Official Publication for the members of the Professional Bowhunters Society

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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Cover Photo - Gary Rieck used a 1970 Bear Takedown to down this fine Iowa whitetail on November 3rd

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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President's Message

by Matt Schuster
matt@easterndynamicsinc.com

I hope you are all having a great start to this hunting season. A couple of weeks ago I returned from a trip to the Big Snowy Mountains in Montana with my buddy Dudley McGarity. Other than the one time we set up on a bull, it was the one of the most uneventful trips of my life. But that one time resulted in a huge-bodied old six-point bull running around me and up to Dudley where he put a cedar shaft right behind the shoulder and made this the best/worst trip ever. What is interesting to me is how I describe the trip to my friends – I seem to already be forgetting how much my back hurt, how little sleep I got on the ground, what a pain it was when a bear destroyed all of our water supply (there was no water in this area.) and how little action we had. Truly, other than that one twenty-minute period, the hunt was awful. But I find myself, when telling my friends about the trip, just saying it was fun, and great, and we got a tremendous bull. And I believe that when I say it. Selective memory is a wonderful thing and is surely one of the reasons we keep going back on wilderness trips – I already can't wait 'til next year.

Closer to home, I have been fortunate enough to put a couple of does in the freezer and have seen numerous pictures of my PBS friends with some very nice critters. Don't be shy with these pictures or stories - please send them in to Harmony, and we can use them in the magazine or on social media. If you have not sent in a short profile for our "I Am the PBS" campaign, please take the time to do it. You don't have to know anything about social media, just send a picture with a few sentences describing why you enjoy PBS. That small action will help us out tremendously.

On a more serious note, this issue contains candidate profiles to replace Senior Councilman Ethan Rodrigue after his years of faithful service. PBS is again fortunate to have two outstanding candidates, Preston Lay and Sean Bleakley, who have agreed to put themselves out there and run for office. Our organization can't lose with two such great candidates – be sure to vote if you are a Qualified Regular Member, and when you see either one, be sure to thank him for being dedicated enough to run for office.

Finally, I just want to thank all of you, the PBS members, for supporting this organization through both good times and trying times. We have had a great couple of years, are growing well, are in good financial shape, and the Gathering in Springfield is shaping up to be a huge event. Special thanks to Terry Receveur, who has amazing organizational skills, for planning the nuts and bolts of this event way in advance. I hope all of you have a fun and rewarding hunting season with your friends and family! I look forward to seeing you in Springfield.

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!

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Vice President's Message

by Terry Receveur
Terrance.Receveur@Taconic.com

One thing that I love about PBS is the fact that we respect each other as people, as hunters, and as individuals who have differing thoughts and opinions on things. We have recently seen a few articles debating the pros and cons of baiting for bears and the outcome has basically been that we will agree to disagree…and that's OK! I also recently saw a post by John Vargo on our PBS Cyber Campfire asking if he should "Shoot or Pass?" on a very respectable buck. One of the first responses was, "I'm shooting the first legal deer that walks within range." Some may have immediately jumped on the responder and berated him for not letting a young deer grow into its full potential, but no one did. I fully believe that our membership is knowledgeable, mature and respectful enough to recognize that people hunt for different reasons. John's question can't be answered unless it is put into context of the situation. There are a lot of questions that would need to be asked before one could answer. A few questions to set the stage include the following:

1. Will the buck have the opportunity to grow or will the next guy or neighbor whack him?
2. Will you have a realistic chance at a bigger buck?
3. Will you have the opportunity to hunt enough in the future (health, travel, family, etc.)?
4. Will you be able to continue to hunt for another buck or is this your one and only?
5. What is the fill level of your freezer?
6. Will you be happy with the buck?

The last question is really the only one that matters and as I stated above, our membership respect and honor each other enough to accept their choice and be happy for them.

I hope everyone is having a safe and fun Fall hunting season. I've had the opportunity to get out for a scant three sits, but they have been great outings. The first sit I saw a couple does and nothing in range. The second sit found me siting over the only soybean field that was still green and the deer were hitting it hard. I had twelve does and seven bucks all around me. I even had a very nice buck in the 140" range broadside at ten yards. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not what many would call a trophy hunter and given almost any other circumstance I would've been "sending it." However, discretion is the better part of valor and a goodly part of why I've been married for over thirty-two years. I had a flight scheduled to NY the next afternoon and I really do not like having someone other than my wife and I process my deer. Thus, I determined that passing the buck would be much more beneficial than shooting it and then dropping it off at home with the instructions for Tina to butcher it. Tina absolutely would've done it, but the price would've been very steep. Fortunately, on my third sit I was rewarded for my good decision. Just after daybreak I caught movement in the thick brush and saw a tall rack approaching. It looked like a good buck, but not a great buck and I contemplated not shooting it because in Indiana you are only allowed one buck per year and it was only October 14th. I've often preached to people to never pass on the first day what you'd be happy with on the last day. The buck continued to my stand and at ten yards turned broadside and looked away. I immediately recognized that I was being given a gift and I sent it. The shot went right where I aimed and the arrow blew through the buck so fast he barely jumped. He acted like he wasn't hit and I grabbed a second arrow but he walked into thick brush before I could shoot. It wasn't five seconds later and I heard a thump. He turned out to be better than expected and will easily make P&Y. It's nice to see a good decision pay off on occasion.

If you haven't signed up for the 2020 Biennial Gathering in Springfield yet, you had better get on it. The hotel rooms are almost gone and there is a big basketball tournament in the area that is filling up many of the other hotels. You won't want to miss this one. The cost is dramatically less than prior years and the speakers, seminars, meals, and other events are better than ever before. Also, if you haven't gotten ahold of Tom Vanasche yet to tell him what you are donating for the auctions and raffles please do so soon. I know we already have some amazing stuff on the docket. There is a Piranha agate knife by Alan Altizer of Heritage Stone Blades that has to be seen to be believed. It is spectacular. Harmony tells me we are booked way ahead of prior years and this will likely be one of the largest Gatherings in quite some time. I sure hope to see you there.

Aim small and miss small!

Terry Receveur

Senior Council's Report

by Ethan Rodrigue
woodsmanbows@yahoo.com

Fall has finally arrived. Bow seasons across the country are underway and hopefully you've already had some time to spend in the woods. My wife always says I am much easier to live with during hunting season. I'm not sure if that's because I'm in a better mood or because she doesn't have to see me as much! But either way, the time to be in the woods is upon us. I taught Bowhunters Ed years ago and at each class we always tried to really stress the importance of safety. I was having a conversation just this morning with a good friend of mine and he mentioned he needed to buy a good harness. I was shocked that my buddy still hunted without a safety harness. If memory serves correctly, the statistics were two out of every three hunters have either fallen, or know someone who has fallen out of a tree stand. We always asked for a show of hands as to who had actually fallen, or knew someone who had. In each and every class I have ever been involved with that statistic was accurate. There is simply no reason not to wear a harness. The safety harness has come a long way in recent years and with the options available today, you hardly know you're wearing one. So please be sure to wear one while hunting from a stand. One second can make a life altering difference!

It is good to see more articles being submitted for our magazine. The only thing bow hunters like more than bowhunting is telling stories about bowhunting! If you have a story you would like to share, please don't hesitate to submit it to home office. We would be more than happy to have it and your PBS brothers and sisters would love to read about it!

Our banquet in Springfield, Mo is closing in and there are many members working hard to make sure everything is in place. We are looking at a record setting year, as we have already sold out of rooms at the Oasis hotel and have had to make arrangements at another hotel just down the street. As I'm sure you are aware, further arrangements have been made for transportation to and from each hotel. Not to mention it is well within walking distance. There is still a great deal of work to be done, but we are all looking forward to getting together with all of our PBS family once again. If you have never been to a PBS banquet, I not only highly recommend it but can tell you your first one will not be your last one!

If you would like to attend the banquet as a vendor, or have something you would like to donate for auction, or just have questions about the gathering please feel free to contact myself or anyone else on Council and we hope to see you there!

Ethan Rodrigue

Council's Report

by Jeff Holchin
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I have been thinking about how often we take unnecessary chances or rely on dumb luck to stay safe while bowhunting. I am not talking about choosing the two-day-old chicken salad sandwich at the local gas station, but something much more serious. For example, would you ride with a hunting buddy who is a terrible or dangerous driver, hoping that he or she doesn't get you both killed on this trip? Ever get in a boat or plane when you didn't fully trust the captain or pilot? Do you text and drive, or at least read your texts while driving if a buddy sends pics of the buck he just killed? What would you do if you hiked over a mile in the dark to your favorite stand, during the peak of the whitetail rut, and then realized that your safety harness was in the truck? The stand is only twelve feet up and you're pretty sure the buck you have been after for three years will be passing by at dawn - go ahead and sit the stand anyway? How about putting a stand in that old half-dead tree because it is the best tree in the killer funnel that is hotter than a fifty-cent firecracker right now, hoping that it will be OK? How about if you are hunting a new place where your buddy has hung some stands, but you realize the stand you are sitting in has a frayed cable or rusted chain, about an hour into your sit and prime time for deer movement has arrived? What if you arrive at a new spot but realize that you forgot to tell your spouse or hunting buddy where you plan to hunt that day, and the cell phone battery is dead - could anybody find you in time if you had an accident? What if you have been sitting your favorite stand all day in the rain and are soaked in near-freezing temps. You feel a little sluggish but expect good deer movement within the next hour - stay and hunt, or quit early and get warmed up? Should you say something, or better yet insist on a change, if you saw a buddy use a dangerous piece of bowhunting equipment (in this case, a bow quiver without a hood to cover the broadheads)? What if you are in a metal climbing treestand and you misjudge how fast that thunderstorm is approaching. When lightning begins flashing nearby, do you cross your fingers and wait out the storm up in the tree, or bail? I am ashamed to say that I have made the "wrong" decisions in all of these situations, relying on dumb luck. After almost forty years of bowhunting experience, I should know better! What about you? Have you taken similar chances while bowhunting? I

am guessing so, yet every year we read or hear about fellow bowhunters whose luck finally ran out and they are now paralyzed or dead. We have got to stop doing stupid things while bowhunting! We need to hold each other accountable and call out a friend when they take unnecessary risks or do something stupid that could harm themselves or others.

Another thing that crossed my mind in recent years is how unique our magazine is, compared to any other hunting or outdoor-related magazine I have ever read. I am talking specifically about the Chaplain's Corner. As a Believer, I am always amazed about how well Gene Thorn can tie any selected scripture into a relevant bowhunting experience, year after year, magazine after magazine. If you get a chance, please tell Gene thanks for his many years of faithful service to the PBS (and to God) by snail mail or email. Even better, tell him in person at the upcoming Banquet (hint, hint). Please send in your hunting story with good supporting photos, donate AND bid on some items for the TradGang auction, plan to attend or even host a Membership Hunt in 2020, and come join your PBS family in Springfield in March 2020. Good hunting to you!

Jeff Holchin

Council's Report

by Tom Vanasche
tomvanasche@mac.com

As I write this, the majority of our members are hitting the whitetail woods. Good luck to all. I received an invitation to hunt whitetails in Missouri with an eighty-four year old friend. He is the last surviving original bowhunter that started the Pope and Young club. Hopefully we will down some game and a story will appear in these pages of our adventure.

There should be a lot of stories generated in the deer woods this fall and don't hesitate to write one up and send it to Harmony, as we can always use more material. If not a story, then send her a picture.

I frequently mention the word, "incremental", in my columns. Time slowly passes by, but it does pass. Don't regret going on that hunt you've been dreaming of, or taking your wife on a nice vacation. Our time on this earth is limited, so try to max out the good times. This has been brought home to me many times, but recently a very good friend and hunting partner was diagnosed with cancer. He may have a life expectancy now of one year. He is only fifty-two years old. His dream hunt is never going to happen. When I start to get upset about something, I stop and think of him. My issues are really minuscule, but it has taught me to live every day to its fullest.

On the lighter side, PBS continues to be financially stable and membership is growing, all because of you. Our members are some of the nicest and best [and funniest] people I know. I recently was on a ten day DIY hunt with members in Alaska and though no arrows were launched at game, we still had a great time. It's all about camaraderie and being in the field with great friends and hunters. We do need everyone's support to keep it going, however. The Gathering is shaping up to be having a great turnout. If you haven't made reservations, get on it now. Also think of what you may be able to bring as a donation for our multiple auctions as well and what you may be interested in bidding on among the various items and trips. If you wish to send your item in advance or you can't make the gathering we have a contact there who will receive items. In this magazine there will be a description about a handmade knife that is being made especially for the Gathering by one our members. It is truly amazing.

We will be electing a new Council member soon and please read over the qualifications of our fine candidates. I applaud them for stepping up to the plate and running in this election. Both of them would make fine council members, but you need to vote. Please take the time to do so as they have taken the time to volunteer to run for a position.

Have fun in the woods and let us know how the hunting is going on our website and/or PBS Facebook page.

Tom Vanasche

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Chaplain's Corner

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Now is the Time!

It is a beautiful fall day here in West Virginia today. Our hillsides are turning the glorious orange, yellow, and reds that our state is famous for. This is the time of year we bowhunters long for all year. The peak of the rut for whitetails in this region is less than four weeks away. We have practiced shooting all summer and sharpened our broadheads. We have scouted our hunting areas and set treestands and ground blinds. Our dreams are filled with big bucks and the stock of venison in the freezer is getting low. Now is the time.

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Now is the time to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior if you have not done so. The day after the deer season is over it is too late to start bowhunting deer. To count on another day coming to accept salvation is not wise. We are not promised another day. The Bible tells us that this life is like a vapor. We are here and then we are gone. I have preached too many funerals, been to too many funerals, and lost too many friends and family to not recognize how fragile life is. It is appointed unto man once to die and then comes the Judgement is what the Word says. Don't put off making Jesus your Savior. Just ask Him to come into your heart and He will.

Romans 13:11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Those of us that are Christians must recognize the time. It is time to get serious about making our life count. **"Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."** is a sobering poem. We have to leave the old carnal man behind, put on the new man and walk in the Spirit. Let us give ourselves wholly to the Lord. Just like we PBSers throw ourselves wholly into being the best bowhunter we can be, and apply ourselves to the season at hand, let us follow Christ with that kind of passion. Let's make the most of each day. **Now is the time!**

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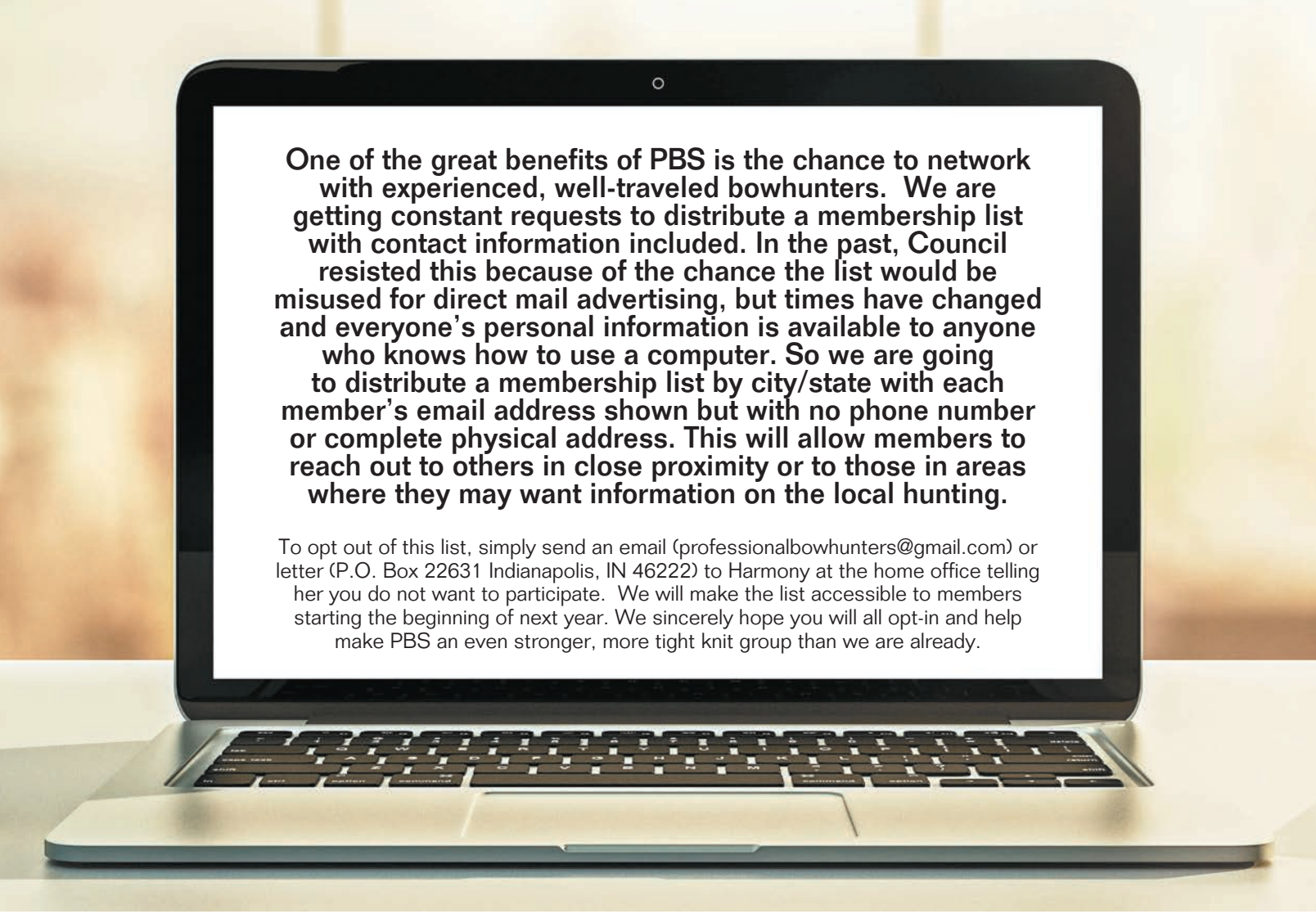


One of the great benefits of PBS is the chance to network with experienced, well-traveled bowhunters. We are getting constant requests to distribute a membership list with contact information included. In the past, Council resisted this because of the chance the list would be misused for direct mail advertising, but times have changed and everyone's personal information is available to anyone who knows how to use a computer. So we are going to distribute a membership list by city/state with each member's email address shown but with no phone number or complete physical address. This will allow members to reach out to others in close proximity or to those in areas where they may want information on the local hunting.

