whether I was about to be let down once again even worse, or I had drawn the tag. My dad explained to me that Nebraska Game and Parks had contacted my mom and notified her that I had drawn the tag. It all hit me then that this had actually happened and I couldn't believe it. It all felt like a dream. I actually had drawn the Super Tag; needless to say, I was flying pretty high for the next few days. That night I set a goal to shoot my bow every single day until season. Little did I know just how much it would pay off in the end.

The days following the news that I had drawn the tag were spent mostly contacting landowners. We decided we were going to focus on the North Platte area in the Box Elder unit. We had some connections there thanks to some friends and I was off to a good start getting permission. Out of all the calls that I made, I never got a solid "no" from any of the landowners. Some of them had family members or hired hands that were hunting and said that they had first priority, however, I had a number of places that told me they would be more than happy to have me hunt elk on their place. Along with the landowners in the North Platte area, I also made contact with some good family friends close to the Ainsworth area since my elk tag was a statewide tag and I was not limited to

one unit. Needless to say, we had plenty of ground to hunt; it was now a matter of finding elk and getting ready to hunt when September 1st rolled around.

Days turned into weeks and before I knew it, summer was drawing to an end and school was starting again. I still had not missed a day of shooting my bow and I refused to let that slip now that my schedule was getting even busier with classes starting. The week of September 1st finally arrived, and I began to get things ready for the weekend. As the weekend drew nearer, the time seemed to move slower and anticipation was at an all time high. Friday could not come soon enough. I made sure to take care of everything in school, so that when the weekend rolled around I would be able to focus on the hunt. Finally Friday arrived, and as soon as class was over, I packed my car and headed west for North Platte, but first I had to make a stop. I stopped at the archery range on the way out of town and took one last shot; I had to keep my promise.

I did not know what to expect the first weekend, I really thought about how we had not had a lot of time to scout, so I figured this trip would be more of a scouting trip and getting the elk figured out. Regardless, I was happy to be going elk hunting as it was something I had always dreamed of, and knew we had plenty of time to hunt. I met my dad and Matt Gideon that evening south of North Platte near Wellfleet. We would be staying with our good friend Chad Stengel and his family for the weekend. This was very convenient as it was just a short drive away from where we would be hunting for the next three days. I can't thank him and his family enough for putting up with us for the weekend!

That night we went and met with a couple of the landowners. One of them insisted that I ride with him so he could show me where exactly the property lines were, as sometimes on maps they can look deceiving from what they actually are. My dad and Matt followed in the pickup behind us. After showing me around, I shook the landowner's hand and thanked him again for the opportunity to hunt elk. I can't say enough about how nice all of these landowners were that I was dealing with! When I got in the pickup, my dad and Matt informed me how they had seen a big bull crossing the pasture as we drove by. Needless to say, this had all of us fired up and we had our spot picked out for the morning hunt.

After a pretty sleepless night, I woke up ready to go. I threw on my hunting clothes, grabbed my bow, and headed out the door. My dad and I would be sitting where we saw the big bull cross the pasture the night before. Walking in that morning I had no idea what to expect, but I was excited to see what the morning would hold. As we walked in, a shooting star as large and as bright as I have ever seen lit up the sky for a good few seconds. My dad and I both stared at it and then at each other in disbelief. It was unlike either of us had ever seen. "We are going to kill a bull this trip..." I thought to myself, "I can feel it."

That morning was unforgettable. It was without a doubt one of my favorite mornings of hunting in my life. We had been sitting in our spot for about forty minutes when my dad nudged me and said, "Elk!" Sure enough, on the horizon, a cow came over the hill, and then another, then another. The elk just kept coming and coming, and even a few of them being little bulls. Finally, a moment I will never forget for as long as I live, a big herd bull crested the hill and let out a bugle that echoed through the early morning air. "That was awesome!" I whispered to my dad, as we looked at each other with both of our eyes just as big as the other's. I had just watched my first elk bugle, and it was a moment I will never forget. We watched the elk for about forty-five minutes while they chased each other around, fed, and bugled on a little patch of green grass on the far side of the pasture. Eventually they went into the cornfield for the day. The hunt ended with a small rag horn that came into about 120 yards with a cow and a calf. It was an action packed hour that had us fired up and ready to hunt again that evening!

On our way back from the morning hunt, we found a spot in a small shelter belt of cedars where elk had been crossing to get into a pivot

that I had permission to hunt on. This was not far from the pasture that we were set up on and was certainly sign from the same elk that we had seen that morning. The herd bull had a tree completely shredded from rubbing on it where they were crossing. We had brought a tree stand with us and we knew exactly what to do for the evening. I never imagined that I would be hunting these elk from a tree stand, but I was now glad that we brought one, as I knew the chances of having an elk come by were fairly high by the looks of the trail.

That evening I climbed into the tree stand and had a perfect view. I could see the pivot in front of me with the trail through the trees, and the green patch the elk had been on that morning to my far north. I could see a long way and knew I would be seeing elk that night; it was just a matter of time. Not long after being in the tree, I saw a few cows pop over the hill and start making their way across a patch of wheat stubble toward the trail below me. Not long after spotting them, a big, ivory tipped bull crested the hill right behind them. I put my binoculars on him and decided immediately that he was a shooter. The cows started angling away from me, along with the bull. I decided to cow call softly. I had nothing to lose. I let out a soft mew and the big bull lifted his head and snapped his head in my direction. I called again, and soon he turned and was on a b-line directly for the trail below me. My heart was pounding out of my chest. "This is really going to happen," I said to myself. Just then, I felt the wind on my cheek. "Oh no..." the bull stopped dead in his tracks and turned the other way and went back to the cows. So close, yet so far, a matter of moments and I would have had my opportunity at this bull. As heart broken as I was that the big bull had caught my wind, it was such a cool experience to see him come in like that after calling at him, and to top it, it was still early. As it got later and the sun was setting, I spotted more elk. This time, they were not coming my direction, they were making their way in the distance to the same green patch of grass they had been on that morning. Cows and calves made their way to the green patch and following them was the big herd bull we had seen bugle that morning. I watched them until dark through my binoculars. At dark I texted my dad to come pick me up, I told him I had watched the whole herd go to the same place they had been that morning. With a southeast wind in the forecast, I knew exactly where we needed to set up in the morning. The cards were on the table. We all knew we now had the best chance we'd had yet the whole weekend at getting a chance at a bull. It would be another sleepless night.

After telling the story of the close call with the big bull that evening, we watched football and discussed our plan for morning before heading to bed. My dad and I would be setting up in the morning in the pasture that we were in the previous morning, this time as close to the green patch as we could get since the wind was in our favor. The next morning came early; my alarm went off at 4:45 a.m. I rolled over and sat on the edge of the bed for a minute after shutting off my alarm. I was tired, but at the same time, I was excited. I knew that we now had a good idea of what these elk were doing and that today our odds of getting a chance at a bull were higher than we had at any other time this trip. I sat on the edge of the bed for a second before putting on my hunting clothes. "God, please give us a bull today." With that being said, we all got dressed and were out the door within minutes. The drive there was fairly quiet. We were all tired from not sleeping much from excitement the last few days, however, you could feel the excitement in knowing we knew we were setting up exactly where we needed to be. Matt dropped us off, and my dad and I walked into the pasture. We set up just on the outside of some tall weeds that separated us from the green patch by about 150 yards. We waited in silence in the dark as we waited for the sun to come up.

The sun began to rise and gave way to a cloudy morning with a nice breeze out of the southeast just as forecasted. Perfect. Now we just needed the elk to do the same thing they did the previous morning. Not long after the sun broke the horizon, two bulls and about 18 cows and calves started

~ continued on page 30 →

making their way from the south toward us in a line with the green patch. The herd bull stopped and let out a bugle and continued walking. Moments later, all of the cows and calves were in the green patch with the two bulls hanging just outside of the herd. The herd bull chased the younger bull away from the rest of the herd and the younger bull moved quickly to the north across the pasture. Now all that remained were the herd bull and all of his cows and calves on the green patch. They were right where we needed them.

A few of the cows started to break away and make their way toward us. Not long after, the rest of the cows started to follow, and the herd bull was right behind them. "Here he comes," whispered my dad. It was game on. The bull started to angle to our right and it looked like he was going to walk towards the field too far from us for a shot. My dad stood up and we started to move to try and get in front of the bull. As we stood up, in the tall weeds in front of us. There was a cow. We could not see her before since the weeds and grass were so high she managed to sneak right in close to us without us knowing. He pulled me back down. We were stuck there. We were not going to be able to move. The bull was beginning to angle away from us the last we could see. "Should I call at him?" whispered my dad. "Might as well, as fired up as he was, it might work," I said. My dad let out a bugle and almost immediately the bull fired back. My dad bugled right back at him. The bull bugled again and this time it felt as if the ground was shaking. The bull was a lot closer now and closing the distance. He was within 40 yards but was in tall weeds. I could not see exactly where he was, but he was close. "Here he comes!" my dad whispered. Just then I saw ivory tips bouncing over the tops of the weeds less than 20 yards away. "Draw your bow!" my dad whispered. I drew back. My heart was pounding in my ears and my hands began to tingle. It was an adrenaline rush like nothing I've ever experienced before. We were on the edge of the tall weeds. Less than 10 yards away, the bull poked his head out of the tall weeds and made eye contact with us. The only thing I could see was his head and his rack. We didn't move. The bull whirled and began herding up his cows out in the weeds. You could see them bouncing as he began herding them up running circles around them. At this point, the bull still did not know what we were. My dad grabbed me and said, "We are going in there!"