To opt out of this list, simply send an email (professionalbowhunters@gmail.com) or letter (P.O. Box 22631 Indianapolis, IN 46222) to Harmony at the home office telling her you do not want to participate. We will make the list accessible to members starting the beginning of next year. We sincerely hope you will all opt-in and help make PBS an even stronger, more tight knit group than we are already.

HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY OR PICTURE?!

Send it to us!

You don't have to be Ernest Hemingway to be published in our magazine - your fellow members want to hear YOUR story!

Submit to our Home Office either by:

Email: professionalbowhunters@gmail.com

or

Address: P.O. Box 22631 Indianapolis, IN 46222

Preston Lay

Let me say what an honor it is for President Matt Schuster to call and encourage me to consider running for Council of PBS. I hold this organization in very high regard and it's humbling to be thought of as a leader in this group of great bowhunters.

From an early age, I have had the inner drive for the love of bowhunting. Not coming from a bowhunting family, I would always search for like minded people with the same passion. My search led me to men such as Gene and Barry Wensel, Jay Massey, Doug Borland, Don Thomas, Roger Rothhaar, Jim Dougherty, Paul Brunner, Mark Viehweg. What I found with these men was that they are the PBS.

I'm Preston Lay from Jennings , OK. I have been a PBS member since 1994. I have been married to my wife Kim for 30 years, we have one son named Jesse. Jesse is grown and gone and we have replaced the kid with a dog. Koko is our chocolate lab and pretty much rules us and the house. I'm a lieutenant with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. I have been with the patrol for 21 years. Retirement is on the horizon and I look forward to never missing a good hunting day.

I firmly believe that the PBS is not for everyone. We were formed as a hunting group and should stay that way. "Knowledge Through Experience" was coined by Gene Wensel and wisdom and knowledge only come with experience. The instant bowhunter has no place with us. The passion of the chase formed us and has kept us intact through some tough times. The appreciation of the preparation , the journey and the hunt. I believe we all know of a person that has our passion and those people should be recruited, even sign them up to get them in and then hopefully they find a home and stay a member. I would challenge all out members to search out and find that person and pay their first year's dues.

We recently had a member issue involving equipment. I'm not hung up on the tool. I'm hung up on fair chase and the preservation of bowhunting's traditional values. If we identify ourselves as true ambassadors of bowhunting and fair chase then we must draw lines in the sand. Sometimes those lines are blurry and offensive. Aldo Leopold provided us with important messages days before he could have known of so called

bowhunters being able to shoot at game up to 100 yards. We must set the standard to keep the hunt in bowhunting. Leopold stated " Our tools for the pursuit of wildlife improve faster than we do, and sportsmanship is a voluntary limitation in the use of these armaments. It is aimed to augment the role of skill, and shrink the role of gadgets in the pursuit of wild things. Too often, what is offered as an aid to self-reliance, hardihood, woodcraft, or marksmanship, becomes instead a substitute for such skill." We as PBS must not forget these precious words!

We have a lot of momentum with PBS. The regional hunts are a great opportunity for members to live out dreams of hunting afar. It's so nice to have the networking available when planning a hunt. Social media is an outreach to attract like minded bowhunters, although I must admit resisting the use of this. I often see on popular bowhunting website forums of hunters admiring Kevin Dill and asking him how he came to be such an adventure bowhunter. Kevin relays how he met other bowhunters through the PBS that led him to Alaska . Our membership is our most prized asset and many possibilities can be sought through our networking and interactions at gatherings.

If elected, I will serve the members and uphold our constitution and by-laws. I feel very proud to be a member of such a fine group. I look forward to many great years ahead for PBS. I'm Preston Lay and I am the PBS!

— Candidate Profiles for Open Council Position —

Sean Bleakley

I'm very honored and humbled to have been asked to run for Council of the best organization that I've ever belonged to. I first joined in the late 90's early 2000's but I didn't quite get what the PBS was all about and let my membership expire. A chance meeting with Terry Receveur on a bear hunt in 2010 renewed my interest and opened my eyes to a little bit of what the PBS is all about. I joined right away and attended my first biennual banquet in Cincinnati. That's when I really got what it was about! Many of you know me, many of you do not. I'm married to the love of my life Jill, and have raised my three stepsons in the Hudson Valley area of New York State. I'm a retired police officer who is now working for New York's second largest commuter rail road where I hold the position of cable splicer for the communications department. I've been shooting a bow for forty years and hunting with one for thirty-nine. My bow has taken me all over North America, hunting ten states and four Canadian provinces. Many of these adventures would have never been made possible if it wasn't for the PBS! This is why I want to give something back.

I would like the opportunity to help the PBS continue its growth and to help its newer membership by offering my "Knowledge Through Experience" as well as finding new ways to expand our membership even more. If voted onto Council, I would like to continue to build on what the previous Councils have accomplished and continue to fight for bow hunter's rights and opportunities on any given forum. I feel that I represent the values of the PBS, as I feel all of us do, by placing self-imposed limitations and relying on skills and woodsmanship rather than modern technology and gadgets.

The PBS has become somewhat of a family to me. I've made lifelong friends by attending several PBS membership hunts and gatherings as well being active on social media. Friends that will probably last a life time. Friends that I would not hesitate to share a hunting camp with, and friends who are there to help me prepare for a hunt that they may be more familiar with. These are the things that make the PBS great. I hope to see the PBS continue to grow as it has over the last several years and we, as members, continue to recruit and mentor a new generation of hunters who will continue to carry on our values and tradition. Thank you for your consideration.

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!

Start using #IAmThePBS in your hunting posts to help us spread the word about us on Social Media!

Regional Profile

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

Ideally, we would like to select a state in one region then move to another region altogether and continue the cycle until we have eventually covered all states. So please give some thought to contributing to the magazine in this small way for upcoming issues.

By Randy Brookshier

The Commonwealth of Virginia is a veritable bow hunter's paradise, with long seasons, liberal bag limits and healthy game populations.

There is an abundance of public land available for hunting through large tracts of National Forest and the various W.M.A.'s. The George Washington National Forest is comprised of 690,106 acres in Virginia and the Jefferson National Forest contains an additional 956,222 acres of public land totaling a little over a million and a half acres of huntable public land. This represents one of the largest blocks of public land in the eastern United States. Much of this land offers excellent hunting opportunities as well as the chance to get back and away from the crowds to enjoy a wilderness hunt.

Virginia's regular deer season comes in the first Saturday in October and runs through early January. This overlaps with the muzzle loader and general firearms seasons but it is legal to bow hunt throughout those seasons as well. In addition to the regular archery season, Virginia also has a special urban season in many of its counties that opens in early September and extends into March. During this season only antlerless deer are legal. Most of the counties in Virginia now, especially in the western half of the state, have a two deer per day limit.

During the 2017-18 deer hunting season, hunters harvested a total 189,730 deer in Virginia. This total included 95,474 antlered bucks, 12,822 button bucks, and 81,434 does. The archery season harvest was 26,676.

Virginia also has a healthy and expanding black bear population. During the 2017-2018 season there was an increase in the number of bears taken and the bear harvest was the highest on record… 2,861 of which 395 or 17% were harvested in archery season.

We also have a large population of turkeys. The 2018 fall Turkey harvest was down due to heavy rains during much of the fall season coupled with a decline in the numbers of hunters participating in the special fall season.

Virginia has very liberal bag limits on deer. The regular deer/turkey big game license comes with a total of six deer tags on it. Of the six-deer limit, no more than three may be antlered deer and at least three must be antlerless deer. In addition, bonus tags containing six antlerless deer tags may be purchased for $18.00. There is no limit to the number of packs of bonus tags one may purchase and they are only valid on private lands.

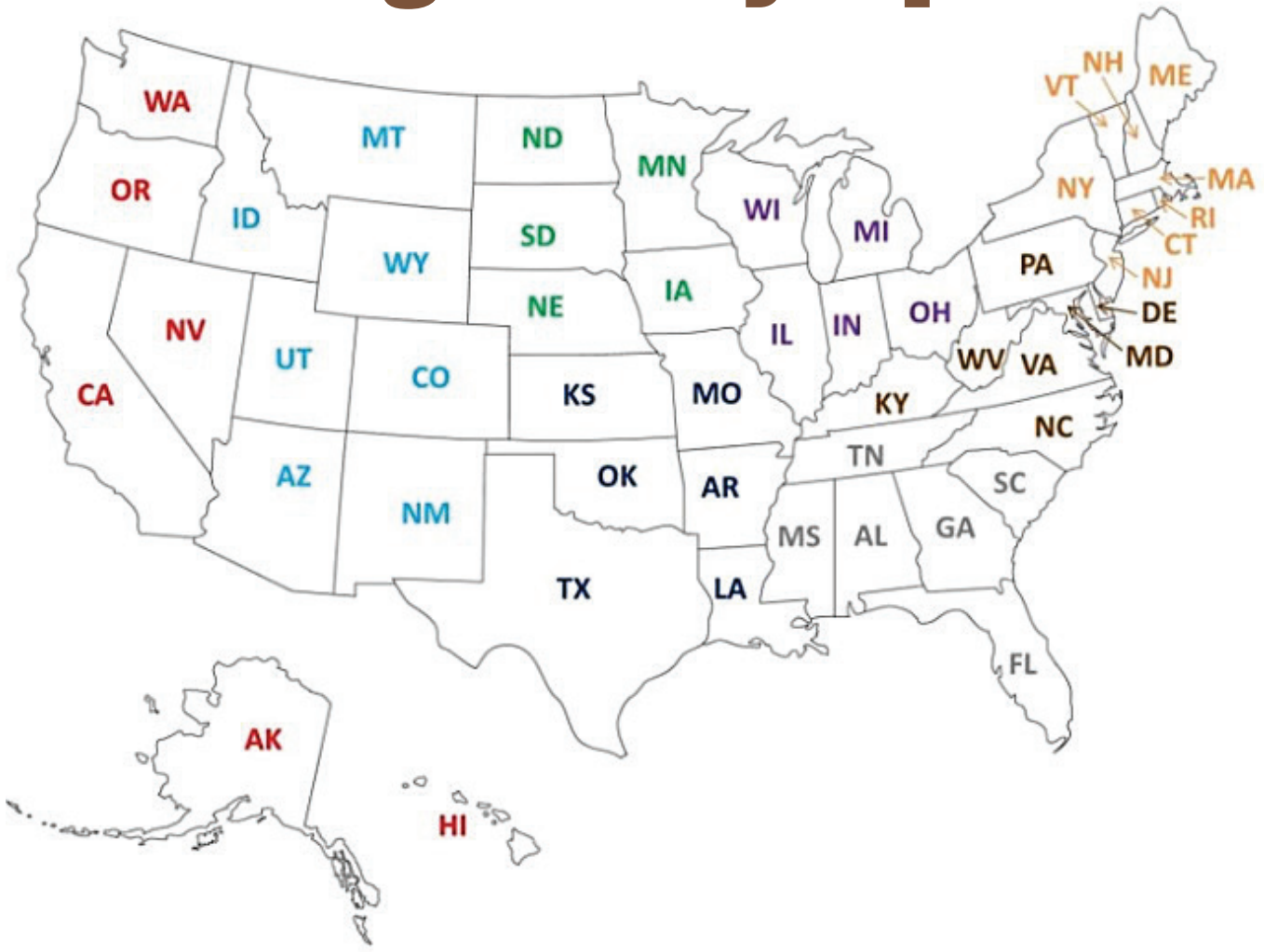
The Game Commission is in the process of establishing a huntable elk herd in several far southwest Virginia counties. Elk hunting is currently closed in these counties but elk may be taken throughout the remainder of the state by simply utilizing a deer tag on them.

In addition to big game, Virginia has good populations of small game as well. Summer time is a great time to pursue groundhogs with a bow. Some areas are absolutely over run with the rodents and can make for an enjoyable afternoon pursuing them along fence rows. Bow fishing is also very good at this time of year and some of Virginia's rivers and lakes have large populations of big carp. There are also seasons and huntable populations of rabbit, quail, squirrel, bobcats, coyotes, fox, and raccoon.

Virginia's hunting license fees are very reasonable, even for the non-resident. The general annual hunting license is $111.00 for non-residents. The deer/turkey big game tags run $86.00 and archery license costs $31. A bear tag used to be included in the big game tags but it is now separate and runs $151.00 for non-residents. So for $228.00 a non-resident can experience all of the bow hunting that Virginia offers, with the exception of a bear tag.

The weather during Virginia's hunting seasons is fairly moderate but can run the gamut from highs in the 80's during the early bow seasons to days in the teens or single digits during the special late season.

PBS – Regionally Speaking



By Randy Brookshier - Fourth Quarter 2019

I would like to recognize and thank Jeff Holchin for his years of service as Chairman of the Regional Representative Program. He has done an outstanding job of overseeing and promoting this program and has made it the success that is has become. With me assuming these duties he now has more time to devote to his Council position and the day to day running of the P.B.S. We have several members hunts that have been set up or are formulating at this time around the country. If you have been thinking of hosting one in the past, maybe this is the year to put one on. I don't care if you are putting together a hunt for alligators, elk or bullfrogs, I guarantee that there will be members interested in attending. It is a little bit of work up front but the benefits in the form of friendships and contacts for future hunts is immeasurable.

Pacific West ..... **Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington**
Rocky Mountain West ..... **Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming**
Great Plains 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 – Randy Brookshier *(stykbow59@comcast.net)*
Appalachian - Randy Brookshier *(stykbow59@comcast.net)*
Great Lakes - Tim Nebel *(tnebel20@gmail.com)*
International - Alessandro Fodera *(alessandro.fodera@gmail.com)*
North and Central Plains - Mark Viehweg *(mark@v-testequipment.com or mark@tradbow.com)*
Northeast - Terry Receveur *(Terrance.Receveur@taconic.com)*
Pacific West - Tom Vanasche *(tomvanasche@mac.com)*
Rocky Mountain West – Paul Schnell *(pschnell0@gmail.com)*
South Central - Preston Lay *(longbow@cimtel.net)*
Southeast - Vance Henry *(vhenry.ga@gmail.com)*

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PBS Regionally Speaking

~ *continued from page 11*

Pacific West Report

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

Tom Vanasche – Regional Representative

Oregon: The Oregon regulations are being changed and traditional hunters are losing one of the two hunts we had for traditional only. We fought the good fight to preserve it, but our arguments fell on deaf ears. Allegedly they are giving us two other trad opportunities but that has not officially happened.

Alaska: The moose population continues to fall due to Michigan hunters. The Western Arctic herd of caribou is allegedly expanding while most herds are in a decline. However, from personal experience this fall, it has not expanded enough.

California: Fall turkey and wild pig hunting through the winter will be the highlights of hunting now. An interesting hunt to look into is mule deer on Catalina Island. Our California rep, Brian Morris, will be checking it out.

Nevada: A traditional bowhunters organization is being formed in Nevada and our rep there, Matthew Wilson, is part of that and will attempt to bring in new members to the PBS.

Rocky Mountain West Report

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

Paul Schnell – Regional Representative

Montana — Scott Myers: First off I hope everyone is having a successful, safe and enjoyable season. Montana has been doing well despite the ups and downs with the weather. As I write this on October 10th we have just had our second snow of the season with temps in the single digits in the evening. For all of you podcast listeners a local podcast has surfaced, bowhunting Montana. You can find the link on Traditional Bowhunters of Montana.

The 2019 Block Management Area Guide is now available online through the FWP. This is a great resource for finding some really great places to hunt. With this being said please remember to respect our public lands and private properties. Being a good steward of the land helps not only us and the landowners but also future generations to come.

Another thing I want to point out for resident and non resident hunters is license fading. If you have a tag or tags that look faded and are hard to read you can get them replaced for free at any regional FWP office.

Archery season is wrapping up in a couple weeks and youth and general seasons will be kicking off.

Utah — Craig Burris: Greetings! My name is Craig Burris and I was asked to be the Utah state representative. A little bit about my background: I've lived in UT my entire life and have been shooting traditional equipment for 25 years. I've taught archery and the scouting Archery Merit Badge to young people in our local club as well as hosting PBS Youth Hunts. I have also hosted elk hunts for PBS members and have met some great PBS'ers along the way.

My present greatest challenge is to harvest a whitetail with traditional gear. To date, I have hunted in five states and missed six bucks. Wish me luck in Virginia this season! If you have any questions concerning UT feel free to give me a holler at preacher2363@gmail.com

Great Plains Central Report

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

Mark Viehweg - Regional Representative

We are in the midst of the hunting season right now. Here in South Dakota we had our first blizzard in the western part of the state last week concurring with the PBS Hunt. Unfortunately, due to the weather Paul Ladner, Tim Finley (Tim had 12-18" forecast for his part of North Dakota) elected to pull out after only a few days. John Borgeson stuck around till Saturday. John was the only one to have a shot opportunity. However, it's always great to spend time in the high plains even if it was only for a couple of days.

Steve Hohensee and I are planning a South Dakota Black Hills PBS Hunt for April 6-11, 2020. This is during the archery only season. We will be hunting Merriam's turkeys. We will be limiting this hunt to ten participants. So far, four slots have been filled with an Italian member filling one slot. The exact location in the Black Hills has yet to be determined, but should be nailed down in the next month. This should fill up fairly fast. Please contact me at mviehweg99@yahoo.com for additional information.

South Central Report

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

Preston Lay – Regional Representative

Oklahoma — Preston Lay: It's been a very wet spring and summer in Oklahoma. Historic flooding occurred this spring. The results have been dense foliage and bumper crops of acorns and persimmons. The wildlife will benefit from the rains which helped to end a several year drought. I urge our members to participate in a PBS group hunt or just plan a hunt with a member. This fall again allowed me the opportunity to go on an elk hunt with PBS member Duane Krones. Through PBS a friendship has been forged for a lifetime. It's so nice to hunt with people that are like minded. It makes a great adventure even better. I wish all a safe and successful hunting season.

Arkansas — Aaron McDonnell: As I write this, Arkansas' bow season is just getting underway. By the time you read it we'll still have a couple of months left to bow hunt. We're fortunate to have a very long bow season that runs from September 28th – February 29th for deer and September 28th – November 30th for bear. We're also fortunate to have a lot of great public land options that are archery only for a majority of the season other than a couple short permit gun hunts. This includes multiple state WMA and several federal NWRs. CWD was detected in the Northwest part of the state in 2016 and special regulations have been put in place for those areas. For information on regulations, season dates, public land info and CWD details visit www.agfc.com .

For the first time is several years I didn't draw a deer tag in the Midwest and have decided to dedicate all my time hunting in Arkansas this year. I'll spend the first part of the season exploring some new public land in the NW part of the state and come November I plan to be in my favorite part of the state to bow hunt, the Delta. Like many places, the first few weeks of season have started off with extremely hot weather but a cold front moving in promises to change that for the better. I'm looking forward to spending some frosty mornings in a tree stand in my home state.

Great Lakes Report

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

Tim Nebel - Regional Representative

Ohio — State Rep Tim Nebel: As I write this we are into the second week of October, we have already had two strong cold fronts come through in Ohio, which led to an increase in deer movement as bowhunters headed into the woods. Our statewide archery season started September 28th, and will run until February 2nd, as one of the longest in the country. Only one antlered deer may be taken, and antlerless deer permits vary by county.

Governor Mike DeWine announced on October 2nd that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and American Electric Power (AEP) have reached an agreement that will secure over 31,000 acres of public land for conservation and outdoor recreation. These new public lands will be in Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, and Guernsey counties in eastern Ohio and will be acquired in parcels over the next two years. It is adjacent to Jesse Owens State Park. Funding has come from $47 million in capital improvement funds through the Ohio General Assembly House Bill 166. Also, over 180 different local Ohio conservation and sportsmen clubs have donated money and support toward the purchase.

Also, on October 5th, The Andreoff Wildlife Area in Hardin County in northwest Ohio was dedicated by the ODNR. This wildlife area will add more than 700 acres of public land providing more hunting opportunities.

Illinois — State Rep Paul Ladner: There is not much to note here in Illinois. It seems that our newly appointed DNR director is well received by the DNR staff. We are experiencing some DNR hiring and things seem to be moving past survival mode for the DNR. Time will tell.

United Bowhunters of Illinois will have their annual banquet March 7 in Springfield, Illinois. Contact me for further information.

Wisconsin — Michael Theis: As I write this, fall activities are in full swing. Fall colors in the northern half of the state are at peak and the southern half is approaching the mid point of full color. The migratory birds are starting to make their way south, and the deer are getting into their pre-rut phase. It is a great time to be in the woods of Wisconsin.

Last night, (10/11) almost all of Wisconsin experienced frost, which should get the deer moving after much rain statewide. Rivers are swollen everywhere, when usually, levels fall this time of year. This has messed up the fall fishing because of volume and water clarity issues. Many areas of standing water are slowing down the hunt a bit, as access via foot can be limited. Duck hunters are happy of course, but the bowhunters are grumbling a bit if your area includes a swamp or low ground. But deer harvest numbers so far, do not seem to be suffering too much. By weapon type, crossbow hunters lead the harvest figures in total kill, and in buck to doe ratio. This has been a common occurrence for the last couple of years. Total deer kill so far for all weapon types stands at 20,800. The 2019 archery and crossbow seasons started up on September 14th.

A much anticipated report entitled "Evaluation of Crossbow Use in Wisconsin" is scheduled to be unveiled at the next WI Natural Resources Board meetings on October 22-23. It is described as a summary of crossbow use in WI by looking at the deer hunting license sales and revenue trends, social science surveys, crossbow use in other states, industry impacts, deer harvest trends and advances in technology. Sounds impressive, but we shall see. If released in pdf form, I will post a link on the PBS website for your evaluation. If you are interested, you can watch the meetings on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website as they record the proceedings live and provide links to that same recording of the event. Search for WI Natural Resources Board or WI NRB agenda page, look at the links along the right side of the screen and choose the link NRB Webcast.

As far as what is on the CWD front, much is happening, but the problem is still funding. In my opinion, it is headed in the right direction. A state representative has introduced a bill to fund deer dumpsters for counties with CWD positive deer. These dumpsters are for deer carcass disposal issues, and are much needed as many landfills in CWD areas are refusing to take in deer carcasses, i.e. ANY deer carcasses. Much of what has been accomplished so far in this disposal area has been through hunter fund raising and implementation efforts. Additional legislation is also in the works to direct both public and private landfills to accept deer carcasses. All of this is an attempt to reduce the spread of the CWD prions across the state as many deer hunters travel to hunt deer. Stay tuned to see if these efforts are successful.

Indiana — State Rep Jake Hawkins: The state of Indiana's division of fish and wildlife have been providing resources regarding disease in our deer herd. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) and epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) are the two that have received the most attention. Several counties have reports of dead deer near water sources, which is common with a wet spring followed by a hot dry summer. This disease can be devastating for the deer herd resulting in several poor seasons of hunting. Thankfully these reports have been isolated compared to the outbreak we saw in 2012.

Like many other states, Indiana is pushing for hunters to get their deer tested for CWD. The state is initiating targeted CWD surveillance in northwest and northeast Indiana. Hunters can check the fish and wildlife website to see if their county is within the surveillance areas. We can hope that these tests will help keep our deer herd healthy.

With all the talk of disease and many hunters (including myself) noticing low deer numbers, the state has finally responded by reducing the bonus antlerless quotas in each county. It is easy to blame outside factors such as disease for our low deer numbers. However, at the end of the day we (hunters) are the ones killing deer. Are we seeing reduced antlerless quotas because of disease? Or are we seeing this reduction due to a higher hunter efficacy with the introduction of crossbows, centerfire rifles, and late rifle antlers seasons? It is something to consider while you are afield this season.

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PBS Regionally Speaking

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There are several rule changes that have been discussed over the course of the year. The two most damaging are the legalization of air bows and legalization of baiting. It is clear that the air rifle industry is looking to get into firearms deer season but they are also working towards adding the air bow into our archery seasons. The air bow is clearly not a bow in any way and does not belong in archery season. Can we afford another "easier" option for archery season? I argue our deer herd numbers cannot. Ironically, the state is discussing the legalization of baiting yet is also conducting CWD surveys. CWD is spread by nose to nose contact and baiting unnaturally brings deer nose to nose very frequently. It is clear that Indiana needs to remain a fair chase state and not allow baiting. Please keep an eye on these two potential rule changes so we can hopefully head them off at that pass.

I for one am looking forward to adding some venison to my freezer as well as spending some days afield with friends. I hope everyone has a great season and I look forward to seeing fellow PBS members' successes! Shoot straight!

Michigan — State Rep Steve Chapell: By the time this magazine makes it to print then to Michigan PBS members, fall will be in full swing. For us bowhunters, fall is a special and favorite time of year as it marks the gateway to pursue our passion for bowhunting. The following bowhunting opportunities will be underway here in Michigan: rabbit, squirrel, bear, deer, turkey and more. Many bowhunters have already done their scouting and put their hunting stands or blinds in place. And, some will have already met with success. I hope you all meet with your vision of success this bowhunting season!

Michigan whitetail bowhunters need to keep in mind CWD remains a serious issue and has resulted in many changes to whitetail hunting laws. Rules for the use of bait, certain urine based lures/scents, as well as other hunting methods have changed and are now outright banned or limited as a means of addressing this serious disease. The DNR, as a test method for addressing CWD, proposed implemented APR (antler point restrictions) in a portion of Mecosta, Montcalm and Ionia Counties. Please make sure you check the current game laws if you prescribe to any of these methods outlined and to make sure you know the game laws where you will be hunting. If you are fortunate to harvest a whitetail this fall, consider having it tested for CWD to help the DNR gauge the health of our deer population…especially if mandated in your hunting area.

Antler Point Restrictions (APR) in the Thumb (Huron, Lapeer, St. Clair, and Tuscola Counties) received 55% support; a majority by most standards. The DNR requires 66% support for APRs to go into effect so the standard buck point rules remain in place.

Many of us Michigan PBS members will have returned from bowhunting out of state. For those who travel for a bowhunting adventure in another state, I hope you too met with your vision of success.

Northeastern Report

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

Terry Receveur - Regional Representative

No report

Appalachia Report

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

Randy Brookshier – Regional Representative

Virginia — Frank Whittaker: Time to go bowhunting in VA.! Temperatures are supposed to start dropping from the 90's to the 50/60 deg. range and that should make the hunting bug take hold of us! Deer, squirrel, turkey and bear seasons have already started. No data as of now, to gauge how the urban archery season went. One question I have been asked by several hunters concerns the EAB (earn a buck) rule. If you kill a doe in one locality would it count in another locality with the UAB rule ? The answer is NO! The doe would count only in the locality it was killed in. Bowhunters, lace up your hunting boots, sharpen your broadheads and get in the woods!

Stay safe, and good hunting!

North Carolina — Jeff Holchin: NC archery opener for deer this fall statewide is September 7, but the closing date varies from September 27 to November 8 depending on the region. The limit on bucks is two while numerous does can be taken. Unfortunately NC does not provide a separate archery season for turkeys or bear. Almost all bears in NC are killed using dogs, but it is possible to tag one with archery equipment, as the bear population is growing. There are some very large bears in NC.

I hope you had a great summer and are preparing for the fall hunts. If you have any regional hunts or other Appalachian Region information shoot me an email Stykbow59@comcast.net.

Pennsylvania- Tim Denial The only relevant news in Pa. is we have a late archery season in Pa. Dec.26th /Jan.20th. This year in units 2B-5C-5D the season will be extended to Jan. 25th

Maryland — Tony Sanders: The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is pleased to announce two new public hunting opportunities in state wildlife management areas. Browns Branch Wildlife Management Area in Queen Anne's County and Popes Creek Wildlife Management area in Charles County are now open to regulated hunting and trapping.

Hunting on the 1,172-acre Browns Branch Wildlife Management Area will be managed through the department's Central Region public hunting permit and reservation system. Those interested in hunting the area must possess a free Central Region seasonal permit and make daily reservations. Anyone interested in trapping the area should contact the Millington Wildlife office at 410-928-3650. Interested hunters should contact the Gwynnbrook Wildlife Management Area office at 410-356-9272.

Hunting on the 522-acre Popes Creek Wildlife Management Area will be managed through the Southern Region public hunting permit and reservation system. Those interested in hunting the area must possess a free Southern Region seasonal permit and make daily reservations. Anyone interested in trapping in the area must contact the Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area at 301-743-5161 for information.

Hunting for all regulated game species will take place during established season dates and bag limits, which are posted in the 2019-2020 Guide to Hunting and Trapping in Maryland.

Kentucky — Scott Record: The LBL Deer and Turkey hunt was attended by nine hunters from six states. Game was seen daily and several close calls were experienced. A few shot opportunities were passed and a couple solid bucks were seen. Everyone had a great time afield and we ate like kings. Plans are already underway to schedule this annual hunt for the first full week of October 2020. Make your plans now to attend. The LBL provides 170,000 acres with excellent facilities and a beautiful venue. The camaraderie and food is so good that the hunting truly is a bonus.

Southeast Report

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

Vance Henry – Regional Representative

First and foremost, I would like to recognize and welcome the following individuals as some of the newest members of this great organization: Michelle Cook, Donald Buckner, Caleb Cornwell, Jerry Russell, Charles Petrie and Daniel Vilorio. In the upcoming weeks you will be receiving PBS's first-class magazine in the mail, please enjoy and welcome aboard! I hope to see all of you at the gathering in March.

October is a time of change here in the south, and if most people reading this feel the same way as I do, it's no doubt a welcome change. The hottest weather of the year is officially behind us and cooler weather lies just ahead. It's still not unusual to be sitting in a tree when it's 85 degrees in October, but that's certainly better than 95 degrees. October is also a time when some much-needed rain returns after being absent for weeks at a time in the heat of the summer. Where I reside in middle-east GA, rain must have been absent for six weeks straight. The leaves in October are starting to change colors but they are still weeks behind their northern cousins. And lastly, October means that persimmons and acorns are reaching maturity and fall to the ground, no longer able to support themselves hanging from a stem and triggering a change in feeding habits with the local wildlife.