We went into the tall weeds, using them as cover, cow calling as we went. The bull was ripping off bugles within 100 yards of us the whole time. We made our way to a small clearing in the weeds, the only open-

ing we could really find. The bull was still bugling and had his cows herded up. We could only see the tips of his tines as we knelt down in the weeds. My dad bugled at him and the bull immediately turned toward us. Once again he came bouncing toward us bugling. It was all happening so fast. I drew my bow again and the bull stopped again at 10 yards, this time with a very small portion of his chest showing. "Shoot him," I heard my dad whisper as I was at full draw with my pin settled on the bull facing us. From my angle the spot that I needed open for the shot was covered by weeds, but from my dad's view he had a perfect opening to the bull's chest. Just as I thought I had a small opening to squeeze an arrow into, the bull once again whirled and began to herd up his cows that were beginning to break up. This time the bull led his cows out of the tall weeds into some shorter stubble. We once again got to our feet and made our way to the edge of the tall patch to where we were out of good cover. The cows were beginning to walk away through the stubble and behind them the bull was walking at a steady clip. "Range him right there!" I whispered to my dad. "He's 51!" my dad said as he clicked his range finder." I drew back and gave him a couple mews trying to stop him, but no luck. Just then my dad cow called and the bull stopped in his tracks and looked in our direction. Time seemed to stand still as I settled my pin right behind the bull's shoulder. The countless hours of practice all through the summer, the thousands of arrows shot, and all of the dreaming about this moment came down to this. I touched the shot off and it felt good.

The next sound I heard was a hollow "thump!" that assured me that the arrow had found its mark. The bull ran for a few steps and I saw blood begin to run down his side. The cows took off in a blur and the bull stayed behind, looking very sick. "Liver," I whispered to my dad as the bull walked to the edge of the green patch that he had been bugling and chasing in just an hour earlier. My dad and I watched the bull as he began to walk slowly across the green patch back toward a small group of trees in the middle of the pasture we had been hunting. In a split second, we decided we should use the small strip of tall grass as cover that ran the length of the green patch to try to cut the bull off and get another arrow in him. I was confident that my arrow would do the job, but the sooner we could end it, the better for both the bull and us. We snuck along the tall grass as the bull made his way across the grass patch. Finally, we got within range and my dad gave me a range, "71," said my dad. I took my time and the shot felt good, but it fell just short, just low under the bull. "Dang it!" I said as I looked at my dad. The shot felt good, but after being constantly on the move the last few minutes and having so much adrenaline running through my veins the shot was off. My dad assured me that the bull did not even spook. The bull made it about 40 more yards before he bedded down. My dad and I laid down in the grass and watched him through the binoculars. He was hurting bad.

Meanwhile, Matt had been watching the whole thing through the spotting scope from a ways away. We called him and he said the shot was a touch back, but not too bad. We agreed that we would wait for however long it would take for the bull to expire and watch him in the meantime as we knew he would eventually try to make it to the trees just 100 yards from him. A few moments later the bull stood up. Just as soon as he stood, he fell back into his bed and we knew that he was really hurting. He began gasping and layed down on his side. My dad looked at me and we both knew it was more than a liver hit. I had caught the back of the lungs and the bull was not too far from expiring, however, we knew if we could manage to get another arrow in him we could



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end it sooner. We made the quick decision to crawl up to the bull since we had plenty of tall grass and a small knob between us and the bull. If he tried standing again, we would at least be within bow range. My dad and I slowly made our way up to the bull, and now we were within shooting range. My dad ranged him through the grass as the bull was laying on his side with his head down. I wanted it to be over now. I asked my dad for a range and he said, “31, take your time.” I decided to take a few steps closer to get a more open shot. One more range, “27,” said my dad. I drew back, held behind the bull’s shoulder and squeezed off the shot. My arrow hit perfectly and the bull didn’t even stand up. He rolled over and kicked a few times and within a matter of seconds it was over. I could not believe what had just happened.

I raised my bow in the air and with tears in my eyes and a knot in my throat I hugged my dad. As we began to walk toward the bull laying dead right in front of us. Neither one of us knew what to say, and we just looked at each other in complete shock. We walked up to the bull and I got down on my knees next to him. I wrapped my hands around the bull’s rack and was speechless. I had just killed my first bull elk with a bow on the most unbelievable hunt that I could ever imagine. My whole life I had dreamed of killing a bull elk with a bow and now that dream had become a reality. He was now in my hands and it was all so surreal. Everything from hearing them bugle, to experiencing the highs and the lows, and getting to experience it all with my dad by my side was more than I could have ever asked for. It was absolutely perfect.

A few moments later Matt called and congratulated me. He drove down to us a few minutes later as we still were trying to figure out what had just happened. There were many high fives and hugs as we stood there and admired the bull and the unbelievable hunt that had just unfolded. We took plenty of pictures and then the work began! I gutted the bull and pulled the heart from him as well as the tenderloins, which would go in the meat cooler for our enjoyment later. We spent the next hour or more trying to load the big bull in the back of the pickup. It was a tiring job, but I was so excited I didn’t care. Thanks to a ratchet strap, a rope, and a few coolers, we were able to get the gutted bull into the back of the pickup and immediately back to the Stengel residence for butchering. We made a quick stop by the landowner’s house and needless to say, he was more than happy to see us get a bull! Again, I can’t say enough good things about the landowners that we dealt with on this hunt.

We spent that afternoon and most of the

early evening butchering the big bull and getting him taken care of. By early evening we were finished and were ready to relax. After taking care of all of the meat and talking on the phone to friends and family that heard of the successful hunt, we enjoyed fresh elk steak as we watched college football and reminisced on the hunt. It was the perfect way to end a day that I had always dreamed of.

The next morning we packed up and said our goodbyes. It was an amazing weekend filled with memories that will last a lifetime. It was hard to believe my dream had come true and it all happened on opening weekend. I could not have asked for a better way for the whole experience to unfold! As I made my way back to Kearney, I looked in the rearview mirror and had to shake my head in disbelief as I was staring at the rack of the bull. I still could not believe it and it would take some time for reality to really set in. “Not a bad investment for a \$26 tag,” I said to myself. It is no doubt the best \$26 I have spent in my life.

As I told the stories to my friends and family, I knew that words could not do justice to what we experienced, but I knew that they understood just how much it meant to me. Getting to share meat with good friends and family showed them why we do it. It is some of the best meat I have ever had and it is keeping my freezer plenty full!

As I close this story, I still can’t believe that this has all happened. From drawing the tag, to experiencing elk action in its finest form, to harvesting a big bull, it was more than I could have ever dreamed. A few weeks after the elk hunt, I returned home for a Friday evening hunt after class. That night I arrowed one of my best whitetails to date, but that’s a story for another time!



THE DOUBLE DOUBLE



By Emile P. LeBlanc

Best friends for over forty years, Steve Young and I have had many great times hunting together over the years. The days pass methodically as we go about “life’s” chores and responsibilities only to awake from the daze and see “time” quickly gaining ground. I’ve been retired for four years now while Steve has been retired for about two years. Steve had a tree stand accident several years ago that shattered his right shoulder even though he was securely tethered with his safety harness. That could have ended very badly. I then had rotator cuff surgery on my left shoulder about a year and a half ago. So, this hunt probably should not have occurred had Steve listened to his doctor.

This was our part of a PBS Javelina Bowhunt orchestrated by Russell Lantier near Marfa, Texas in February of 2018.

We arrived the afternoon before our hunt was scheduled to start so we took full advantage of this time to drive around and locate feeders that were there two years ago. We slipped in over a shallow hill to sit and glass the bowl where we had each taken a javelina two years previous. We spotted a group of four javelina milling around along the far hillside, probably waiting for the feeder to go off. This spot is tough to hunt as the wind is usually blowing from the wrong direction or “squirrely”.

We teamed up the next morning and headed out to the feeder site only to have the ranch owner drive up with a small backhoe to repair a broken water line to one of his cattle watering troughs. Well, so much for hunting this spot today. The ranch covers 20,000 acres so we should be able to find another spot. As luck would have it, we ran into a group of quail hunters who informed us that they had just run a group of javelina off of a feeder in the bottom from where they had just come. As we eased over the rise, we spotted a javelina at the feeder milling around. I was able to stalk in range for a shot but never got a shot before it moved back into the brush.

During our lunch, we formulated our plan of attack and were back to implement it by 3:30 pm. As we approached the feeder in Steve’s truck, several javelina moved off into the brush unalarmed. Steve started spreading corn around the feeder and down the road while I trimmed limbs and grass for a ground blind. With the wind from the right and the feeder straight out in front, I was set! Steve would drive down the road, park then walk back and set up on the other side of the feeder and uphill a bit where he could watch the road.

I was set up a total of about four minutes when I caught movement

from my right as a nice boar came in and started picking up the corn that I had strategically placed at eleven yards. As he turned to a slight angling away shot, my arrow was off! He broke right and headed for the thick brush across the road where some gnashing of teeth could be heard before all became silent. After a couple of minutes, I got up and made my way up to Steve’s spot where we exchanged looks of amazement as I told him to take my place in the blind.