October is just a great time to be in the woods with a trad bow and I absolutely love it! Then again, I love November too…

International Report

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

Alessandro Fodero – Regional Representative

Italy — Alessandro Fodera: Hello my brothers, I would like to introduce you to our new member: Helmut Ditrich from Germany.

As I mentioned in the previous report, from 29th to 31st August the Italian bow fishing championship was held, organized by the Arcieri del Bernabò and for the first time in conjunction with the Italian 3d championships of the Italian traditional archers shooting federation Fiarc. It was a great success with the public and archers who did not know bow fishing. A great promotion and visibility at the national level that is bringing many archers to approach bow fishing. The second place was awarded by our brother in PBS: Lucio Tremolizzo.

One more thing, but very important: to all international members; please send me even a few lines on bow hunting or bow fishing in your country, the type of license required, where and how to go bow hunting, how the season is going, and any information can help PBS members to get information about your country. thank you so much. Email me at: alessandro.fodera@gmail.com

While I am writing this report, the hunting season for small game has officially started on September 15th. The bow hunting period coincides with that of the rifles; so the difficulties for bow hunters are considerable but, if possible, everything is much more appealing. In almost the entire country the ungulates hunt season, only in selection as required by law officially started in mid-August. As expected, it is another tough season as the overall population in the country continues to be lower than desirable. Like last year the great heat of the summer has reduced the presence of animals on the territory; although for some species, such as the wild boar rather than the heat it was a parasite of the chestnuts that caused more than the decrease, a major shift of territory. In fact, not finding food, they began to invade the plains causing extensive damage to crops and reaching inhabited areas; also bringing wolves with them. Due to the depopulation of their territories, the areas assigned to hunters and bow hunters have very few animals, and this is and will be a big problem for bow hunters this year, which in perspective will lead to having few catches.

To try to counteract the increase in wild boar in the plains, we are working diligently with the institutions that see the bow as the only way to control them in densely populated areas. In other late news: in Veneto, which recently opened bow hunting in selection of roe deer, the first two male roe deer with a bow in the region were killed in the first two weeks of September. Good arrows, rare people.

"Mobilis in mobile"

UNITED WE ACT

for Preserving Bowhunting's Traditional Values

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

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

Associate Members receive these benefits:

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

Associate Member Application

Name_____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Age _____ Hunting Bow Weight _____

Email Address_____

Phone ( )_____

Referred by _____

❑ Gift

I firmly agree with the goals and principles of the Professional Bowhunters Society® and apply for Associate Membership.

_____

Signature

Mail completed application to:

Professional Bowhunters Society®
Associate Membership
P.O. Box 22631 • Indianapolis, IN 46222
Phone 801-888-3802
email: professionalbowhunters@gmail.com
PBS Website: www.ProfessionalBowhunters.org

Yearly fee: $35.00 per year • (Canadian members: $40.00 **U.S.** per year) • Shoulder patch: $5.00 • Decals: $3.00

Payment Method *(choose one)*
❑ Check ❑ Visa
❑ Mastercard

Credit Card Number _____ CVV_____ Expiration Date _____

Phone ( )_____ Signature _____

PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY
"Knowledge through Experience"

2019 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

ENTER TO WIN

3 DAY HOG HUNT

WITH THE GUYS FROM TWO OF OUR FAVORITE PODCASTS:

The STICKBOW CHRONICLES

The Push

HUNT AT THE WORLD FAMOUS PARADISE HUNT CLUB

PRIZE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- *AIRFARE FROM CONTINENTAL U.S. TO GEORGIA
- *3 DAY NON-RESIDENT LICENSE TO HUNT HOGS

DATES FOR HUNT ARE FLEXIBLE

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE RUNS APRIL 1 2019- MAR 12, 2020

VISIT **WWW.PROFESSIONALBOWHUNTERS.ORG** FOR ENTRY RULES AND DETAILS

Welcome new members to the PBS family!

September
Tony Rizan - Slidell, LA
Tyson Wolbaum - Castlegar, BC
Ronnie Newell - Sulther, LA
Kevin Dice - Ft. Wayne, IN
Daniel Vilorio - Homestead, FL
Anthony Sottung - Festus, MO
Bob Mason - Cheyenne, WY

October
Robert Butler - Houston, TX
Nathan Ripley - Morristown, TN
Jason Sullivan - North Pole, AK
Dylan Drego - North Vancouver BC
Major Tallent - Vonore, TN
Scott George - Longmont, CO
Vincent Sydloskey - Marco Island, FL
Cole Forte - Lancaster, PA
Kirk Russell - Littleton, CO
Joshua Overcash - Warrensville, NC
Justin Blunt - Greenville, IL
Jeff Janes - Fresno, CA
Cole Plese - Warren, PA
Zac Costello - Monroe, MI
Ken Webb - O'Fallen, MO
Brad Jansen - Germantown, WI

November
Bradley Rutledge - Merkel, TX
Jake Tessmann - Merkel, TX
Jeff Finn - Englewood, CO
Micah Nelson - Melrose, MA
Kurt Ebers - Hannibal, MO
Colby Farquhar - Stillwell, OK
Walter Alward Jr. - Lenox, MA
Anthony Landers - Scotia, NE
John Raterink - Hastings, MI
Steve Himmelrick - Wierton, WV
Shannon Welche - Benton Harbor, MI
Ron Rohrbaugh - Port Matilda, PA
Jeff Sparks - Silver Spring, MD
Michael Hough - Petersburg, IL

Professional Bowhunters Society

2020 Biennial Gathering

Springfield Missouri

March 12 - 15, 2020

The Oasis Hotel has no more rooms available, so we have negotiated a great deal with the nearby Doubletree By Hilton Hotel

- $114 a night
- Free breakfast at the Oasis for all Doubletree Guests
- Shuttle running between the two hotels
- 3 minute drive to the Oasis!

To Book at Doubletree:

Call 417-831-3131 and mention you are with PBS

Online Link for Booking:
https://bit.ly/2NSHqMD

With Special Guest Speakers:

Friday Night: Bryan Burkhardt & Jim Eeckhout
-60th Anniversary Little Delta Bowhunt
Saturday Night: Dr. E. Donnall Thomas, Jr.

For more information

Website:
professionalbowbunters.org/gatherings

Contact:
Terry Receveur
terrance.receveur@taconic.com

Amazing Seminars By:

*Dr. E. Donnall and Lori Thomas: Improving your Field Photos
*Dr. Ben Pinney: growing up PBS
*Monty Browning: A Life of Adventures
*Annie Browning: Living With A Hunter
*Barry Wensel: Whitetail Strategies
*All about Podcasts with the guys from the Stickbow Chronicles and The Push
*Gene Hopkins: The History of Archery
*Brad Jansen and Thaddeus Stager: knife making 101
*Gene Wensel: Whitetail Strategies

And If That Doesn't Tempt You Enough:

Thursday Tour of Black Widow Bows Since 1957 Hotel is minutes from the Johnny Morris's Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium As well as the incredible The Archery Hall of Fame & Museum, Inc.

Ladies Tour

Friday March 13, 2020 | 10 AM – 3 PM

$50 per person | Includes transportation, ticket to Wonders of Wildlife and Aquarium, and buffet lunch at Hemingway's Blue Water Café.

Wonders of Wildlife and the Aquarium

TAKE A JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD - Go eye-to-eye with wildlife and discover the greatest collection of record-setting big game animals ever assembled. One and a half miles of completely immersive Wildlife Galleries transport you to the wildest places on Earth by engaging all of your senses. Entertaining and educational, this world-class experience emphasizes the critical role hunters and anglers play in conserving the great outdoors.

Johnny Morris
WONDERS OF WILDLIFE
NATIONAL MUSEUM & AQUARIUM

DISCOVER AN OCEAN IN THE HEART OF AMERICA - Dive into the excitement of the world's oceans, lakes, and streams with 1.5 million gallons of saltwater and freshwater aquariums teeming with more than 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. Touch a stingray. Go underwater with the biggest river monsters on the planet. Be surrounded by piranhas. The 350,000-square-foot aquarium's Great Oceans Hall features boats used by Ernest Hemingway and Zane Grey and is home to a 300,000-gallon "open ocean" habitat of saltwater marine life.

Hemingway's Blue Water Cafe

Enjoy great food and unique atmosphere inspired by saltwater fishing legend – Ernest Hemingway, an avid international sportsman, one of the pioneers of big game fishing, and Nobel Prize winning author. Lunch Buffet is included in the price of your ticket and tax and gratuity are included, as well as a non-alcoholic drink. Alcoholic beverages can be purchased for an additional charge.

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)	# _____@$50	$ _____
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: $ _____

CHECK OUT THE BENEFITS OF EARLY REGISTRATION (Before Dec 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 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.

Canadian members must send International Cashiers Checks or Money Orders payable in US funds.
Credit card purchases will have a 2.5% surcharge to your total amount.
Please provide the following information:
Name & Phone # if different from above: _____
Credit Card # _____Expiration Date_____ CCV #_____
Signature_____

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.

PBS NEEDS YOUR DONATION

THE SPRINGFIELD, MO BIENNIAL GATHERING WILL BE HELD FROM

March 12-15, 2020

DONATIONS OF ALL VARIETIES NEEDED; EVERYTHING FROM A HUNT TO A HOMEMADE QUILT!

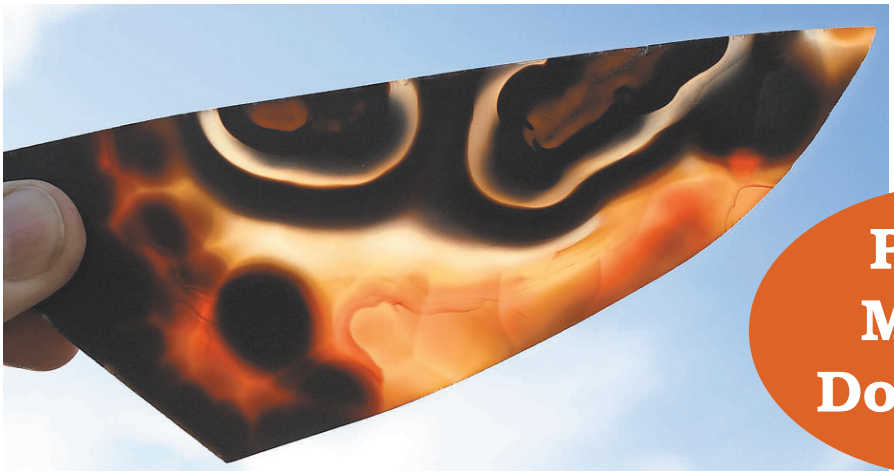
THE BIENNIAL GATHERING IS PBS' LARGEST FUNDRAISER AND SUPPORTS MANY GREAT PROGRAMS

If you have anything to donate please contact

Tom Vanasche | 541-990-3946

A Knife For The PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY'S 2020 BANQUET

handcrafted by Alan Altizer



Please Make a Donation!

Of all the pieces I knap, knives always surprise me the most. The problem is I want to keep most of them for myself. If done correctly, knives become a living, breathing piece of art with each one having its own unique personality. I spend hours choosing the right piece of antler to match the finished blades. Each knife is carefully matched and set to have a rhythmic flow from the base to the tip. The unique characteristics of each horn, whether the heavy horned base of a northern whitetail or elk, are carefully utilized to create a polished work of art that feels as good as it looks. My blades are made from the highest quality, most beautiful pieces of gemstone I can find. I utilize agates, jaspers, and other stone from throughout the world. When coupled with the finished handles, they are breathtaking pieces of art that will last for generations. One of my favorite set of knives was a gift to my friends Gene and Barry Wensel.

Today I have one of the best collections of premier knappable Piranha agates in the world. When I decided to make this knife, I searched through the tons of stone I own and found one that

echoed the life blood of the volcano that gave birth to it. Through the process of choosing the rough boulder, cutting it to find the hidden beauty locked inside, then cutting and cooking the preform, there was never a doubt this was the perfect choice. My friend and I often say we are simply working with some of God's most beautiful artwork; sunsets trapped in stone.

When I decided to donate a knife to PBS, I wanted to provide our organization with a piece of artwork which would represent our traditional heritage. My hope is this blade will generate funds to assure my son and grandson are afforded the same privileges I have been blessed with throughout my bowhunting career. This particular blade is one of the most unique and beautiful pieces I have been blessed to work. The handle is an equally outstanding whitetail shed. Pairing them together has created a one of a kind heirloom.

I have worked some of the most beautiful pieces of gemstone to create some of modern flintknapping's most incredible pieces of artwork. My knives have been sold throughout the world and this blade is in my top ten. This one will go to one of our own, a fellow member of The Professional Bowhunters Society, to help insure our children's bowhunting future.

~ Alan Altizer

Professional Bowhunters Society

2020 Biennial Gathering

March 12 - 15, 2020

Springfield MISSOURI

PBS Knife Contest

- Open to all. The membership will vote on the Best Hunting Knife.
- All entries become the property of PBS and will be highlighted in the Saturday Night Auction.
- Entrants need not be present to win.
- Entries can be sent to Tim Donnelly at 3922 W. Tracy St. Springfield, MO 65807. Please note clearly that the knife is to be entered in the knife contest.
- Include an index card with entrant's name, address, phone number and any other information that you would like the judging membership to know about your entry.

PBS Photo Contest

1) Scenic/Wildlife (also includes hunting action shots)
2) Hero Shot (Includes big and small game hero shots)
3) Trail Camera
4) Youth

Contest Rules

- Participants may enter multiple photos per category , All photos must be 8"x10" prints , All photos become property of PBS , All mailed photos must be received by March 5, 2020.
- Photos may be hand delivered at the Gathering.
- Each photo must be marked with entrant's name, address, phone number and email address.
- All photos must be on photo paper or light backing material.
- No matting or framing.

Please package photos to prevent bending and send to:
Professional Bowhunters Society
P.O. Box 22631
Indianapolis, IN 46222

PBS Arrow building Contest

- Open to any PBS member in good standing.
- Members need not be present to win.
- If the arrow shaft is footed, self-nocked, or inlaid, then all work must have been done by the entrant. No sharp broadheads or field points.
- No illegal components (eagle feathers, etc.)
- All entries become property of PBS

Categories

- Best matched 3-arrow set Professional Class
- Best matched 3 arrow set Amateur Class
- Best One Arrow Artistic – this can be primitive, artsy, or whatever the maker desires.

Each entry must be titled and include an index card with the title, entrant's name, address and any other pertinent information that the entrant wants the judging members to know. **Send INDEX CARDS ONLY (**or e-mail) to Harmony Receveur at the home office--PBS, P. O. Box 22631, Indianapolis, IN 46222
(or by e-mail: professionalbowhunters@gmail.com) before February 15, 2020.
This will give us an idea of how many entries and allow us time to make display signs for each entry.

Deadline for arrow arrival at Gathering is noon on March 13, 2020.

Those members planning to attend are asked to please bring entries with you. For those not bringing their arrows, they can be sent to Tim Donnelly at 3922 W. Tracy St. Springfield, MO 65807. Entries much reach Tim before March 5, 2020.

Jerry Pierce Bowyers Contest

1) Professional Class

Can be recurve or longbow made by those who sell bows commercially

2) Amateur

Can be recurve or longbow made by those who do not sell their work

3) Primitive

Self bows only

Bows become the property of PBS and are highlighted in the Saturday Night Auction

Bears, Blood trails, and Buddies

By Ethan Rodrigue

Late Friday afternoon on June 7th, I boarded a plane headed for Spokane, Washington. I was on my way to a much anticipated bear hunt with good friends Rob Patuto and Jesse Minnish. We were heading to Northern Idaho for bruins. About a year ago, Rob was serving on the publicity committee for PBS and he and I were looking at getting involved with sponsoring some traditional bowhunting podcasts in hopes of getting some exposure for the PBS. After we teamed up with The Push and Primitive Pursuit and saw the positive feedback, we began kicking the idea around of doing our own podcast and getting even more exposure for PBS. That is where this trip began. We've had a blast interviewing lots of guys and gals and have enjoyed them sharing their adventures with us, a great many of them being fellow PBS'ers.

So, with plans set and tags purchased the day finally arrived for me to head out. Jesse picked me up at the airport late Friday night, practically Saturday morning. We headed to his place and grabbed about three hours of sleep then were off early the next morning. As the truck climbed elevation the fog and mist began to turn into snow and the mountains were shrouded in clouds. I don't know why but I actually like weather like this and it always makes me long to be in the woods with my bow, so I took this as a good sign. Pulling into camp we saw the wall tent and smoke billowing from the stove pipe. Rob had coffee going and a cozy camp all set up. It's hard for me to think of a better place to be in cold, wet weather than that.

We spent a few hours getting our gear stowed away and bows assembled. We had plenty of daylight left, good coffee, great company and had totally left behind the pressures and hustle of the real world. We discussed the week's plans and looked at lots of trail cam pics. Before long, it was time to get in the woods for real. I've heard many times how thick and brushy North Idaho is, and it didn't take me long to see how true this is. Even though the snow had almost completely stopped our rain gear was weighing heavy from the wet vegetation in no time. That afternoon proved to be uneventful as far as bear encounters go, but just sitting in the quiet of the hemlocks and tamarack forests was peaceful and comforting and a great way to wind down and get ready for the week ahead.

Back at camp that evening we sat in the comfort of the wall tent as the wood stove gave off the warmth and comfort that only a wood stove can. The wind and snow were back, but it made no difference as we couldn't have been more comfortable. Dan Hooper was joining us in camp for a few days. Rob and Dan go way back and we enjoyed their stories of guiding for brown bear in Alaska and all the adventures they've had in the Frank Church Wilderness in years past. Dan warmed up some elk chili his wife had prepared for us and it was nothing short of fantastic. We talked late into the night, but finally decided to turn in and get some rest. After almost forty-eight hours with only three hours of sleep, I slept about as sound as I ever have. I woke up rested and eager for the day's adventures. The weather appeared to be breaking so we decided we would sit a few hours, just in case. Once again, the cool temps and wind seemed to keep the bears at bay, but it was of no concern. Bear camp has a certain cadence to it. It's typically a laid back and easy atmosphere where a guy can sleep in a bit, enjoy a great breakfast, and spend the morning re-baiting stand sights, doing camp chores, send a few judo tipped arrows into stumps, and generally relax. Our camp was no exception to this and we passed away the cool, overcast day with ease. Dark comes around 9:00 this time of year there, so around 2:00pm we headed back to our perspective stands. The weather was continuing to clear, and the winds were starting to ease up a bit. At 7:03 that evening I heard something behind me and turned to see a beautiful chocolate bear standing on a log that was angling uphill. With the brush being so thick they seemed to prefer to walk the various downed timber whenever possible for the ease of travel. The bear looked cautious but relatively relaxed and I tried to commit every detail of the scene to memory. I've always thought bears were special and have loved watching them and generally being around them every chance I have. So I did just that, and watched as he slowly made his way up hill and circled around in order to approach the bait from downwind. Thirty minutes later he was in front of me about forty yards and once again making use of a downed tree. Then he slowly reversed his direction and stopped another ten yards farther out from me. With his jaws popping he seemed to consider his options for a moment, then once again proceeded to approach cautiously. When he finally got within range he paused for a few moments and stood broadside. I was in no rush for the encounter to end so I just stared at his beautiful chocolate coat and enjoyed watching him. He turned his head and motioned as if to walk away, then paused and again turned broadside and began to relax. At that point, I didn't want to take any chances of him losing interest or spooking at an errant breeze carrying my scent, so I picked a spot. The next thing I remember was reaching my anchor point and burning a hole in his side. I slowly repeated to myself to keep pulling and focusing on where I wanted to hit. The arrow suddenly appeared right where I had been focusing and with a deep growl he was in full motion and covered the downed timber and brush in a flash. He

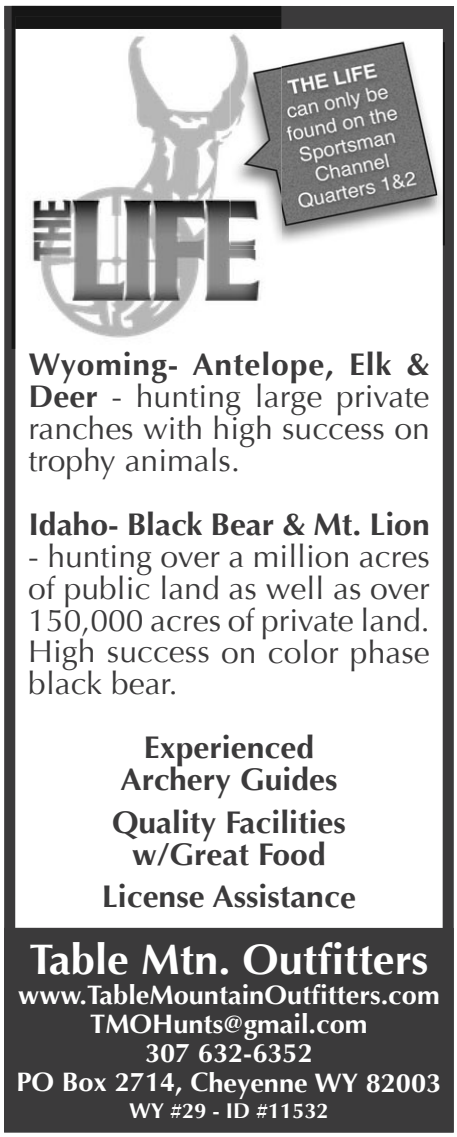
paused for just a second to look back at where he had been standing and try to figure out what had happened I suppose, then was gone. As he leapt from another downed log he seemed to stumble just a bit and then all was silent. I quietly listened for a while but could hear nothing. My arrow was sticking in the ground and covered in blood where the bear had stood just moments before. After about fifteen minutes I quietly climbed down and left the stand site as carefully as I could so as not to alert anything.

Making my way back to the truck I replayed everything in my mind a hundred times. I always try not to get to optimistic until I have my hands on an animal, but I felt really confident of my shot placement. I made my way back to camp and as darkness set in and everyone returned from their hunts we all grabbed our packs and set out to track. We walked up to my arrow and it looked very promising, covered in bright red blood and those little bubbles we all love to see. But retracing the bears path, we saw no blood and that first bit of concern began to creep in. Dan suggested I climb back into the stand and verify we were in the right spot. Doing so I saw that I had led us to a downed tree about fifteen yards uphill of where the bear had actually stood when he looked back. At that, Jesse immediately saw blood. The concern subsided a bit and we began the blood trail. The blood trail was less than stellar to say the least as is often the case with bears, but we continued to make progress. The thick vegetation and total darkness didn't help but Jesse's tracking skills really came in handy and we slowly made our way. The bear was traveling very erratically and going from bear trails, through brush, and back to trails again and it was proving to be a tough track. Around eighty yards or so I was beginning to think I had only gotten one lung and my shot wasn't as good as I had initially thought. Dan commented that due to the way the bear was traveling and under the circumstances, he thought that we were really close to a dead bear. I tried to fight back the feeling of dread that creeps into our minds on a long track and kept looking. Moments later, I glanced over my right shoulder and through the dense brush I saw him lying there, motionless. I cautiously said, "There he is." At that, Rob calmly asked, "Is he dead?" I couldn't see his head where he lay and replied, "I think so…" Taking another step to my right, I could see his eyes were open and his teeth showing as he lay motionless. A huge feeling of relief washed over me and once again I did my best to soak it all in. Jesse and I drug him to a spot a bit more open, relatively speaking, where we could get a good look at him. His coat was in great shape and he sported a sort of halfmoon shaped blaze on his chest. He wasn't huge but was a good representative of the species and was plenty big enough for me. I admired his dense coat and the beautiful coloration. After a few congratulatory handshakes and pictures, we began the task of breaking him down and into quarters, taking the necessary precautions to make sure the hide was removed carefully for taxidermy. While we were skinning the bear we actually heard wolves howling. Regardless of how you feel about wolves (and we probably feel the same way), hearing them in the wild is always a cool experience!

I carried the cape and front shoulders and Rob volunteered to carry the remainder of the meat. The pack out was not bad, and we made it back to camp around midnight. We hung the meat to cool and we all enjoyed a celebratory toast falling asleep tired but happy. The next morning, I worked on the meat and cape a bit while Dan once again out did himself with a breakfast of bacon, bear sausage, potatoes, peppers, eggs, and salsa cooked in a Dutch oven.

After filling my tag early in the hunt, I enjoyed the remainder of the week hunting some, tagging along and trying to get Rob or Jesse on film filling their tag and re-baiting the sites. I had another tag, and as the great friends Rob and Jesse are they insisted I focus on filling that one, too. But I was more than happy to just enjoy the adventure as it unfolded. I even came out early one evening to cook bear backstraps in onions and peppers along with potatoes and onions. Trent Wengerd, of Wengerd Archery had a bait site not far from us and drove down to hunt with us. He arrowed a dandy sow one evening and arriving in camp told us the story. He had a great blood trail and felt confident in the shot. As he was tracking he began to hear a bear vocalizing in the direction his bear went. Fearing the bear wasn't yet dead and not wanting to push the bear from its bed, he elected to hike out and come back to camp. We took up the trail around 11:00 pm and discovered the vocalization he heard was likely from another bear, as his laid just 20 yards or so past where he backed out. Rob's son Elijah, was able to join us in camp and it was really cool to have him share the experience with us. The celebratory handshakes and pictures once again took place, then we skinned and quartered Trent's bear and began the pack out.

Rob and Jesse both had opportunities that week but for one reason or another, neither let an arrow go. But we all had a great time and made some wonderful memories that we can relive for years to come. This hunt is just another reason whey the PBS is such a special organization as none of this would have been possible without the friendships we forge through the brotherhood that is The Professional Bowhunters Society.



The Payback Bear

By Ronald Bauer

I guess this hunt really started back in September of 2005. It was the first year of my retirement and I along with my close friend Floyd Oakes were camped in the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest out of Craig, Colorado fairly close to the Montana line. We were on a scheduled seventeen-day do-it-yourself mule deer hunt. On the second night of the hunt we came back to our camp after the evening hunt and found the back of our tent torn away. Another hunter up the mountain from our camp site had watched a young uneducated bear make the visit to our camp and then it came up the mountain right past the stump he was sitting on. Our visitor left little of the back wall of the tent and even less of the foam pad that was on my cot. Then and there I decided that one day I would have my chance at payback. This adventure never had a chance at success. On the second day after the bear episode we went out far enough to get cell reception and found out that Hurricane Katrina had devastated our little corner of the world so we packed up and headed home to friends and family.

The Louisiana black bear is protected and a rarity in our deer woods. In all my sixty plus years of hunting in Louisiana and southern Mississippi I have seen the grand sum of one bear and it was just a glimpse from my tree stand during the Witching Hour one evening just as I was deciding to pack it up for the day. Other than my cot eating friend in Colorado this is my total experience with bears. As happens to all of us at some time or other, life got in the way of my having the opportunity to hunt bears and get some kind of redemption for the way our tent and my cot were so rudely treated. This all changed in March of this year when my phone alerted me that I had just received a text from one of the greatest guys you could ever have the privilege of calling a friend. Bill Terry Sr. was letting me know that there was an opening to hunt bears with him in La Tuque, Quebec, Canada the third week in June of this year. The wheels for another grand adventure with this fine gentleman were now in motion. Bill put me in contact with Tom Phillips who runs this hunt and before long my deposit was on the way and I was looking at a list from Tom of things that I would need to bring with me. I would be part of Trad Gang Bear Quest 13. After fourteen years my chance for payback was about to become a reality. Please don't get me wrong about payback. I wasn't out to kill a bear just because some bear tore my stuff up. I consider the freedom and opportunity to hunt any animal as a gift from God and not to be taken lightly. It does put a smile on my face though when I think about the young bear coming into my space uninvited and now it was my turn to intrude upon their world. To milk every-moment I could out of this adventure I decided to drive the approximately 1,900 miles from my home in south Louisiana to my destination in Canada. This in itself would be a nice adventure just getting to see country that I had never been in before. It is just so hard to make out much below you when you are flying at around 400 knots and about 40,000 feet. The drive didn't disappoint, affording me a look at several beautiful states that I had never laid eyes on. Taking my time and limiting myself to about eight hours of driving a day it took me three days to pull into the driveway of Bill Terry Sr. After an evening of catching up with Bill and Kathy and being treated to a wonderful supper of bear roast with all the trimmings it was time for a good night's sleep in preparation for the final leg of the journey to bear camp in Canada.

Our first stop was at Tom Phillips' home in Peru, Maine to meet and greet with the rest of our group. It was good to find out that I wasn't the only first timer on this hunt. Three of the other members were also making their first bear hunt so Bill and Tom would have their work cut out for them with a camp full of rookies. After gathering at Tom's we left that evening with about twelve more hours of driving in front of us headed to La Tuque, Quebec, Canada. Tom operates the bear hunting out of the Rothman Outfitters establishment which mainly caters to the fisherman on the White Reservoir. It is obvious that he has plenty experience doing this at this location because everything operated like a well-oiled machine and he had active bait sites that he had been keeping baited up and ready to hunt. Arriving in camp on the morning of the fifteenth we set about unloading and organizing our equipment into three comfortable bedrooms and then helping Tom do the same with enough provisions not only for our hunt but for the group that would be arriving the day we headed home.

We arrived in a steady rain the day of our first hunt and it continued well into the night.

The option was ours to hunt in the rain that evening if we wanted to but after such a long ride and the fact that recovering a bear in that weather would be a challenge, we decided to spend the evening preparing for the next day and enjoying a great supper prepared by Tom and his wife. It was still misting rain the next day but we all went to our designated site and our adventure was underway. A typical day consisted of breakfast then around ten in the morning we would divide up and go refresh the bait sites. Finishing that up we would meet back at camp for lunch, rest up and prepare for the evening hunt. We were usually on stand for our hunt by around four o'clock and hunted until dark which didn't happen until around nine thirty. Back in time for a late supper and some good conversation meant it was almost midnight each night before getting to bed.

The first few days consisted of bear sightings by most of the group but only one shot taken. It was a high hit with no blood trail to follow and the broken arrow showed hardly any penetration past the broadhead so it more than likely hit a large bone in the shoulder. Even though a great effort was made, the bear was not recovered and will probably live to fill another hunter's dreams one day. The second shot taken was by the only lady hunter in our group. She won my respect by hunting as hard or harder than any of us and putting up with the ever-present mosquitoes and black flies. From what I put together listening to the camp conversations this wasn't her first time to hunt here with Tom. She was one of the seasoned veterans making up our group of six hunters. She brought in an arrow with blood it's full length and said it was a complete pass through but she was positive that it was a high hit just under the spine. The bright red blood on the arrow looked like evidence of a muscle hit and after several hours of following a blood drop here and a drop there, the trail was finally lost and it was the consensus of everyone that this bear would live to eat sweet feed at someone's bait site another day.

Mid-day of the third day I decided to show Bill how to not get in a boat while standing on algae covered rocks in ankle deep water. I set such a perfect example for him that I was even able to twist my right knee in the process. It didn't keep me from hunting but it did make five hour sits in a tree stand interesting. I got really friendly with my bottle of Tylenol Arthritis tablets. With two days left to hunt all I had seen was the daily drama played out around the bait barrel by about a dozen red squirrels. Fom about 4PM until 8PM it was total chaos with them fighting and chasing each other away from the sweet feed. The only thing that stopped them was when a pine marten came by window shopping for his next meal.