During the next hour, I saw two javelina feeding on corn along the road that were farther than I liked. Just shortly before the feeder was scheduled to go off, Steve got a shot on a javelina that managed to circle around and get up a hill between us. Steve was able to slip up and put a finishing shot on it as the two others with it headed for higher ground. We made our way back to the bunkhouse before dark and were able to get both animals gutted and iced before the celebration began!

That feeder site turned out to be a hot spot as we turned it over to those who had not seen javelina the first day. The wind changed direction but regardless, several more javelina were taken at that site over the course of the hunt.

The next morning found Steve and I back at our first day location and set up across the bowl from each other. Within an hour, Steve got a fifteen yard shot at an almost black javelina but hit too high. He watched as it ran up the mountain and went back to its normal activities up on the ridge some 400 yards away. I then set up next to the cedar tree where Steve had sat and had him set up about

thirty yards uphill to cut off any javelina that might circle down wind of my position. Sure enough, after about thirty minutes of sitting still, I heard Steve shoot and the javelina bolt. Steve had his second javelina! We drug him to the downwind side of my position then Steve moved across the bowl to glass the hill behind me.

After about an hour, Steve made the prearranged hand wave to let me know I would have a visitor shortly. It took another ten minutes of tense waiting before I caught movement from the upwind trail. The boar stopped and fuzzed up his dorsal hair before making his way toward the open area surrounding the feeder. Another eleven yard shot from my longbow sent him back up the hill about twenty yards before he rolled down thrashing and gnashing teeth. Two more follow up shots ended that behavior! WOW! We were done in Grand Style doubling two days in a row with time for pictures and trading each other’s perspective on the hunt.

We spent the next day quartering and icing our javelina and even had some time to pitch in and help a couple of the other guys with their kills.



No Tail Doe

By Greg Szalewski

Summer gardening is one of our pastimes during the warm weather months. I do the garden, yard, and arborist duties. Karen covers the ornamental plantings like the annuals and perennials. A few years back she put in a number of hostas around the dozen or so maple trees that are now approaching two feet in diameter.

If anyone has tried growing hostas in an area that is frequented by deer, you know what the result is. They get trimmed back by those deer, usually when you are not looking. That is the way it goes every year in our yard. The hostas come up real nice, growing at a fast pace and with enthusiasm for the warm weather to match ours. It doesn't take the deer long to find them, and in many cases chew the leaves off back to the stem.

That of course was the case again last year, and by mid-June it was apparent that we were once again feeding the neighborhood deer herd. We had yet to catch any in the act of the crime, but at any sightings, they were declared to be the guilty parties.

It was near the end of June, late in the day, before sunset that I was in the kitchen and saw a doe eating one of the hostas, about sixty feet away from me. I told Karen so she could see and perhaps shoo the deer away, for whatever that would be worth.

And that she did. She opened the back door, stood in the doorway and gave the doe a good scolding. The doe was unimpressed and just looked at Karen. So Karen walked out on the deck to get closer, putting herself now about forty feet away, gave the doe another scolding to which the deer just turned around, now facing away, but showing no signs that she was in any hurry to leave.

Karen continued to talk to the deer and then I was hearing her tell the deer that it was alright, she could go ahead and eat her flowers. The doe walked away and Karen came back in and I asked her what was up with the change of heart. She said that the deer didn't have a tail, and when she realized that, she felt sorry for her. The doe was now by the garden, (it is fenced and I don't share) and sure enough, no tail. Before I could get the camera turned on to get a picture she had moved off to a neighbor's yard.

So now the quest was on for me to get pictures of the deer without a tail. Of course, she never showed again in the evening, except for a few times that she was just moving through. I did catch her a couple times in the morning as I was leaving for work, but by the time I got the camera all I could get was a distant and often blurry picture.

My next plan was to put a trail camera on an apple tree that was now dropping apples. I noticed that they were getting picked up every night, so no doubt I would get some pictures there. Sure enough, within a couple weeks I had many pictures to pick from.

From what I can see there isn't any stub of a tail. It just appears to be smooth where there should be one. If anyone has an explanation for this, please let me know.

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2019 ARIZONA PBS

By Rick Wildermuth

I really anticipated this year's hunt. It was the holiday season, supposedly great weather, meeting up with old friends and hopefully meeting new members. I think this is year five of hunting with PBS members in southern Arizona. We have been hosting this hunt in two locations, switching each year.

The weather. Several years ago when I announced this hunt I boasted about 60 degrees, dry and sunny weather. Why stay in Wisconsin in January? Come to Arizona. It ended up very cold weather, snow, the wind blew like a banshee, PBS members brought wives and RV's. Mud and snow delayed their departure by several days and made hunting interesting. I have not discussed "possible" mild conditions since then.

This year, Pete McMiller was the first member planning to arrive and meet Paul Marsden from Tucson, that was pushed back a day due to snow (this location is at about 5200' in elevation and the report was for a below-average temperature week with several fronts passing thru).

I met Paul Saturday morning and we made a two-vehicle caravan to the campsite, about seventeen miles of maintained dirt road. It was slick but we did ok. Pete was already set up when we arrived.

Javelina season didn't start for several days so I searched a day and a half for Coues deer and mulies, having only spotted a buck hot on a doe's trail, several hundred yards up the slope. She ran by, hauling butt and I wondered why. It must have been two minutes later when I spotted the young buck following her trail. What a nose. I saw him zigzag, only slightly, to stay on her trail. I can't smell my socks when they're ripe.

I went home to spend New Year's Eve with my wife and left the next morning to return to camp. Just south of Tucson the trees and cactus were snow covered due to another front passing thru. First time I'd seen snow in this area. I made it to camp, slip sliding my way along. It sure was beautiful. We don't see snow-covered cactus very often.

I arrived back in camp New Year's morning around lunch. I told

Paul I was going to hike along the wash directly behind camp, only a few yards away. I had traveled less than 200 yards and spotted two javelina not far ahead. Wow, cool, yeeha. They were not spooked so I high-tailed it back to camp for some assistance in the fun. I told Paul what was up and I never saw him move so fast to grab his gear. Then I ran over and knocked on Pete's door shouting "Hey, want to chase some pigs? They're right over there." Well, I could have caught him at a better moment, but he responded well. Within five minutes he was dressed in jeans and running out the door. So off we went.

Those javelina did not know what was coming after them. One walked by me so I followed him just a short distance. He walked right up on Pete, who took it upon himself to make a great shot, on MY javelina, so says Paul. Paul and I saw three or four other javelina but no shot transpired. Pete certainly didn't need help with the drag, all 200 yards of it. So, having plenty of fresh snow on the ground Paul and I decided to track these guys and off we went. Several miles and hours later we caught up with them. Along the way they had stayed low, in and out of washes, mostly heading southwest. Finally I heard Paul whisper, "There they are." We spotted six adults and I think several youngsters. A big guy strolled pretty close to me and I thought I'd get a shot, but not quite close enough. The wind must have changed because they suddenly took off, the chase was over. That was a great first day of the javelina season.

Another day the rancher stopped by and mentioned that every time he drove into the next valley he had seen javelina. I was out on my own at that time, somewhere, so Paul took a hike over there. He spotted two javelina cresting the highest ridge, then found some other tracks and followed them till dark. That night over dinner we decided to head back to the same area in the morning, driving instead of walking. More firewood needed – that was our excuse.

After parking and organizing our packs and bows, we walked up the ridge where Paul spotted the javelina the night before. The tracks were easy to pick up and follow. Another long tracking job. Up and down the steepest slopes, into and out of washes. I remember getting into a wash, thinking maybe, just maybe, I'd find them piled up in a bed. Several times I had to back out because the wash became too narrow for me to pass through. I remember thinking about how I would react if I came around a bend in the wash to find myself face to face with several of these dudes. I mean, at times, the walls of the wash were ten feet high, three feet wide. Could I swing my long bow up? Would they charge me? Would they just take off one way while I ran the other? No worries. A confrontation never materialized.

We did take a snack break four hours into the tracking. I got out an apple to share. Paul asked if I would like to have half of his prime rib sandwich. What could I say? That guy knows how to eat and yes, my apple was also good.

Another five hour track job. At times, things got a little tough. The snow was melting on the south slopes, and with the terrain being mostly stone, we really had to search. Once again I heard this hiss, "Rick, they're right over there." And he was right, we had moved within fifty yards of them, without their knowledge.

Paul took the first shot and "whack." The hit sounded great. The javelina jumped to the other side of this huge prickly pear, looked around, and walked



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THE HIGHLIGHTS

back to the spot he was rooting in. Whack for shot number two. Same javelina movement, walk away then come back. Thwack. This time he took off, leaving a very scant blood trail. Paul had placed two arrows one inch apart in a prickly pear paddle, which looked just like the javelina's "sweet spot."

Meantime, another javelina decided to walk over to the same huge prickly pear. Just after clearing a mesquite he stopped and I shot. The flight looked perfect. I was watching it in slow motion. Then, for some reason, the arrow took a quick right. You know, the unseen twig story again. I did some more damage to the prickly pear. We looked for hours and never found another drop of blood or any other sign of the javelina Paul hit. We searched that area pretty hard the next morning. No javelina, no sign.

A friend of mine and bowhunter-in-the making, Marty, arrived several days later. I knew the road was still very slick so when he didn't arrive when we expected, I started driving in his direction to see if there were any problems. We met along the road. When I asked why he was behind schedule, he said he stopped for fuel and ended up helping a woman that had locked her keys in the car. Good deed of the day accomplished.