At ten minutes to eight on the evening of my second to last hunt I got to see my first bear. Judging him by the pictures we were getting off of the game cameras at each site, this was a really nice bear. He was about forty yards from me and slow strolling through the bushes as if he owned the forest. One look at the bait barrel was all he gave me as he continued to walk out of my life. I am hearing impaired so my head is always on a slow swivel because I depend on catching movement more than anything. About fifteen minutes after seeing my first bear I caught movement through the bushes to the right of my stand and this bear was on a straight course for the barrel. When it stepped into the opening, I recognized it as one of the two cubs that we had game camera pictures of. Their mom was a big lady and I had been told that the cubs were close to two years old and she would be running them off soon so she could breed again. Taking her would only speed this up by a few days. It gave me something to think about and knowing this I started looking for the rest of the family and they were right behind the first cub. The second cub came straight in and they began taking turned at the barrel. While waiting it's turn one of them decided to check out my ladder stand and came up to the second step before losing interest and walking off. Big momma stayed just inside the bushes and made half circles out in front of me keeping watch over her kids. On one of her trips she ended up completely behind and downwind of me. I figured it was all over but she came back around and never seemed to pick my scent up. She finally stepped up on two logs near the barrel but was quartering hard towards me. Two more steps and my Black Widow recurve could have seen some action with an easy fifteen-yard broadside shot. Instead she turned around and left the way she came in. She didn't know just how safe she was because I had made my mind up that as long as the cubs were with her, she was in no danger from me. It would be her decision to put the cubs out on their own, not mine. It got really interesting a few minutes later when for some reason she let out a woof. One cub streaked out of there headed for momma but the other one decided the safest thing to do was to climb a tree about eight yards from the one I was in. It took him about a split second to be up the tree and looking me eye to eye with me begging him not to tell his

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Dove?... No! ...Turkey!

By John Borgeson

Many bowhunters have knowledge or have experienced the dove hunting that is available in Argentina. However, few know that there is also turkey hunting available. Though turkey hunting may be available, it is incredibly difficult to locate a campo (farm) that will allow you to hunt their turkeys. 99.9 % of all hunting in Argentina is on private land. To say that public land hunting is non-existent is an understatement to say the least.

To locate the opportunity to hunt turkey began for me seven years previously. It was at that time when I saw my first turkey in Argentina. This happened while my family and I were driving through some public park land. After seeing the turkeys and locating the park staff, I enquired of them as to the availability of hunting turkey on public land. The response was one of surprise and disbelief because they thought I would hunt with a gun. But, when I explained to them that I would use a bow and arrow and NOT any type of firearm they were more than willing to explain to me what to do. However, the process to get the necessary paperwork was so complicated and time consuming that I chose another avenue. I began to search out and talk with the owners of campos around where I had seen the turkey.

Some landowners that I spoke with agreed to allow me to hunt turkey but at a ridiculously high cost. I even had some Argentine friends enquire for me to see if there would be a difference in cost, but they received the same information as I had about the cost. Mucho dinero! Too much money! I continued to search for a farm that would let me hunt turkey, but I always received the same answer: no turkey hunting; or yes, but exorbitant "fees". My search continued for some years and I was starting to get a bit discouraged about being able to hunt turkey but then something happened

An opportunity to hunt turkey unexpectedly came for me the first week of July of this year 2019. While driving by a farm on the way to a camping area with a friend, his son, and my daughter I saw an incredible sight. I was driving on some back-country roads and as I rounded a bend in the road, there in front of me were fifteen turkeys standing next to the road.

As I slowed down my car to get closer, my daughter says "Dad! Look at the turkeys!" She had seen turkeys before and was well acquainted with how the birds looked. We slowed down the car to almost "snail" speed but one of the Jakes noticed and gobbled and they all took flight into the woods. I stopped the car and walked to where they had entered the woods. From where I stood, I could hear and see the turkeys. I made a mental note of the location and observed that there was plenty of sign on either side of the road indicating that the turkeys crossed this section of the road frequently.

After watching the turkeys for a short time, we got back in the car and continued on to the camping area. As we approached another intersection in the road, I saw a house that I thought probably belonged to the caretaker of the property where we had seen the turkeys. It was some distance from the area we saw the turkeys but it was the only visible house for some distance. I decided to stop to see if the caretaker was at home. He was and the owner of the farm just happened to be there, too. After making the customary salutations, (and the owner introducing himself as Horatio) which is normally a hug and a kiss, (even, after living here for some years I still don't kiss the men, only the women. Neither does my Argentine father-in-law kiss any men in greeting by the way) I asked about the turkeys and if they belonged to him. He said yes the birds were his.

I talked with Horatio about the possibility to hunt the turkeys that I had seen. He was hesitant and evasive about answering me until I assured him that I would use a bow and arrow. He asked if I had the bow and arrows with me (which I did). He then expressed a sincere interest to see my bow and arrows and so I took them out to show him. As he examined them, he said "Muey Bueno Recurvado" (very nice recurve).

We chatted a little bit more and enjoyed the conversation that flowed naturally. Relating about our families, friends, and other subjects such as the current

The arrow that took the turkey.

For this hunt I used a Dale Dyke "Good Medicine" takedown recurve bow, 55lbs at 30.5 inches of draw. My arrows are Goldtip Traditional 400s with Zwickey Eskimo 125 grain points. My fletches on my arrows are fluorescent orange and yellow. No pink feathers for this bowhunter! I ranged the distance from where I shot the bird to where I hit him, and it was exactly 18 yards away.

president of ……Argentina and the U.S.A.. I felt that there was a bond growing between us and as I said my good-byes to him and his foreman, I also felt that I had a new pair of friends.

A week later I was driving to the same campground and using the same route which would take me by the turkeys. I was going to do some solo camping. Usually about once a month I travel one-three hours away from where I live to solo camp for one or two nights. I do this to refresh, study the word, and pray. I also shoot a lot of arrows in between the other activities.

As I was driving down the road that I had seen the turkeys the week before, I again saw those same fifteen turkeys. I slowed down to get a better look and once again the same big "Jake" gobbled but this time all fifteen turkeys gobbled and clucked as they headed off into the woods. I was sure that if I were given the opportunity to hunt the turkeys that I would get one.

I continued on my way and as I came near to the foreman's house, I saw that Horatios' vehicle was parked next to his foreman's vehicle. I decided to stop at the house and then I pulled into the drive to say hello. As I approached and greeted Horatio and the foreman, Horatio asked me why I was here again. I told him I often go to a campground for some time alone and to shoot some arrows. During our conversation I told him that I had again seen those same fifteen turkeys and I asked him if he would let me hunt the turkeys. He asked me if I wanted to hunt today. It took me two seconds to say "YES" and such a smile came to his face as he said, "YES" to my request to hunt the turkeys. At Horatio's request, I parked my car at his foreman's house, prepared my bow and other equipment. The hunt was on!

I walked in the direction of the location that I had seen the turkeys. As I entered the woods I was some distance down the road from the foreman's house. I stayed just far enough inside the wood line that I would not be seen from the road. As I slowly made my way through the woods, I could hear the turkeys gobbling in the distance. I was angling away from the road towards the noise of the turkeys. Not being sure of how far away from me they were, I stopped to listen and to get a better idea of the direction that the turkeys were from me.

I listened for some time, relaxing in the wooded area, concentrating and searching with my binoculars in the direction that I could hear the turkeys. I was some distance away from the turkeys to be able to see them. The farms in that area are relatively flat so even a small rise gives you an advantageous view.

The turkeys did not seem to be moving but from the sounds they were making they gave me the impression that they were more or less remaining in a patch of woods about a half mile from where I was sitting and listening.

I closed the distance between myself and the turkeys to halfway and again stopped to listen for the turkeys.

About ten yards in front of me was a small man-made ditch, aka a drainage ditch with a patch of osage trees and some brush so I chose to use it to hide myself and moved into it. I began calling to the turkeys.

Immediately I received an answer as three of the Jakes came towards me. I could see the largest one clearly at about forty yards but I did not have a clear shot at him. I kept calling and he came towards me but very hesitatingly. At about twenty yards away he stopped. I had no clear shot. A tree and some brush blocked me from shooting him. I thought to myself, just move two or three yards to the right so I can have you for dinner tonight.

He did just that. He moved just enough so that I was able to take aim. I clucked at him once more very softly and he stopped, looking for where the noise had come from. When he looked away I drew back, aimed and released my arrow only to see it pass just above him and into the dirt behind him. He didn't move.

I held my breath, not moving, watching him, waiting, and then I clucked softly once more, and he looked directly at me but did not see me. As he looked in another direction, I again drew

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Some of the bird that I cooked and ate just before I went to sleep the night of the hunt.

Sunrise the next morning after the hunt. What a fantastic Creator to give us such wonders!

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another arrow, aimed and released. This time I watched as my arrow went under him. Again, the Jake did not move.

I prayed that the Lord would give me one more shot and that my arrow would fly true. I watched him. I waited to see if he would look away from me. And he did!

I nocked an arrow, took aim, released and this time I saw my arrow fly true and into the turkey. My arrow struck the turkey center of the right side of his chest.

The arrow passed almost completely through the turkey but stopped just before the feathers on my arrow. The impact of the arrow momentarily stunned the turkey. He tried to fly but with my arrow in him he was not able to and so he tried to run. But he ran only a short distance flapping his wings

I raced to him and held him down as he flapped his wings a few more times and waited until I was sure he was dead. I picked him by his feet and looked him over. He was beautiful! He was heavy! And he was going to be dinner!

I thanked the Lord for such a fine bird. Then I began the walk back to the foreman's house with my trophy hanging over my shoulder. What a blessing this turkey was! As I walked, I reflected on how all the events leading up to this successful hunt had unfolded so quickly but smoothly. From the first moment I had seen the turkeys, to the moment when my third arrow hit the mark! Yes, I did retrieve my first two arrows that missed the bird.

As I arrived at the foreman's house, he and Horatio came to greet me and to look at my bird. Horatio asked if I had enjoyed my hunt. The giant smile on my face told him all he needed to know. I thanked him for this wonderful opportunity and put the bird in the trunk of my car. We said our goodbyes and I drove off to camp and eat some turkey.

Later that night I ate some of the turkey. He tasted unbelievably good! When I returned home a day later, I shared most of the bird with my family, and friends in my church. I made turkey Milanesa (breaded with egg and flour and then fried in a small amount of oil) and served it to my family.

End Note:

Probably what helped me to call in the turkey using only my voice as watching some videos on YouTube on how to use your voice to call in a turkey. One of the videos I watched was entitled: "Calling Turkeys With Your Voice" at a website called HuntPrimitive. I recommend if you have not seen the videos that you watch and then like me you practice, practice, and more practice until you are comfortable with your turkey calling. You can also ask your family to critique you on your turkey calling. I did that and my lovely wife and daughter helped me a lot. They teased me just as often as they could, but they also helped me to improve my turkey calling.

Sunday morning making Turkey Milenesa with my daughter.

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mean old momma about the bad man in the tree next to him. He must not have liked my looks because he hit the ground and ran to momma. This would happen twice before the evening was done. Over the next hour they would leave and come back three times. I guess this is where this rookie bear hunter is supposed to fess up and tell you that I would start shaking badly every time they left and it would take a concerted effort and some deep breathing to make it quit. Being that close to a sow and her cubs gave me a whole new perspective on the term "adrenaline rush". Walking out in the dark that night had me on high alert. One of the cubs had a large white V on its chest and the next evening it came back in to the bait alone. It was really skittish and you could tell that all was not right with his world. The other cub and the sow never showed up so I'm pretty sure she had run him off. After a few minutes he lifted his head looking in the direction he had come from and took off out of there. I swear it looked like his back legs were going past his ears he was running so hard.

I might not have come away with my first bear rug and a cooler full of meat but that didn't diminish the adventure at all. I spent seven days with some wonderful new friends and experienced hunting in one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. The boat ride across the lake at night under a full moon was worth the price of admission. God's handywork was on display everywhere I looked. I'm still confused as to why He created so many mosquitoes, black flies and gnats though! I cannot say enough good about Tom Phillips and the way he runs his business. All this plus being able to share another adventure with Bill Terry Sr. just made this more memorable. As far as I'm concerned, I got my long-awaited pay back for the one that tore my tent up. I got to sit within fifteen yards of four of them and watch them in their natural environment with nothing between me and them but a bent bow, a sharp stick and air. That is plenty payback for this seventy-year old man.

Sorry but the only bear pictures I got came off of the game camera. It always happened so fast and they were so close that I was afraid of scaring them off by taking pictures. I was hoping to have time for plenty of pictures while I was standing over a dead one admiring him.

Gray Areas *And what they mean for PBS.*

By Don Thomas

The September 2019 issue of the PBS magazine contained a thoughtful editorial by our President, Matt Schuster, in which he made a worthwhile attempt to bring clarity to some of the ethical conflicts and differences of opinion regarding bowhunting practices that PBS members debate all the time. He rightly assumed that some methods of take are just so ethically suspect that most if not all PBS members would reject them out of hand as legitimate hunting techniques. In this category, he listed crossbows, airbows, expandable broadheads, drones, hunting big game animal at night with lights, shooting from roads, and shooting swimming animals. He correctly pointed out that many of these methods are illegal in most states, but not all of them, all of the time, and that we cannot rely on state law to inform us what is ethical, as opposed to what is merely legal.

He then went on to identify what he calls gray areas, hunting methods upon which PBS has taken no official position because some members support them while others do not. These are the issues that arouse the most intense discussion whenever bowhunters gather, and as we all know those discussions can sometimes grow heated. My take has always been that there is nothing wrong with that is long as debate does not sink to the level of personal attack. Bowhunters are opinionated people by nature, and if we don't air these disagreements openly and candidly hunting will be the worse for it.

Matt was kind enough to provide eight examples of hunting methods that he considered "gray zone" issues, and this is where his editorial really became interesting for me. I've always considered myself something of a stickler regarding ethical issues, and apparently my reputation reflects that position. In this case, one might think that I would offer a simple "no" in response to most of the items on Matt's hypothetical list of gray areas. That was not the case. In fact, rather than simply stating that I never employed any of these eight hunting methods, my own response to each of Matt's examples fell into one of four categories: yes; no; used to but not anymore; or depends upon the circumstances.

Now I'll walk through them one at a time and invite readers and other PBS members to do the same. I think we may find these answers intriguing, not just for ourselves individually but for PBS as a whole. In the order that Matt raised them:

1. Baiting. This is basically a no for me, but to be truthful it comes with an asterisk. My first year in Alaska, I set out a bear bait near my rural home. The first time a bear came by, I looked over the situation and listened to a little voice telling me I didn't want to kill a big game animal this way. Subsequent discussions with hunters like Doug Borland and Jay Massey, coupled with the satisfaction I experienced stalking bears successfully, convinced me I'd done the right thing.

2. Blinds. Yes. Like most ardent waterfowl hunters, I've hunted from blinds all my life and never saw a reason why I shouldn't do the same for big game. Interestingly, duck hunters regard hunting from blinds as the most ethical form of hunting (as opposed, say, to jump shooting). I do avoid commercially manufactured blinds, and limit myself to concealment made of natural materials on the spot.

3. Tree stands. Used to but don't anymore. With the exception of one elk, all the animals I've taken from tree stands have been whitetailed deer. I initially abandoned tree stands for reasons of safety as I grew older and less agile, but I soon realized that I enjoyed hunting whitetails from the ground just as I've enjoyed hunting dozens of other species. I do not consider hunting from tree stands unethical. I'd just rather do it another way. Think of it as a matter of catching trout on dry flies rather than nymphs.

4. Food plots. No. I just don't see a reason to try to improve upon nature.

5. Decoys. Yes. Indigenous hunters have been using decoys since time immemorial. It does not convey an unfair advantage, and the sight of watching a whitetail buck marching in to attack a decoy is as exciting as hunting gets.

6. Waterholes. Depends on the circumstances. If water is being artificially manipulated in order to provide shot opportunities, I'll pass. Naturally occurring waterholes are another story.

7. Treeing Dogs. Used to, but not anymore. This is a tough one because there is so much difference between the good, the bad, and the ugly. In a worst case scenario, a rich client arrives from out of state and spends the morning drinking coffee in a café while assistant guides run the backroads looking for a track. When they find one, they check in by radio and everyone heads out. If the head guide confirms the track belongs to a mature tom, the dogs are fitted with GPS collars and kicked out of the truck. When the electronic display indicates that the dogs have treed the cat (yes, they can do that now) the guides start planning the approach by snow machine, and eventually the hunter steps off his chariot, shoots the cat, poses for "high-five" pictures, takes the skull and hide and leaves the rest, and goes home, all without any exertion or learning anything about lions or the mountains in winter. I can't justify that to anyone.

During the decades I hunted cougar, I trained my own dogs and grew quite attached to them. We never used GPS collars and followed tracks strictly on foot, relying on our own tracking skills to get us to the tree. Sometimes we had the cat within the hour, but at other times we staggered down out of the mountains by moonlight wondering how we were ever going to find the dogs. Some of those hunts were as demanding physically and mentally as anything I've ever done in the outdoors. And of course, we ate the cats we killed. The only reason I stopped was that I wound up with so many bird dogs in my kennel there wasn't any room left for hounds.

I took a lot of friends lion hunting, and they were almost all blown away by the amount of knowledge required to tree one and the exertion and outright danger a good, tough chase entailed. That, friends, was hunting.

8. Trail cameras. No. Too much technology, and I enjoy scouting too much.

I would encourage other PBS members to take this little test. If I'm sure of anything about the results, it's that there will be a wide array of answers. Bowhunters do not march in lockstep, even when they represent an ethically advanced group such as PBS. There will never be unanimous opinions on any of these issues, and that's just fine. The important thing is simply that we keep the conversations going.

As I look back on my own replies, the ones I find most interesting are not the simple yesses and nos but the rest, the ones in which I acknowledge that my own views have evolved over time or that what is acceptable to me under one set of circumstances may be unacceptable in another. This ambivalence simply confirms that ethical answers aren't static, and that we will be doing our best for bowhunting when we constantly question our own behavior in the field. Nothing furthers this goal more effectively than wise, experienced hunting partners willing to help us work through ethical dilemmas while acknowledging that they themselves don't necessarily have all the answers either.

I've always thought that this is what PBS is all about.

Big Country Bulls and the Journey of a New Hunter

By Rob Patuto

Generally in July and August when I have trouble sleeping I close my eyes and envision how my upcoming hunts will play out…..come on…. surely I'm not the only one that does this. However, I was unsure how this year would play out as my longtime hunting partner Jake was unable to make it and the country we had been hunting is not solo friendly. Why not ask someone who is twenty years younger and owns a CrossFit gym, what could go wrong? I met Kenny Markwardt about eight months ago, and having grown up in California, not in a hunting family, he was pretty green when it comes to hunting so I thought it would be fun to show him some really big country and chase some bulls. Trying to become a hunter at the age of thirty is a mountain I can't even imagine trying to climb it. Kenny however has been putting one foot in front of the other and doing well. I was eager to share in his journey and to take the opportunity to see bowhunting through fresh eyes. The stage was set.

Day one found us chasing lazy grunts in various basins until the sun depleted us of water and threatened our sanity. Finally the sun dipped low enough on the horizon to cast a long shadow into the basin below us where we spotted a bull up and about. Determining he had willingness to engage us we tore down the rocky slope maneuvering to get the correct wind direction. We slowly made our way through the sparse timber to a small ridge, not wanting to push him but to get in tight enough to demand action from him. Spotting the pocket of cover I assumed he was in I moved forward as Kenny set up to call. For the next forty minutes while Kenny traded insults and threats with a good six point bull I pushed my luck creeping ever closer until I was out of cover. Seemingly unwilling to commit or not feeling threatened enough to leave his cows the bull continued to defile a young fir tree until he finally heard what he needed to and left the unfortunate tree behind as he moved towards the caller. Not taking the path below me like I had assumed he would but over the top. This route would take him past me at an unshootable distance but was headed in Kenny's direction. For some unknown reason he turned, now head on to me, as he closed the distance. At twenty-eight yards he locked up facing me and broadside to Kenny. Drawing his bow on the first elk he ever had in bow range proved to be a bit much as his arrow whistled harmlessly below the bull's vitals, and after a bit more wrangling with this bull we called it quits and climbed the steep basin walls back towards the truck. As we labored in the fading light we counted and recounted the events. Listening to Kenny reflect on his first real encounter, the mix of emotions he experienced that we all know so well and expressing a grateful heart for the second best outcome possible.

A couple slow days ensued tempering our speedy start. We logged miles, shot grouse and discussed the challenges of becoming a hunter as an adult. Kenny is tied in with some good local bowhunters who are helping him learn the ropes but all of which shoot compounds. It is my belief that while it may be a natural progression from modern to traditional equipment it may not be a progression everyone moves towards and I am good with that. (In the spirit of full disclosure it is an easier pill to swallow in a state like Idaho where the game department has done a decent job keeping a lid on technology) Under the watchful eye of Kenny I knocked down the first grouse at twenty-three yards… that was a pressure shot. I felt at some level I was representing traditional bowhunters to a crowd of compound guys that would surely be filled in at a later date. That afternoon during a break, we discussed the pros and cons to traditional equipment and he stated the rhetorical question, "Why would I make it harder on myself?" It was a flippant statement, but drove to the heart of the matter as it presents itself today. Why would one? I loved his question and I did not even begin to entertain an answer as that is best answered by one's self.

Friday morning broke gray as the cold steady rain pounded the canvas tent. With the confidence that it would break soon we slipped

down a small finger ridge adjoined by canyons more representative of a sci-fi movie than central Idaho as the fog ebbed and flowed below us. The kind of place that makes you thankful you passed on the fourth hotdog or that third piece of cake last summer. The bugle across this vast expanse led me to believe it was going to be a long day. The plan is always to get in tight and after a cold, wet and brushy creek crossing we clawed our way upward trying to gain elevation on the opposing side. Careful glassing revealed a dozen cows holding a steady contour line as they made their way to, what I assumed, would be their bedding area for the day. The herd bull was about 100 yards to the rear, obviously feeling the effects of the season as he let out the occasional bugle and would tear up unsuspecting trees. Discussing the situation with Kenny we knew we would need to beat them, or at least meet them, at the head of the drainage which formed a significant bowl. The skies began to clear, and the thermals were becoming predictable giving me the confidence we had the right approach. The finger ridge we were now on would meet theirs at the outlet of the bowl, if they beat us there all bets were off. The openness of the country coupled with the loose rock and burned timber the bull could hear us walking the entire time. Bugling often he no doubt thought us to be a competitor who was dogging him and his cows. They held their elevation and our paths now came together. Filtering through the trees I could see the cows watering and milling about, the thermals had indeed steadied and were rising as the air warmed. Still not feeling we had gotten close enough to set up I determined we needed to get higher now and drop into the bowl so as to be in front of them. Ascending a scree slope I paused on a rock outcrop above the bench we had just left. We stopped just in time to hear the herd bull sound off below us…right below us…right from where we had just been. Checkmate. I now turned to Kenny and exclaimed, "We got him." I knew he had strayed far enough from his cows and close enough to us, to be vulnerable, most likely thinking a challenger had followed him for the last hour and now moved in to run him off. Down the scree slope we slid out of sight, but not earshot, of the bull. Landing on a line ninety degrees from upwind with the bull we moved forward. Setting Kenny up in some rocks I told him to be aggressive as I gained a slight rise in the terrain fifteen yards ahead and sixty yards from the bull who was now in plain sight. At Kenny's first bugle the bull turned back to his cows, either to check on them or possibly go back to them, I motioned for Kenny to pick up the tempo. The next time he hit the grunt tube was with aggression and the bull answered as he turned and began a confident stride to meet his challenger. Having set up for a shot I neglected to figure in a large down tree which would force him to my left so as he crossed broadside at seven yards I was attempting a dramatic shift to get in position for the shot. Although I was now in plain sight he did not pick up my movement with his peripheral vision as he locked up at the sight of Kenny. Rushing the shot the arrow broke through his shoulder blade and I assumed only got one lung. Not what I had wanted and a potential disaster in this country. Knowing the need for a follow-up shot I calmly looked down at my quiver and nocked a second arrow. Lifting my bow and regaining my focus I cow called well enough for him to hit the skids. Quartering hard, too hard for a first shot and at thirty-six yards a bit out of my wheel house the second arrow found its mark. With the arrow buried to the fletch behind the last rib he lurched forward going sixty yards back towards his cows. There he faltered, my heart raced as I knew the arrow was good but to lay down that quick resembled a paunch hit. I needed him anchored as this country is too vast and too steep to want to pack a mature bull very far. The white fletch of the second arrow was in plain view with my binoculars as I heard him labor for breath. As his cows found some errant scent swirling in the basin they began to break out, this would be the time a paunch hit bull would gather his feet and run. Instead his last breath was used to let out a bugle and with that he rolled to his side as he expired.

A sense of reverence and relief came over me as the realization that I had averted a long blood trail in difficult country. Making that crucial second shot, and the fact that I was able to enjoy it with my buddy Kenny only heightened the excitement as we walked up on a great bull. Although I would have much rather made the first shot as I should have and not needed to make the follow up shot I was glad Kenny got to see you can still get rattled after all these years and get it done. While it may not make his journey any easier he may take solace in the fact that it never gets easy but we do all we can to make it right.

An Ageless Wonder, or How Persistence Perseveres

By Tom Vanasche

I have known Dennis Dunn since 1985 when I first met him at a Pope and Young celebration. I did not spend any hunting time with him, however, until we rode together in my Suburban to a British Columbia bison hunt in December of 2007. When it gets to 36 degrees below zero, you get to know your campmates fairly well. Neither of us secured a bison on that trip, but we were awfully glad when we left that misery behind. It was hard to imagine, a century earlier, that a native wearing wolf and buffalo skins and toting a self-bow would be hunting for his survival in those same conditions.

It is also hard to imagine that a cum laude graduate of Harvard in romance languages would become such a relentless bowhunter. He had no adult male mentors, but his mother taught him to shoot the bow and arrow at age six, as she had been an archer in college. It fascinated him to no end, as it has the rest of us. He tuned his skills on the local Seattle squirrels and stumps, and then, when he was 24, he harvested a mule deer doe in the Nason Creek area of Washington, — that same area where Glenn St. Charles hunted repeatedly. This thrilled Dennis to no end, and the hook was set. Though taking several more does, he did not tag his first buck until seven years later at the age of thirty-one.

Many years later a trad friend and PBS member, Rick Duggan, suggested that he take on an ultimate challenge and try to get the North American 29 with his bow. He had not thought of it before, but realized he was over halfway there, and it became a new adventure goal. He had taken animals with longbow, recurve and compound, though he had never used sights, releases or other aids on his bows. Another hook had been set. In the interim, in 1988 — for employment — he had moved to British Columbia and now realized he could hunt Stone sheep for a $50 resident's tag. That seemed to be a good starting point! Hard to believe that bargain now! He eventually became the first man to accomplish the 29 feat with a "bare" bow, though Fred Eichler and Rick Duggan later did it with their recurves, and Nathan Andersohn recently did it with his longbow. Though it only took Dennis forty years from that first Mule deer, he was just a young pup of sixty-four at that time, and more challenges were on the horizon.

When I asked about which hunt was most satisfying, he said it was close, but probably the Stone sheep adventure. He did an amazing, arduous, solo-backpack-trip for two weeks to take his ram unassisted. Certainly, that had to be a top choice. The price was right also!

Dennis had started out hunting traditional for many years but took up a compound when they came into fashion [though never using sights or a release] — as did many of us. Now it was time to return to his roots. He elected to have a custom recurve made by Steve Gorr in his home state of Washington. It would be a 60-lb draw weight at his 31-inch draw. This was to be his principal bow in his 7th and 8th decade. The compound was put away, for good, 13 years ago.

Several of his animal species were short of the record book, and, as a further goal in his bowhunting life, he made it a quest to go after those exclusively with his new recurve and his Suzanne St. Charles wooden arrows. Dennis was always looking for the challenge; as with the greater handicap, comes a greater personal victory. He had stated that it's "all about a competition with yourself."

Whitetail deer

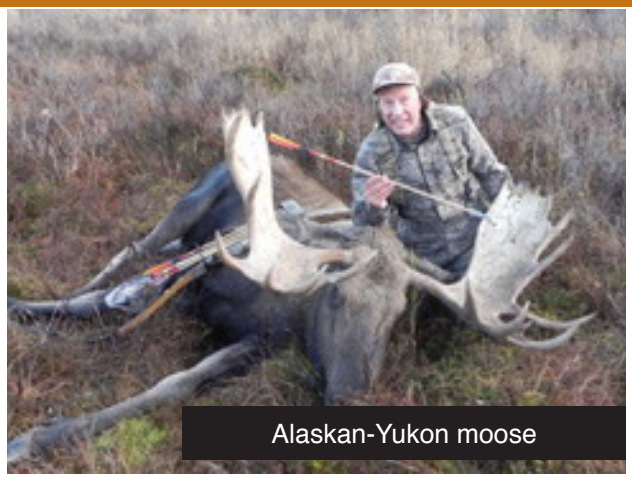
By shooting traditional, he felt a greater joy in launching arrows and "watching the flight." With a compound, many shooters need lighted nocks, as they cannot actually see their arrows after releasing. On a later bison hunt of mine, my guide was thrilled, as he watched the death-arrow from my longbow take down the massive animal. He stated I was the first traditional hunter he had had, and he could never see the other hunters' arrows in flight. For Dennis, it became also a matter of hunting skill versus marksmanship. Are you more proud of a forty-five yard shot or an eighty yard shot, while stalking an animal? Rifle hunters tend to take pride in their 600-800 yard shots, yet — while I find it interesting marksmanship — it is not an indication of their hunting prowess. That "getting-close" aura and thrill generally require greater hunting skills, and a far greater reward is manifested.

This last fall I had three different bull elk in the Roosevelt jungle within twenty yards screaming at me, two of which I never saw. No shots were fired due to the vegetation, but I consider it one of my best elk hunts, as the adrenaline rush was amazing at such close quarters. I'm not sure you get that at 800 yards. Dennis feels the same way — and hence our old-school equipment.

So how does he keep going now, in his 80th year? His mother, who was probably his greatest fan, lived to 102, so there are some good genes involved. Genetics alone, however, won't keep you in shape. I have seen many hunters, as they've gotten older, put on a lot of weight, find the sofa

Dennis working out in his 80th year

200 lb. boar


Alaskan-Yukon moose

140 lb. pack on Stone sheep hunt

too comfortable, and the hunting desire dwindles. My mentor and PBS sponsor, Vern Struble, hunted vigorously into his late eighties. At the age of eighty-five he took two trophies, a blacktail buck in Oregon and a caribou in Alaska. What did Vern do to keep it all going? He went to the gym regularly, ate and drank reasonably, and most of all had a great positive attitude.

Dennis also tells me he is a frequent gym-visitor as well, doing a variety of exercises. He focuses also on a balance program, that seems to have really helped his coordination in the field in his older years. A key thing, as well, is that every other day, he does the "Stairmaster" or "strider" for forty-five to sixty minutes. There is no easy way to maintain our health, and — like everything else — it takes hard work and a positive attitude. Dennis, of course, manifests these traits abundantly. Attitude and mindset are probably the two greatest determinators of our future, as the diet and exercise plans will be a byproduct of them.

So what about the rest of us? We may not all be blessed with natural good health, but a lot of it is on our shoulders. As my friend, Aristotle said, "Moderation in all things — except bowhunting". It is up to each individual to decide their own eating, drinking, and exercise habits. We can be very active and chasing our hunting dreams in our later years like the above-mentioned gentlemen — or couch potatoes reading about their adventures. I prefer the former.

Where is Dennis now in his final quest? The Alaskan caribou and the bison are the last two remaining animals to "upgrade" on his docket. He and I have tried a few trips to Alaska for the caribou already, but were in the wrong place at the wrong time, as is common these days. A good camping time was had, and I even managed to tag an Alaskan ground squirrel. Dennis has frequently called himself the "luckiest man" in the world because of how his life has been blessed — and mostly because of his ever-patient wife, Karen. He has hunts planned in 2019 for both these species, and, with just a little more luck, he should complete his final quest. I told him, if Vern could do it at 85 years of age, he has several years of opportunity remaining. I think he will accomplish it primarily because of his positive attitude and perseverance.

Dennis has written an award-winning book called "BAREBOW!" — about his life and hunts. It also gives a lot of biological and geographical information on all twenty-nine species of big game in North America. I have found the Kindle version especially handy, since I can revisit stories and information there on my smartphone or Kindle in a tree stand, or on my iPad in an airplane. He has graciously donated more than a hundred copies to PBS for fundraising purposes.

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Making Up Lost Time

By William Graves

It had been awhile since I have seen my two friends from Alaska, so I thought that maybe a reunion of sorts was in order.

"I can't wait to get down to Texas," stated my friend Jeff Cooper, as I spoke with him on the phone. Jeff and our mutual friend Fred Hill, also from Fairbanks, were making their last-minute preparations in anticipation of their trip to Texas, where they were going to join me for three weeks to chase hogs, tell stories and catch up on old times.