This was Marty's first try at javelina hunting. We hiked the afternoon once he was settled in and spotted four mule deer does about two miles off. Nothing else was stirring. That night, chef extraordinaire, Paul, made enchiladas for dinner. WOW and thank you again, Paul.

The weather was forecasted to get nasty again, rain, warmer temps, and more rain. The roads were just starting to dry up a little but that was to change soon. Pete decided to leave the next morning. If not, he figured he might not get out for the next three or four days. We knew how slick these roads were with the melting snow, so rain on top of that? Oh boy.

We said our goodbyes to Pete the next morning, hoping to see him soon since we had another great time together. Paul said he would hunt around camp and I figured I would show Marty a few spots (maybe he'd think I was a very knowledgeable guide). Our first stop was the valley Paul had lost his javelina in several days earlier. Nothing was stirring. So we drove to the area I had shot a javelina two years ago. It wasn't long before two javelina were spotted working their way down into a deep draw. The wind was blowing south so we headed south, hoping to get down into the draw, wind to our face, and get up behind them. Well, we were almost to the bottom when we spooked them. Seemed like when we headed south, they changed direction and also headed south. Dang it.

We headed in the direction we figured they went, spotted them again several hundred yards ahead of us, and they were not running, just meandering along. After re-crossing the draw and getting into the last area we spotted them, game over. We searched for awhile and it's like they just disappeared. The terrain was very open, little vegetation, shallow draws, but we could not find them. After hiking around the next hill for several hours we found ourselves back at the truck. I knew another spot a short drive away and we drove off to where we had camped several years ago on an earlier PBS hunt. Javelina had been shot almost in camp.

We stopped just above that old camp to do some glassing and in the first minute spotted four javelina on the next hillside. Another stalk

was on. After working our way up the hillside, the javelina were still just hanging around. I've never seen them digging so faithfully before. They were really tearing up the ground under a large prickly pear.

I sneaked within twenty yards of one that had wandered away from the diggers. Guess he decided the action was too hot over there so he found his own rooting spot. When he turned broadside, my shot was off. I have no idea what went wrong but my arrow was at least a foot left. When the arrow hit the cactus he took off up the hill. Excitement? Lack of focus? Another unseen twig? I love this challenge but at the moment I was very frustrated.

We split up and headed back to the truck, it was getting dark. I laid my bow in the truck bed, opened the door, then turned, took several steps away from the truck and spooked several more javelina. They must have been strolling along a cattle trail just fourteen yards off in the brush and never spotted me until they cleared a thick bodied mesquite, at the same time I was turning around, empty handed. What can I say?

That night, lying in the tent, we heard the rain start around 1 a.m. I had difficulty sleeping, thinking about packing up in the rain the next morning, driving less than a mile and not being able to get up three small hills, just sliding right back down and ending in a ditch. We would have to set camp up again, along the road, just to be able to stay comfortable until the roads dried up just enough.

When it started to get light the next morning, around 6:30, we packed up in a light rain and, after several attempts, made it over those slick hills.

Four hunters, one javelina down, three hunters that had ample opportunity to bring home the bacon, but didn't.

We had a great week along with great hunting, food and campfire stories (inside the wall tent).

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Good Morning, Jack

By Paul Ladner

Each of us evolves as a hunter in our own, unique way. The desire to hunt comes naturally enough when you love the outdoors and believe that the hunter is a humble hero, a provider, a cunning and clever pursuer of game and a capable woodsman. Aspiring to be that hunter will lead you naturally enough to the woods and guide your evolution into an ever more experienced outdoor person. The process and not the outcome alone being the goal. Having the opportunity to put those urges into practice cannot be taken for granted in the twenty first century.

Jack gave me permission to hunt his farm and a friend lent me a shotgun. I was probably 28 years old and a recent transplant from the city of Chicago. Shortly I shot my first deer. It was a yearling doe, but the success was enthralling. I could not have been more proud. I was going to be fed with meat made by nature and taken in the hunt.

This morning the chain clanged on the stock gate as it was unfastened in the cold and still predawn darkness. The gate was swung open and the truck driven through. The gate was again fastened as it is proper to leave gates as you find them. A short drive across the corral and the ceremony was repeated followed by a drive along a fenced in lane and then I enter the pasture. It is a large pasture by Midwest standards, several hundred acres of rolling, cow path crossed, wide open. A forgotten prairie haunted now by polled Herefords rather than bison and elk. There are a few old trees and some brushy cover in the deepest parts of the draws, but most is neatly maintained by the grazing cattle. Crossing the half mile or so to my destination in the dark is a rehearsed, slow rolling trace. Avoiding the deepest cow paths, dead falls and a mucky seep in the bottom brings the gravel strewn creek crossing into view.

My first trip across the pasture was as a passenger in Jack's truck. I memorized his course learning to avoid the obstacles along the way.

Driving across the creek still stirs a childish fascination. Forging a water course like a pioneer in a wagon rather than whirring over on a bridge. Drainages, waterways and divides no longer define the landscape as they once did. Wetting the truck tires in the gentle stream sheds a bit of civilization and roughly marks the halfway point to the far side of the pasture. More twists and turns following the contour of the land and I manage the climb back out of the drainage and I arrive at a slight dip in the long flat area Jack called his landing strip.

Jack and I hunted together in the gun season for a number of years and enjoyed our tailgate lunch and strategy sessions. I would bring fresh baked bread and some candy and he would bring lunch meat and water bottles. We were gun season hunters and the brief experience never allowed us to learn very much. Neither of us really had any clue what we were doing and somehow that made the process that much more fun, the adventures and mis-adventures being part of our hunting lore.

The truck is parked in the little dip to conceal its location. I pop open the back. My gear is all stacked in the order I removed it after the last hunt. I put on the needed layers for the day's weather. Safety strap, check. Binoculars, check. Fanny pack, check. Climbing stand, check. All that is left to remember are the bow, arrows, arm guard and shooting glove. Most importantly the bow and arrows without which I am only nature watching. It is six weeks into the season and the routine is now just that.

This is the weekend before gun season. Jack (never taking up the bow) and I have a tradition of meeting late morning to set a ladder stand for him to hunt next weekend and then share lunch in town. We continued to set a ladder stand for a couple of years after he committed to ground hunting for safety reasons just in case he felt up to it. He never did. Some traditions die hard.

Leaving the truck behind I march across 150 yards of cow patch and climb the gate into the south end of the property. 80 acres of whitetail heaven. There are a couple small plowed fields that turn up arrowheads on occasion and a short stretch of Cedar Creek. Most of the acres are timber acres. They are populated by hickory mostly, but also plenty of cherry, elm, osage, hackberry and oak with an understory of brushy thorn covered thicket making cover for rabbits as big as deer. Cattle are usually let in for a brief period after the harvest is complete, but not this year. The undergrowth is unmolested and the only trails belong to the deer.

Jack has helped me track and recover a buck on more than one occasion before we set his stand. Somehow our appointed day to meet has brought me good luck over the years.

I know where I am going this morning as I had tossed and turned a couple times last night contemplating my odds. I have hunted the property for over twenty years, shooting my very first deer with that borrowed shotgun at the very north end, three quarters of a mile from where I am now and my first bow kill close to where I will be today. I'm still a novice deer hunter, but I have put in the time. Time with a bow in hand. Time waiting for deer to close the distance rather than reaching out and touching them with a lead slug. Time becoming a hunter. I have hunted this tree before and find it with the single reflective tack I put in it years ago.

Good morning, Jack. Thanks for allowing me the space to roam and pretend for a while to be the hero, provider, cunning and clever pursuer of game, pathfinder and capable woodsman.

I climb the tree and settle in to enjoy the pre-dawn pageantry. The twinkling stars, the brightening of the eastern sky, the rustle of a rabbit hurrying to its daytime hide and the chirp of the first bird. As shooting light arrives, I stand and prepare for an opportunity. Although I see several deer this morning there is one fine young buck that decides to wander by my tree at seven yards. Totally unaware, he passes broadside and the arrow is released. The shot is perfect and a mad dash ensues. He circles around my tree and heads back the way he came but succumbs within sight and seconds.

Jack never arrives. No tree stand will be set today and no ground blind will be deployed. No lunch date nor strategy sessions. Jack passed away last winter heart broken at losing his bride the year before.

Recovery of the deer is bittersweet. Maybe it always is, but today on my usual day to be with Jack and him not here I can't help but be a bit sad, but at the same time glad. Sad to miss my friend, but glad to have known him.

Jack's spirit was with me today and always will be in the hunting traditions we shared.





by Tom Vanasche

BAIT

"To bait or not to bait, that is the question," my old hunting partner Will Shakespeare used to say. All humor aside, this topic can bring up emotion, argumentative debate, and disrupt friendships. It may be wise to have adult beverages available to calm the discussion, though that could perhaps have the opposite effect.

The point of this essay is to just think about it rationally and have some open thought. What is bait? Webster's defines it in a lengthy fashion as a verb, "1: to persecute by continued attacks, 2: to harass with dogs usually for sport, 3: to furnish [as a hook] with bait, 4: ALLURE, ENTICE, 5: to give food and drink [as an animal]." Then there is the noun, "1: lure for catching animals [as fish], 2: LURE, TEMPTATION syn: snare, trap, decoy come-on, enticement." It does get complicated. We perhaps have our own definitions. Mine is essentially using any method to entice an animal to come to you, as opposed to you going to the animal. This could be food, water, minerals, decoys and calls. Who does not recall that attractive girl in high school using her sweet voice [calling] or perhaps dressing a bit provocatively [decoying,] to lure you into her clutches?

Thousands of years ago our ancestors were surprising birds in rye and grain fields and sitting at waterholes waiting for game to arrive. They fashioned ancient decoys out of reeds to essentially "bait" live birds in to land. What about calling? Whether it is birds or mammals, the purpose is to lure them into you, essentially using the noise to bait them into thinking they are joining other members of their group or perhaps mating partners.

Many of us have sat in blinds near corn fields or other grains awaiting ducks and geese to arrive. We may not be dumping sacks of pure grain in the water [hopefully], as this would seem to bring about an untoward advantage. Most would say that was an unethical act, as well as illegal. If standard bird decoys are ethical, what about those that move by wind or wave? What about electrical powered movement? Where is the ethical line? Now comes the question of the classic Texas hog or deer hunt. Corn comes out of the feeder at appointed times and the animals may or may not show up. This is legal and I suspect the "normal" method of take there. Is there a difference when the bowhunter puts his treestand above a standing corn or soybean field? The bait is there and the deer may or may not show up.

Obviously with fishing, it is bait or nets most of the time. There is of course bowfishing [even bow alligator fishing of which I have thoroughly enjoyed] which is more spot and stalk. Bait may be the food which the fish desires or lures that remind it of food or to reflexively attack it. You are indeed trying to make them come to you, but by artificial means.

I have had some phenomenal times sitting on trails waiting for antelope to go past, baited by an alfalfa field in the distance. Some of my best photos, memories and game taken have been obtained while using the lure of water on desert animals, be it in Africa or the American

west.

Thousands of black bears have been taken in Canada over bait, for in a lot of this country, spot and stalk would be impossible due to the vegetation.

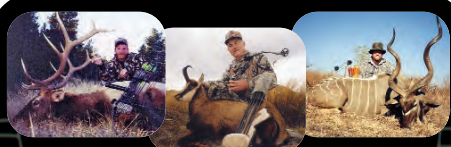
Some may say that it should be "natural". 200 years ago there were no corn or soybean fields. Is that natural now? Is fishing bait natural? You are throwing it into the water where it did not exist the day before you arrived and may not naturally live in that body of water. Are the latest calls, decoys and some fish baits "natural"? They certainly look and sound natural, though obviously made of the latest space age materials. Is the only turkey call to be allowed a "natural" wing bone one? Dog food seems to be a fairly common bear bait. It is certainly not natural and may raise the ire of some. Would it be ok to put the remains from a butcher shop there instead? How close or far should it be from humanity to avoid conflicts? What about hunting bears, wolves or wolverines over previously killed bears, moose, deer, bison etc.? A lot of questions but few definitive answers, if it is honestly debated.

Of course whatever you do, it needs to be legal, but many times legal may be questionable ethically and vice versa. I once came upon an elk in the roadside ditch with a broken femur, apparently after a vehicle interaction. It was dark, so it was not legal to shoot it with my bow [which I thought would be somewhat disturbing as well] and it was illegal to dispatch it with my sidearm. My friend and I eventually got a hold of the state police, but I suspect it was hours before they arrived and dispatched it. I still feel the ethical thing would have been to use my pistol. As a teenager, I once belly crawled a long distance and jumped a huge number of ducks from an open spot on a frozen pond and essentially "flock shot". A pile of birds came down, legal, but in my heart I knew it was wrong. The late Jay Massey once let a Dall's sheep walk when he had an easy close shot, as the ram was trapped and had no avenue of escape. Certainly legal, but he just didn't feel it was right in his heart.

Decades ago, Aldo Leopold summed it up fairly well. "A peculiar virtue in wild-life ethics is that the hunter ordinarily has no gallery to applaud or disapprove of his conduct. Whatever his acts, they are dictated by his own conscience, rather than that of onlookers. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of that fact."

We all have different hearts and hopefully most of us have an inner "know what's right" meter. Though as poaching continues to be rampant, I know that "meter" is certainly not universal.

This article is written to hopefully promote friendly discussion and not inflame argumentative passions. Let us all be calm thinkers.



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by Dalton Lewis

Absolutely!" he answered, "You just go there any old time you want! I'll send a permission slip with my girl tomorrow." At that point, had someone walked up to me and handed me a one-hundred-dollar bill I would have been no more excited. Being a middle school teacher is one of the highlights of my life. I literally wake up every morning excited to go to work. Making a difference in a child's life is an opportunity that I cherish, meaning that most days (at some level) are good ones. But there are days that are better than others, and this day topped the list. The father of one of my students is a Christmas tree farmer, and he had just given me permission to bowhunt his farms. As it turns out, they happen to be excellent farms for turkey hunting.

The anticipation of the 2019 season was as grueling as any that I can remember. I knew that it would be just a little tougher this year, as my wife and I had booked a vacation to Florida to chase sharks from the surf during spring break. It sounded great in the planning stage, but it was only after the deposit had been sent that I realized that spring break for this year would fall over the second week of North Carolina's much awaited spring turkey season. I immediately realized that meant my season was only three weeks this year, and on top of only being able to hunt weekends due to work--my work was cut out for me. The night before the season opened sleep was hard to come by. For whatever reason this has always been the case and, if I ever lose that, well, I'll probably just take up something boring like knitting or golfing (equals in my book.)

The alarm found me awake, and after a quick shower I was grinning behind the wheel on the way to meet my buddies for our long dreamed of opening day hunt. After an uneventful first sit, we moved locations to a property that we have been able to hunt for several years. On the second property there is one bench in the field that the birds will always end up on at some point in the morning. This bench has been very productive, we added it up in the blind and the success rate in that spot is somewhere around fifty-percent. Naturally we had plenty of confidence as we set the blind up to a chorus of gobbles in the hardwoods surrounding us. Three calls and ten minutes later we had a bird on the way. As he erupted in response to my purr at a mere fifty yards, the nerves were running high. My friend Aaron was

trying to tag his first bird with a bow. He was gripping that Omega longbow with all he had and as the bird appeared in the window walking with a purpose toward us, I gave him one last whisper of confidence and the bird was on top of us. Martha's (my DSD hen decoy) suitor was very much tore up. He was turning circles around Marcus Aurelius (DSD Jake decoy) and making it quite obvious that he thought he was the boss in this area. As he pecked Marcus in the head, Aaron tried to make his move. To his horror though, he realized the decoy had been inadvertently placed directly behind the strip of blind between the two windows, meaning he had no shot. Despite his efforts the lustful suitor eventually figured out what was going on. He headed the other direction, and us three just sat there like an old man told me one time, "With our teeth in our mouth." After all, I named my decoy Marcus Aurelius after the Roman Emperor with the same name. Marcus Aurelius was the last of the "good" emperors, and was specifically fascinated with the concepts of destiny and fate. Luckily for that bird, his fate was not to be met that day.

As the disappointment settled, smiles quickly broke through the monotony of our heartache, "That was insane," one of us muttered, and we all broke into muffled laughter. And alas, my favorite part of turkey season was once again exhibited.

Aaron had to go to a concert that evening, (his longtime girlfriend was the main event) so alone, Ethan and I kept after it all day. The incoming thunderstorms and rain made it difficult, but we enjoyed every minute of it. No birds were harmed, however.

That was the theme of the 2019 turkey season. Rain, wind, suck. I hunted every evening after work, and to my astonishment heard next to no birds in the effort. By Friday, I was getting nervous. Knowing I would be gone all the next week, and when I returned the following week we would be in full-blown end-of-grade testing mode, I knew my time was running short. Before we left on Thursday, the young lady from the beginning of the story said, "Mr. Lewis, you need to go directly behind my house. There is a real green flat spot. I see them there like everyday." Fresh out of ideas and already feeling the crunch of a time limit, I said, "You got it."

Daylight found me in the little flat. It was perfect, being slightly lower than the hills around it meant it was sheltered from the increasing winds. The weather was calling for storms and heavy rains, but tucked away in my blind I decided I was going to tough it out. My stubbornness was reinforced when surprisingly and unprovoked a



bird sounded off on the knoll behind my setup. He gobbled two or three times, but despite my loudest efforts on the slate call, I couldn't get him to hear me--so I thought. After ten minutes or so of peeking through the windows I never did see him. I settled back in my chair, and pulled out my phone to give my dad a quick update. It was then I heard the fighting purr noise, close, and looked up to see a tom in full strut chest-bumping Marcus.

Knowing I didn't so much as have an arrow on the string, I slowly turned the camera on, then painstakingly got the bow hanging in the corner. Miraculously, the bird was too occupied with Marcus to notice my rookie mistakes. After growing bored assaulting my decoy with pecks and wing slaps, the assailant decided he would stand on top of his wimpy foe. At this point though I finally had an arrow on the string and was ready. My cedar arrow drove through the bird (still on decoy) in the front of the chest, taking the far leg out as it went. The bird was quartering hard, and after a short runaround I was looking at my first North Carolina gobbler for the year. I toted all of the gear and wet bird back on the scenic grass road back to the truck just ahead of a soaking rain local mountain folk would refer to as a "frog-strangler." As I breasted out the bird I felt relieved. If the season had ended that day I would have been content, but it didn't.

Two weeks later I was slipping into the same knoll before daylight. It's an arduous climb but as my observations noted the birds ended up on this knoll at some point nearly every morning. My confidence was high, as my seventh-grade intel had told me the day before that "a real black one with a colorful head" was patrolling the field the days prior. Surprisingly though, as the time I felt sure to be fly-down passed, I had heard exactly zero gobbles. I was confused, but knowing I was in the best possible place to be sitting on the property, I slumped back in my chair to enjoy a good book. About ten minutes later, I was rudely interrupted by a gobble no more than sixty yards from my location. I didn't mind the disturbance. Before I could even get my tab on (yea, I'm a slow learner) the bird stepped out in the tree row about thirty-yards out. I figured it was all over but the crying, but to my dismay, he continued right past me and circled to my right. As I scratched my head in confusion, he continually gobbled and strutted half circles at about thirty-five yards, taunting me. A short time later a hen appeared and went straight to him. As I watched him follow her out of sight below me, I had pretty well written the morning off. But as comfortable as I was and with a great book at my feet I figured I would just sit it out until ten or eleven, I had nowhere else to be that day anyway. That was at about seven. Around nine-thirty I looked

up from my book and saw a turkey go between trees around eighty yards out. My binoculars revealed a hen, and as I picked up my call and made conversation with

her a thundering gobble of approval from behind her confirmed my suspicions, this was the same crew. She picked her way all the way to me taking her time as she went. He followed behind and before long she was nearly in the decoys. He stayed just out of range, however. It was as if he knew my range and stayed right outside of it. For nearly an hour the same thing happened. He strutted and she picked. He had finally worked into range, but was to my immediate left. There was no window down there, so I was helpless. After the third time of him going back and forth behind a Christmas tree, I got bold. With his head behind the tree I dropped the window on that side. Somehow I got away with it. As he cleared the tree on the other side, I dropped to my knees and sent a primary-fledged cedar arrow into his boiler room at about eighteen yards. He made it a meager thirty yards and went end over end, expiring in just under eight seconds from impact.

As I knelt to examine my quarry I couldn't help but grin and be thankful. I looked around and thought to myself, "My God what a pretty place to kill a turkey." Pretty place, indeed.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS AND TRICKS

WHAT'S A #HASHTAG?

If you're a social media novice, hashtags—those short links preceded by the pound sign (#)—may seem confusing and unnecessary. But they are integral to the way we communicate online, and it's important to know how to use them.

Hashtags can be used to help you discover new accounts and pick up followers. By simply clicking on the hashtag you will be taken to a page with posts using that same phrase! Once you are on that page you can follow that hashtag by clicking the **Follow** button at the top of the screen. This will allow all posts using that hashtag to show up in your Instagram feed.

HASHTAGS 101

- For starters, spaces are an absolute no-no. Even if your hashtag contains multiple words, group them all together.
- Capitalization is not important, however you can capitalize to help differentiate between the words (#IAmThePBS works the same as #iamthepbs)
- Numbers are supported, however, punctuation marks are not, so commas, periods, exclamation points, question marks and apostrophes are out. Forget about asterisks, ampersands or any other special characters
- If you ever have any questions never hesitate to reach out to Harmony at the home office!


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SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

AN ELK HUNTING ADVENTURE

by Jeff Holchin



Many PBS members are old enough to remember a song by that title from the rock band, The Clash, circa the 1980's. If not, check it out on the inter-web (YouTube), it's a funny song. You know how sometimes a certain song gets stuck in your head? A few years ago on the long drive from NC to WY, I had a bull elk tag in my wallet for a good unit and plenty of time to scan the radio stations from here to there. I kept hearing this song and it got stuck up there, but I had no idea then that it would ultimately help me tag my best bull to date. The previous year, my son drew a limited entry bull tag for that unit and we hunted it together as his high school graduation present. Young Daniel and I had previously been on several elk hunts together in CO, MT and UT — in fact he attended the 2009 PBS Youth Hunt for elk in Utah and came oh-so-close to arrowing his first elk several times on that special hunt. One evening while watching a water hole with a herd of cows and bulls nearby, we saw a lone cow elk approaching and I quietly coached him to wait for her to drink for real before drawing and shooting. She stopped only ten yards away and we passed the camo test when she stared us down for at least a minute before lowering her head. I was hoping that Daniel would remember to wait, but he started drawing his bow too soon and she busted him with the old “fake drinking” trick. That one hurt the most, being so close, but watching her walk away (does that remind you of a certain song by Rascal Flatts?). I had built up points for him since the beginning of Wyoming's use of preference points (which are pretty cheap for a youth — hint, hint dads!), so he had max points and could hunt a really good unit. After talking to some PBS friends, my contacts in the Bowhunters of Wyoming and numerous state wildlife biologists, we selected and applied for a great unit and were excited when he drew his bull tag. I managed to pick up a leftover cow tag, so we both could bowhunt together. Because of sports and senior projects, he could only hunt weekend to weekend, flying in and out

of Denver to save time. I drove out a few days early and did some scouting. We experienced some awesome elk hunting together, again coming sooooo close on multiple occasions. One day we saw ten different bulls, and another day we found a herd of cows with a huge herd bull that was being harassed by several smaller bulls and one very large 6x6 bull. We hung around them until they began moving out to feed in the sage meadows. It was chaos for that last hour of daylight, running after the elk and getting close when the two huge bulls finally squared off and fought for a few minutes. Shooting light was quickly fading when the loser finally broke off and walked past us - Daniel was at full draw and wanted that bull so very badly, but it was at the limit of his range, he couldn't see his sight pins clearly and it didn't feel right, so he let down. I was proud of my 18-year old son for making such a tough decision, and told him so on the long walk back to camp in the dark. I think he was second-guessing himself.

I had seen enough of that unit to really want to hunt there myself, but I didn't have max preference points and it would be tough to draw the tag. I had drawn a bull tag a few years earlier in another unit and had a great but unsuccessful hunt, though not for lack of opportunities. However, I had a few little-known tricks up my sleeve regarding applying for the bull tag I wanted, including applying for a late season rifle tag (you can still bowhunt in September with that tag) and going with the more expensive “special draw” (tag cost was over \$1000), both to increase my odds. I beat 10% draw odds and was thrilled when the limited-entry bull elk tag arrived in my mailbox. I am not a great elk caller or stalker, and until this hunt preferred to be passive and try to ambush an elk, rather than being aggressive. I like to find a herd and hang around on the downwind side, trying to pick off a straggler. That strategy had helped me fill a few elk tags in the past decade and I planned to use it on this hunt. In other states with a lot of hunting competition, the bulls rarely bugled and most elk calls were suspected to be from another hunter. In this particular unit, with

restricted entry for several reasons and less hunting competition, the bulls would bugle freely and there were a lot of cow elk. Being there the previous year gave me a general idea of the elk patterns, which was to feed and socialize down low in the sage flats and bed up on the adjacent ridge sides or tops. These elk had no issue with travelling three to four miles each way, which is hard for an eastern whitetail hunter to get used to.

I set up my camp and spent the first day driving around the unit to see how many other hunters were present. I was not surprised when I saw a nice six-point bull hanging in one camp and a similar bull getting a ride out to the butcher in a pickup truck. I talked to both successful hunters and learned that the bulls were getting fired up. I checked several areas that were good the previous year and saw lots of fresh sign, but the best sign was in one particular area where a wet canyon spilled directly into a large sage flat. I hunted that area the next few days and came close to filling my bull tag there, using my passive approach. Before dawn I was on a narrow ridge that split the canyon, and spotted a black mud-covered bull cruising by with loud bugles. Instead of setting up in a good shooting position first, I cow called once to gauge his level of interest and he came charging in, busting me as I scrambled to set up for a shot. I dejectedly watched him walk away but was able to follow his progress up the open ridge and saw him stop and bed down for the day under a big pine tree. Even from several hundred yards away, I could see him chewing his cud and eventually nodding off to sleep. That's when the song started playing in a continuous loop in my head and I considered how easy it would be to sneak up and put an arrow through the sleeping bull's chest. However, I decided to stay passive and wait for him to return to me, which did not happen. The next day was spent repeatedly kicking myself in the butt for staying put when the situation clearly called for me to go after that vulnerable bull elk! I vowed to do things differently the next time.

After a few more days I decided to move my camp to another good area, and on the first evening there, perched on a rocky ridge top, I located a herd bull following a dozen cows as they fed their way into a sage basin several hundred yards away, plus a vocal approaching bull that was very interested in those cows. When the big 6x6 bulls finally saw each other, they put on quite a show of screaming, challenging and threatening each other — at

one point they were on opposite sides of a downed pine tree, tearing up the tree between them in frustration. After ten or fifteen minutes of enjoying the show, I suddenly realized how stupid it was to just stay and watch them — I needed to go after those bulls since they were distracted with each other! I slowly and carefully eased down the open slope, got to within fifty yards of the distracted bulls and put an arrow on the string, just in time to see a cow elk spooking from my careless approach. As she alerted the entire herd and took them away to safety, I realized that I had wasted another great opportunity to arrow a nice bull. I was very disappointed for sure, but at least I was adjusting my approach from “stay and hope” to “go and make something happen.”

Several days later, at dawn I located a big herd with about fifty cows and more than a dozen bulls loudly moving from some sage pastures on a private ranch to bed on an aspen and pine covered ridge on public land for the day. I got behind them and passed up several spikes and small bulls as I tried to keep up. Soon I saw two nice 5x5 satellite bulls square off and begin sparring. Watching them through my binos about one hundred yards away, I saw that both of them had closed their eyes and I heard that song again, so I dropped my pack and quickly walked right up to them, stopping only fifteen yards away without them even noticing me! They were twisting and spinning around and I just couldn't get a clear shot. My heart rate went through the roof, knowing that I would get a shot if they would just stand still with a good angle. However, they bolted after the departing herd when they broke contact, still not even noticing me standing there so close! That year I tried some leafy ASAT camo and was very impressed with its effectiveness. I was trembling with excitement, not believing what had just happened. I was on to something here with this new strategy of going right after the distracted bulls. That day turned out to be the most action-packed day of my elk hunting career, one that I will probably never experience again. I hung around that main herd all day, and honestly saw at least fifty different bulls and hundreds of cow elk by dark. The bugling continued all day long and once the main herd got up in the late afternoon and headed back for the sage pastures, I had one close encounter after another with them and several other smaller groups of elk. The highlight was calling an absolute brute of a bull in to about forty yards, with his cows all around me, before the light



faded and I had to quit for the day. He was the biggest bull elk I have seen in my life, including in the national parks. I wanted that bull so much as he stood there broadside, screaming at a handful of circling satellite bulls, but I just can't shoot accurately enough at that distance. I had to walk for several hours in the dark to get back to camp, getting turned around several times in this new area. I was surprised to see headlamps on the trail ahead of me as I finally climbed out of the canyon, and met two other bowhunters who also had amazing encounters with elk that day in the same area.

Those guys were locals and were camped next to me, so we agreed to walk back into that area in the morning together, because it was tricky to get to in the dark and they knew the area well enough. We wished each other luck when we parted — we could hear lots of bugling and I asked them if they wanted to team up on the big herd I was after, but they said they were going after another herd. I guessed that the main herd would head to the same bedding area and was in a good position as dawn arrived, along with well over a hundred cows, calves, spikes and rag-horns, and then the huge herd bull that was screaming at a dozen or more satellite bulls, most of them quite large themselves. It was an amazing experience having that herd envelop and then pass by me on both sides, sometimes with elk passing just a few feet away. Incredibly enough, they would smell or see me and react with bulging eyes and some quick steps away, but not a single alarm bark was issued. It was pure chaos but I just couldn't get a clear shot at any decent bull, by the time the main group of elk had passed me. Just when I thought that I had missed my best chance to tag a bull that morning, four 6x6 satellite bulls came trotting towards and then past me, with three staying together and the biggest one keeping a slight distance away from the others. I let out a few excited cow calls and got an immediate reaction from the three smaller bulls, as they wheeled around and came back to me. They hung up around twenty yards, but grew suspicious when they didn't see any elk from the "bush" that was emitting cow calls, and turned to leave. I stepped out to follow them and was immediately spotted by the biggest satellite bull, who stared me down for a solid five minutes. I avoided eye contact and prayed that my leafy ASAT camo suit would save me. He had me dead to rights, but he finally relaxed and turned to follow his departed buddies on the same trail that they had taken. I fell in behind him by about fifty yards, just keeping his rack or rump in sight. When he caught up to his buddies and some cows from the main herd, he paused to destroy a small pine tree. I saw with my binos that his eyes were tightly shut as he rubbed that tree, and that same old song ran through my mind right then, so I decided to GO! I sprinted right up to him, nocked an arrow, drew and put that arrow right through his chest at a distance of thirteen yards! He reacted with a grunt and surprise, stumbling around



for a few seconds and finally fell dead just forty yards away! I couldn't believe it, my new strategy had worked and it was a great 6x6 bull. It was only 8 am, and it would be another hot day in the 80's by the afternoon, so after a few hero photos, I set about breaking him down and cooling the meat. Believe it or not, his three buddies returned several times, screaming and spoiling for a chance to poke the fallen bull. One of them had a tree branch in his antlers and rolled his eyes back into his head as he approached to within twenty yards, and I had to yell and wave my arms to run him off. He was fired up, to put it mildly.

Now was when I wished that I had a PBS buddy with me, not only to experience so much excitement, but to help with the packing. I was three tough miles downhill from my camp, and it took me three days to pack that bull out and get him to town for processing. That first day, I was able to shuttle the five loads of meat and the head about one mile, to the base of the canyon, where my two new "buddies" saw me at dusk and snapped a photo of me (but didn't offer to help with the meat packing...). It took all of the next day to pack the meat up the mile of steep canyon, and the final day to finish the meat packing to my truck and get into town. The first meat processor refused to take the meat, once she found out that I had killed it three days previously in that hot weather, and the second processor would only take the meat after carefully smelling and examining each piece of meat. Packing that elk out was the most difficult task I had ever done while hunting, but it was well worth it. Even better, I had learned an impressive lesson about how to aggressively hunt elk in the right situation. To answer the question posed in that old rock song, it was much better to GO than stay, on this incredible elk hunt!

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The Boss' Favorite Tree

Bowhunting whitetails in NW Arkansas

by Manuel S. Cervantes

It's early February 2019, I get up at 4 am, get some coffee going, and gear ready to go. The weather looks tough, it's 28 degrees Fahrenheit, gusting wind twenty to thirty MPH from the NE, and freezing rain. Some western hunters have talked about how easy whitetail hunting is, from the physicality of it, in comparison to western hunting. I challenge any western hunter to sit eighteen feet off the ground on a tree-stand under these conditions for five or more hours. NW Arkansas, contrary to popular belief, has tougher winters than the rest of the state. This is due to the fact that we are sitting on the Ozark Mountain Plateau, which means elevation here is 1,000+ feet above sea level. The rest of the state sits either at sea level or just slightly above.

Nevertheless, this wind direction is good for my funnel tree stand. I have been hunting off this fifty-acre field/woodlot ten minutes from my house. It's awesome but no luck so far. Our season here in Arkansas runs to the end of February. I missed two does early in the season at slam dunk distances, of course, I have excuses for that. The first one was a twig deflection, and the second jumped the string.

During the rut, I passed a fifteen-yard shot at a mature buck behind my house's flood zone woodlot because he stood behind some light brush and I thought he'd take one or two more steps forward or backward, but he never did, he simply whirled out of there chasing his sweetheart. He had long, curving G3-4s and main beams that braided above his eyes! I never saw anything like this; he made an impression on me. Maybe next year! Hope is such an awesome force!

As I get out to my rig, I had to remove half an inch of rock-solid ice off the windshield to allow some visibility. At the trailhead, I get ready for the right entry. I have to negotiate my way through three sets of five-line six-foot barbed wire in order to not disturb any deer in the adjacent woodlot. My tree stand is sitting at the SE corner of this woodlot. So, I entered about 100 yards to the south of it through open hay fields.

As I finally get up and into my tree stand, the freezing rain continues to come down even harder now. I am wearing my raincoat, but within minutes, I have a thin layer of ice all over me, including on top of my felt hat, wool cargos, jacket, bow, arrows, etc... This freezing rain solidifies on impact anything it comes in contact with. The wind is howling as I second guess myself, "What the hell am I doing

here? I could be home in bed warm, and soundly asleep." But make no mistake about it, I absolutely must be here, under these miserable conditions. Looking at the time, it's 5:30 am now. I'll have to wait for a while before first light.

Even though I am wearing several layers of clothing, I struggle to stay warm. The gusts of wind kill me; somehow cold air just finds its way to the middle of my bones. As I start seeing some light on the horizon, I notice that the front of my arrow on the string is nearly doubled in diameter with all the ice formed on top of it. I kept a large handkerchief on top of it, but it did not cover the front five inches. I know there is no way I would be able to hit anything if I had to shoot at that moment. With my bare hands and fingers, I get rubbing the shaft and broadhead to remove the ice, wondering, "What if a nice buck presented itself right now? I better keep this arrow clean of ice accumulation." I keep doing so every few minutes with frozen hands. The rest of my arrows are dry inside my back quiver, on top a plastic newspaper bag covering the fletching. However I know that my chances of pulling a clean arrow out without making noise and moving too much, will be nearly impossible, considering the super acute senses of whitetails.

A very nice buck lived on this land. We called him The Boss. We had seen it the year before, I saw it in the distance early this season, and knew he might be hanging with everyone else now that bowhunting was winding down. He was a very wide twelve point that would probably score in the 150s-160s. At this point, however, I would be happy to just kill a nice doe.

Under the nasty conditions, it's hard not to think of the comfort of home only a few miles away. Out of a small thermos, I pour some hot coffee in the ceramic mini mug I carry in my haversack. Its warming effect boosts my concentration, and I once again give thanks to the creator for letting me be here, even though it is miserable, I'm pretty sure I'm the only dummy to go out bowhunting from a tall tree stand on a day like this. Two hours go by and nothing to be seen other than a lonely coyote in the distance crossing the field, probably in search of something good to eat. I figured I'd sit it at least until 11 am. It was the end of the season, and I was feeling the pressure of not having killed anything other than a fat cottontail rabbit and a nice fox squirrel.

Again and again, every fifteen minutes or so, I get my cold hands out of my crackling wool jacket and clean up the

front of my shaft and Zwickey Eskimo broadhead. What curve balls this Nature of ours sends our way as bowhunters. Others don't understand or can't even imagine what we go through to pursue our passion and way of life. True bowhunting is not for everyone, and at the same time, it's for anyone. Meaning anyone willing to put themselves through all the rigors it takes to sometimes, very rarely, be successful at killing a big game animal.

These and other thoughts flood my mind as I sit here in observation trying to keep warm in the howling cold wind and ice. At about 9:30 a.m. I see something moving behind some trees directly east from my tree stand. "Yes, deer feeding my way." It's two does and two small bucks. Anyhow, before they get any closer, I get my hands out and try desperately to remove the ice from my arrow. It seems a shot is imminent and I've got my hands on my bow and I am set to draw. However, the deer are taking a few minutes to get to me, and ice starts building on the arrow again. Suddenly, The Boss shows up behind everyone else. "Yes, it's the big twelve pointer!" He's just feeding along with the rest of the herd, and acting playful, like a little kid with all the rest of his friends. It's been a few minutes since they first appear on the scene, too much ice has built on my arrow again, so I slowly remove some of the ice behind the broadhead. My hands are freezing; at this pace, I won't even be able to hold my bow anymore. The small bucks and does are at twenty yards, and I could have shot either already. "Hang in there, The Boss will give me a broadside opportunity," he's at thirty plus yards. He keeps drifting to the right and out of my window. Suddenly he stops broadside looking away from me. No hesitation on my part, I draw and let fly, I see my arrow fly, it looked good until the last few yards as it dropped low under the big buck. He spooks back to where he came from, and so did all the other ones. In a flash, as they are running, I remove the little yellow newspaper bag cover from my arrows in the quiver and pull two arrows. I lay one on my haversack ready to be grabbed, and nock the other one to the string of my Black Widow recurve.

Within seconds, all the deer are back, and The Boss goes to where he was, moving fast to my right. He gets within ten yards of me; he is just feeding; he is there for several minutes. Looking down at my arrow, I know there is no way I'll get true flight out of it. I make an effort to remove a little ice from it, but make just enough noise with the crackling layer of ice all over me, and The Boss takes notice. A little buck gets further behind me and catches my scent, and spooks away. The boss looks at him and gets suspicious as he watches the little guy run off, so he starts going back as well but taking his time. He finally gets back into my shooting window and stops briefly to have a final look at thirty-five yards. My hands are nearly frozen, and somehow, I manage to deliver another Port Orford homemade arrow, it's in the air, I can see it spinning counterclockwise as it's looking good, but honestly,

I did not know if I hit or missed, but might have been low again. The big buck just ran off with the others after the shot. He did not kick or anything, "Darn! Might have missed!" However, I am pretty confident at this yardage because I practice even further all the time. But I don't practice with iced down arrows! As I wait, I try to locate my second arrow on the ground from the tree stand with my

field glasses. I cannot see anything, this could mean I actually did hit him. This has happened to me before, thinking I missed when I had indeed hit a deer right through the heart back in west Texas a few years ago.

There was nothing to do except wait for at least an hour, while doubting that they will come back a third time. Sixty minutes go by slowly. By 10:30 a.m. I decide to get down to investigate a little. Before I get off my tree stand, I take some Judos from my quiver and shoot them to the spots The Boss had stood. Of course, my arrows were clean of ice, and of course, I hit my mark on the grass all three times. I found my first broadhead arrow right away, but cannot find the second one. Yeah! My hopes start lifting a little, but as I keep on looking, I find it under the long grass, clean, no blood at all on it. A sea of sadness invades my heart and sinks it to the bottom of that sea! Will I ever have another opportunity at this awesome buck? Probably not...such were the cards that I was dealt with today, and I was not good enough for the task. "Bowhunting traditional, it's such a challenge!"

Three days later, hunting out of the SE grass makeshift ground blind, I once again saw The Boss in the middle of a harvested corn field, about eighty yards away. He was hanging with twelve other deer, one of them a nice eight, some does, and a couple of small bucks. They seemed to be coming right toward me, but the lead mama turned east, and away, behind her all the rest of them, last to leave, of course, The Boss. I just contemplated through my field glasses the wide, symmetrical tall rack. We were on a countdown now. The end of the season is approaching, and The Boss or any other nice buck could drop their antlers any day now.

Keeping at it with no success, on closing day, I finally showed up at 2 p.m. at the same makeshift SE ground blind. The entrance brush ground blind, which is at the middle entry fence into the property seemed more appealing to me, but the wind was not quite right. Walking the half mile or so, I finally got into my blind. I got out my little folding chair, applied some face camo, got some broadhead arrows out, and leaned them on the side of the blind. I nocked my favorite one with my bow across my lap. It was fairly nice at 38 degrees, light wind coming out of the NE.

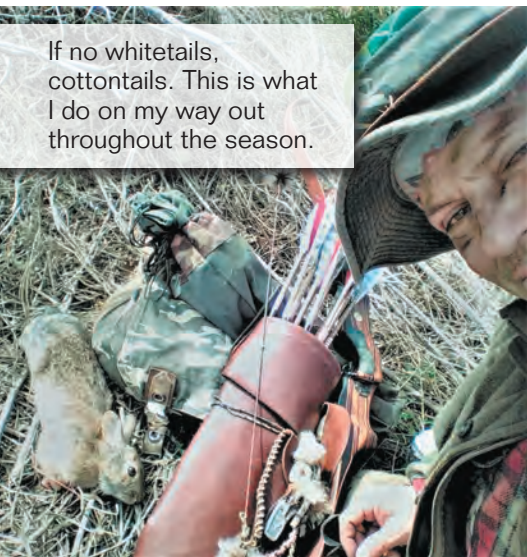
Within an hour, I saw movement behind the fence on the other side of the field right by the entrance ground blind. Through my field glasses, I saw the whole herd hanging together. "Next time, listen to your instinct," I thought, as I have many times before. "It's early; surely they'll swing this way." Hours went by, they hung there for at least one hour, and then they seemed to have moved somewhere else, I could not tell. Slowly, my hopes died as dusk closed in, and it was time to call it the end.

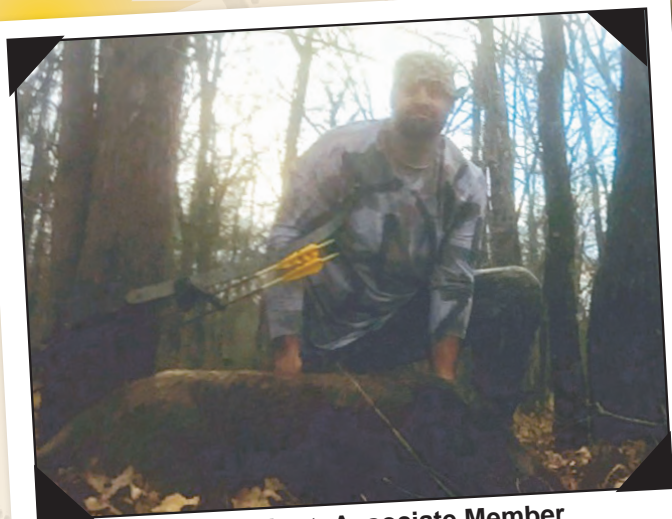
Collecting my stuff, I sadly and slowly started the long walk back to my rig. As I approached the entrance ground-blind, I saw, in the moonlight, at least twenty whitetails hanging together, more or less at the same time they saw me. They stampeded out of there, and all I recall is all the white rumps and white flags waving at me, like saying, "Hahaha, you had your chances, adiós amigo, till next time!!!"

In summary, let me just add that I probably hunted harder than ever this season. I had so many frustrating close calls, missed those four shots, got rained on, got freezing cold, got snowed on, etc... all for naught. But next season will be here soon enough, and maybe, just maybe, I will have another encounter with The Boss, and maybe this time, I will be luckier! Hope is such an awesome force!

This is The Boss, near the entrance ground-blind. It's a bad picture, but it's the only one we have. When a nice buck shows up, I cannot think of taking pictures, I am focused on the right timing to let an arrow fly.

If no whitetails, cottontails. This is what I do on my way out throughout the season.





Clay Burkhart, Associate Member
Taken December 19, 2018 • Deer hunt turned hog hunt



Paul Ladner, Jim Franks and Kevin Winkler

Member

Photos



Tim Jones
With his full velvet 10pt. Taken on his own Tn. Farm on 9/24/18. With a homemade longbow.



Brian Morris with his annual turkey.



Mike Harris, New Member
First ever big game harvested with a bow. I harvested this whitetail doe in Wisconsin in January. Bow - Aspen Classic Longbow, Arrow - Cedar, Broadhead - Abowyer 145 grain single bevel



Preston Lay

A Magic Week Off in November — Combination of very cold weather, with the right time of the year. The week started with a heavy snow storm. Deer movement was unprecedented. The first buck taken, on the 14th, was the 10th buck of the morning. He was the last in line of three bucks as they were chasing a doe past my stand at 14 yards, my arrow passed completely through his chest. The second buck was taken on November 16th. He was cruising along the top side of a drainage. At 13 yards my arrow found its mark, passing completely through the lungs. Both deer were taken with a Black Widow recurve, carbon arrow, and Zwickey Delta two blade broadheads.

Member

Photos



Sean Bleakley

Tagged out in New York. Another 8-10 yard shot made with my Robertson Tribal Styk and D&M custom arrows (Beman Centershots)

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