Jeff and I had been talking of such a get together ever since our last hog hunt took place in Texas back in 1999 while we were both still in the Army. Jeff, Fred, and I met while I was stationed at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. All of us had different trades. I was an infantryman, Jeff a helicopter test pilot, and Fred a civilian pest control specialist employed by the Army. Yet, one common factor brought us together as friends: the love of hunting and traditional archery.

The time between our talks and the hunt seemed to fly by and before we knew it the time was upon us. After picking up Fred and Jeff from the DFW airport we began the two hour drive north to my house and used that time to catch up and to talk about the upcoming hunt.

According to The Mammals of Texas online edition, feral pigs in Texas are descendants of European stock introduced for the purpose of sport hunting as well as domestic stock that had either been abandoned or escaped captivity and established feral populations.

With the ability to generally breed year-round coupled with a gestation period of 115 days. The feral pig in Texas has established a sizable free-ranging population, which stretches from parts of the Rio Grande to the Red River, as well as the hardwood bottoms of East Texas.

Finally, after fighting traffic we arrived in a much better setting in my rural home in Fannin County, Texas and began our preparation for the following morning's hunt. We stayed up much too late for three aging fellows, but after telling stories and getting our gear in order we finally said our good nights.

The alarm was only a formality, as we were already awake when it sounded. We ate a quick breakfast of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, packed our day packs with snacks and water, grabbed our bows and headed to the woods of Bois D' Arc creek.

After a check of the wind direction, I planned to head to the northeast corner of our property to ease along the creek to see if we could catch some hogs bedded. We did see a few hogs that were on the move but could not close the distance.

Jeff and I decided that we would try and push some hogs past Fred. His knee was giving him some problems, so Jeff and I headed into an area that had been clear cut several years back and separated about seventy-five yards apart and slowly made our way through. As I was keeping check on Jeff, I stopped and looked to my left and saw movement, I saw that it was a hog and I tried to get Jeff's attention so he could get a chance at the pig. However, the wind was blowing steadily and Jeff never heard or saw me.

The hog was about seventy-five yards from me when I first saw her. I slowly made my way towards her, cutting the distance to about twenty yards when she turned and faced me and started to feed in my direction. I stood there for what seemed an eternity while trying to find an opening in the tangle of brush and saplings. Just when I thought my pursuit was futile, she turned away allowing me to move on her once again.

At ten yards, I was practically in her lap, yet I still had no shot. I patiently waited for her to feed to a small opening about the size of a basketball. As if on cue, she stepped into the opening. I crouched, picked a spot and took my shot. The arrow flew true and I was elated to have the first hog on the ground of the hunt.

The next morning's hunt was delayed a bit to take care of my ailing daughter. A quick trip to the doctor's office, a diagnosis of streptococcus, a trip to the pharmacy and then back home took most of the morning.

After arriving home I sent my sick daughter off to her room to rest and rousted up Fred and Jeff to head out on an afternoon hunt.

"I have a good feeling about today," I told Jeff and Fred as we placed our packs on our backs and then headed off into the woods.

A cold front rolled through this area of

North Texas, dropped the temperature about thirty degrees, and brought some much-needed rain. With a stiff, north breeze in our face, we decided to hunt an area of our place that we have not ventured into. Right from the start we found fresh hog sign.

I was just about to turn to Fred and Jeff and tell them that we are going to see some hogs soon, when in an excited voice, Fred jutted his finger outwards and whispered "HOGS!"

Since Jeff was going to take the hog, we discussed his options and decided to head right up the middle of this group, which contained about twenty mature hogs and countless piglets. As Jeff was closing the distance, I was trailing behind him helping keep tabs on all the hogs around us.

"Make it to that cluster of trees and you will be good," I whispered. Then a hog that had been feeding away from us turned and headed off to our left. She was intent on ripping up the forest floor searching for whatever delicious grub she could find. This allowed Jeff to shave off a few more yards and put him even closer to what was soon to be his first hog.

I excitedly watched as the hog turned and began to walk right at Jeff and as if it had been planned, she turned broadside at ten yards. I glanced over at Jeff and watched as he put tension on his bow string. I then quickly returned my attention to the hog.

Off to my right, I heard the muffled twang of the bowstring and watched as Jeff's arrow sunk up to the yellow banana fletch. The hog lunged forward as she reacted to the shot, stood there for a moment, then ran thirty yards and fell over.

The following day a massive low-pressure system settled over Texas. We awoke the next morning to the sound of torrential rain fall, loud thunder. We decided that it might be best to sit it out this morning rather than take a chance and get struck by lightning.

A trip to the vet, some shopping, and lending a helping hand by doing some plumbing work for my parents was the order of the day for Fred and I. Meanwhile Jeff was hitting the books doing some mandatory schoolwork. All morning we watched the skies and wondered if the rain was ever going to let up.

I walked into my office and noticed Jeff with his hands on his head looking stressed. "Jeff, want to take a break?" Knowing what was on my mind, he eagerly replied, "Let's go."

Despite the rain, we packed our gear and headed to the woods for what was no doubt going to be a wet and soggy evening.

With the truck locked in four low, we slid our way down the easement towards the flooded creek bottoms. We had talked about this evening's hunt and came to a consensus that with all the rain and the fact that Bois D' Arc Creek was out of its bank; the hogs would be taking to higher grounds.

The wind was coming from the east while a light, but steady rain was falling from the gray skies. We mapped out the route we would use for still-hunting through the high grass while watching the tree line and the side of the hills. We had just turned to the north when suddenly, the wind switched from the east to the west, and the clouds opened with a deluge of rain. Just then on the side of the hill, I spotted a black object that seemed out of place in the yellow grass. I grabbed my binoculars to confirm what I had already suspected: more hogs.

We made a quick plan and then began our slow, methodical stalk toward the four hogs that were fully engrossed in their feeding activities. With Jeff to my right and Fred to my left, we made our way towards the group of feeding hogs using the wind and driving rain to cover any noise we may had made, we closed the

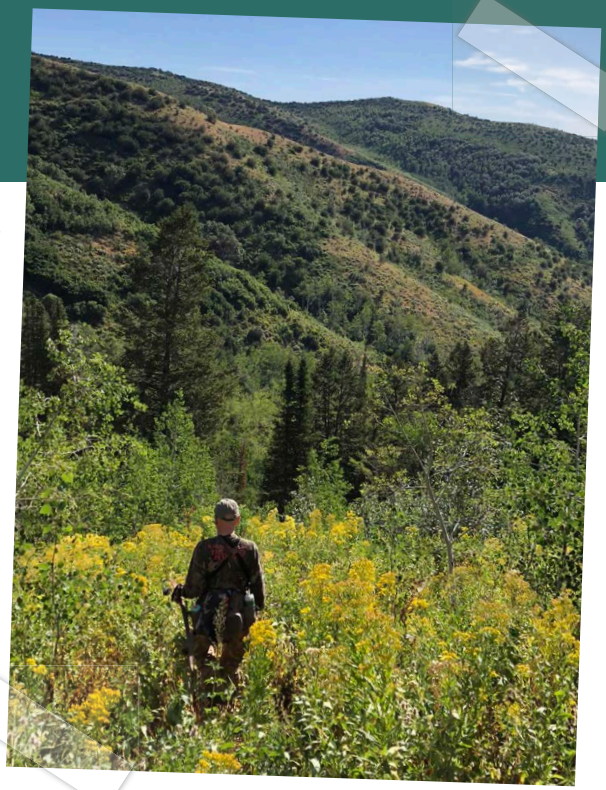
distance to about ten yards. I nocked an arrow and picked my way through some briars on my hands and knees in order to put myself in position for a clear shot. Two of the hogs were directly in front of me, and the others were off to my left towards Fred. From my peripheral, I caught movement coming from the left. I slowly turned towards Jeff and gave him a big grin, for I knew that all the cards were falling in place.

The hog I was focused on was less than ten yards away when she came to a halt, offering me a broadside shot. I rose up from my crouching position and while coming to full draw, picked a spot and released the arrow in one fluid motion. The 750-grain arrow hit the mark a bit back from what was intended and passed completely through her. She had no idea that she had been hit and stepped forward closer to the other hogs that were still feeding. Suddenly one of the larger hogs saw me and started to head right at me, glaring and grunting menacingly as it came to a stop a mere three yards from me.

I watched as this 200 plus pound

~ continued on page 32

2018 Membership Drive Utah Elk Hunt



By Tim Denial

Matt Schuster put together this hunt for the membership drive and what a great job he did.

Roger (Zip) Urmann was the initial winner of this hunt and he had invited his brother Royd to go along with him, at his own expense. The PBS would substitute a given amount of Roger's airfare for gas money since he and Royd would drive to Utah, meeting up with the rest of the gang at the Courtney Ricken's family ranch.

Unfortunately, the Wednesday before he was to leave he had messaged Matt (while Matt was standing in my kitchen preparing to walk out the door to drive to ETAR to set up the PBS booth) that he would be unable to go due to health reasons. I made a quick call back to him now trying to figure out how to replace him at the last minute, he threw out the idea of me going in his stead since I was the one who had signed him up. Matt, making an executive decision, agreed. I turn to my wife, Cindy, who has a look of "what's going on?!", and say "I'm off to Utah next week!"

Now we all know that elk hunting can be an exhausting endeavor, and I would not have accepted due to the fact I was not in elk hunting shape, and Matt assured me that this was not your standard cross country up and down hunt. It would be over water holes at this ranch.

Earlier I had contacted Council that I would not be able to set up the booth at ETAR, for my grandchildren would be at our house for three days and they live five hundred miles away. Grandchildren trump all. So a trip to pick them up drive home spend time with them doing everything shooting, fishing, swimming, rodeo, water park, baking, more shooting, more swimming, left little time to get gear prepared for this hunt, yet it all came together in one day.

I had arrived in Salt Lake and the reception that greeted me was nothing short of amazing. As I was coming down the escalator, people were cheering waving welcome signs and I thought WOW, Matt really knows how to welcome someone. Then I noticed the young man behind me was returning home from his two year LDS mission trip. Oh well.

Tom Vanasche was nice enough to go out of his way and be our Uber driver. He met Matt, Matt's nephew Cameron, and myself at the airport. This was a college graduation gift to Cameron from Uncle Matt. Cameron is a very nice young man, and twenty-two years old and in great shape. I think Uncle Matt had an ulterior motive for bringing him along. Can you say packing out an elk?

After we were loaded into Tom's rig we grabbed a bite to eat. After we went grocery shopping and for the life of me I do not know how we managed to get everything in. I think if we had bought a box of Junior Mints, we would have been overloaded. It goes without saying you always eat good on a PBS hunt.

We met up with Courtney at his house and got licenses and such, then followed his son Canon to the family ranch and cabin. He then showed us numerous water holes to hunt.

The first morning Tom and Cameron headed in one direction and Matt in another and myself off to Matt's favorite water hole. I missed the road that Matt tells me to walk up to his favorite spot. Now in my defense, the road was only about thirty feet wide and about thirty yards from where I parked Tom's rig. Sometimes I have trouble with directions and fences but that is another story.

In my favor I ended up in some good elk sign a mile or so up this canyon. I encountered some cows rather abruptly and had no shot. I hurried around some brush to head them off at the pass, as you would say. I got to the junction of Tim and elk only to find an elk looking right at me and the game was up as they busted out of there. I am the only one that had any real excitement that day.

On day two Tom and I headed out together with me going to the pond I missed the day before and Tom putting some miles on circling the canyon and meeting up with me later in the day. I saw a few moose come into the pond. Matt and Cameron had no luck on their excursion. That afternoon Canon showed us a few more water holes, and that evening produced no action.

Day three found Tom, Matt, and I heading out but Cameron sleeping in for he was playing with mice for half the night. Tom and Matt ventured out together and ran into some elk but were never able to catch up to them or entice them into comfortable shooting range. I saw nothing except on the walk out I encountered two nice bull moose. That evening I sat the honey hole pond and had a cow and calf pick me out at about a hundred yards. Cameron and Matt had no luck and Tom saw some cows but far off.

On day four, I was up early with nature's call and outside I saw four shooting stars. We had somewhat abandoned sitting the water holes because Utah was unseasonably green this year and the elk were not hitting the water holes. Tom struck out on his own and Matt and Cameron teamed up together with me going to the spot I saw the elk earlier. Tom found himself chasing some elk with no shots. Then Matt and Cameron bumped about one hundred elk past Tom. He had a lot of "almost" opportunities, but no shots were taken.

I found the perfect hide with good cover, I could stand, sit or lay down all without being detected. The wind was perfect and I had been in my hide for about three hours. I have two perfect shooting lanes cut out. About 10:30 I heard them coming and I was ready with me lined up with my two perfect shooting lanes.

Elk were coming down a hill and they all blew right past my two perfect shooting lanes. I now had eight cows drinking out of two very, very small pools of water at fifteen yards and no shot. Suddenly, a cow came toward me looking for another pool and she was standing broadside at seven yards and I found an opening about the size of a softball in the brush close to me. The arrow was loose and a good shot it was. (What was that saying of Mr. Browning's? "Give me three shots inside of ten yards and I can kill anything in North America"). I rapidly started cow calling and after a short run of fifty yards the bunch settled down and started to walk off except for the cow I shot. She had tumbled down a hill out of sight. I believed she was dead but I waited about a half an hour to be sure.

I was elated! This was my tenth year of elk hunting and this was my first elk. The first nine hunts all resulted in tag soup served with entrees of close encounters and great memories.

Now this is where the adventure went downhill fast. Please remember (Knowledge Through Experience). Looking back I have second guessed my decisions over and over.

I found the downed elk. Thanks for this wonderful creature and the opportunity to pursue them. By now the temperature had risen to the mid-nineties, and there was no cell service. Should I go and get help or should I do this myself? It never dawned on me that once I got the one side of the hide off the amount of flies that would show up, and if there was one there were thousands along with hundreds of bees. Shortly into this process I knew I was in trouble. Now I have helped bone and pack elk in the past, so I had a clue. But that was in temps forty to sixty degrees cooler than where I was at. I found myself quickly running out of gas and water. In the small creek that I was at I was able to pull rocks out to make a place to cool my bags of meat. Though because of the state I found myself in I did a poor job of boning this animal out and for that I am sorry to say meat was wasted. I could go on bashing myself here but you get the picture. I got back straps, front shoulders and hind quarters. By then I was running on empty while packing the first load out leaving the rest bagged up in the small pools and covered with grass.

I returned to camp, pretty well spent and relayed my story. High fives were given all around and REALLY TRUE HAPPINESS from good friends on my success is a great feeling to experience. That's the PBS.

Now Cameron was chomping at the bit to help me with the second load and what a great help he was. Youth, what a wonderful thing! Cameron also gave up an evening's hunt so as to help me get my elk to town to the butcher. This young man is our future in the PBS.

The last day I stayed in camp to clean up. Cameron went to the honey hole pond, and Matt and Tom tag teamed together where Matt had a line on some elk not far off the road. They got into some elk with Tom doing some calling and if not for an unseen branch elk number two would be down from one of Matt's arrows. Cameron came back without seeing anything.

This was a great trip, albeit at the expense of Roger's misfortune. I got to spend time sharing a camp with friends I hope to share a camp with again someday.

Thank you, PBS for this hunt!

Close Encounters

By E. Donnall Thomas Jr.

A tom turkey responds to a hunter's calling in one of two basic ways. The first option comes as a flat-out, aggressive charge accompanied by furious gobbling and can leave the hunter face to face with one of the most challenging quarries in the woods in a matter of minutes. A skilled and fortunate hunter may witness this phenomenon once or twice over the course of a long spring season. Or not.

The second, and far more common, kind of response is a long, laborious approach conducted as if the bird were picking its way through a minefield. The tom may remain nearly silent throughout, leaving the caller attached to the hunt by nothing but a thin tether of hope. Even when the tom answers his patient clucks and yelps, the hunter may listen in despair as a flock of real hens lures the gobbler away and out of his life before he ever sees the bird. These are the times that try men's souls. They also define spring turkey hunting.

This morning, I hiked for an hour in the dark up to a mountain meadow that consistently holds turkeys by mid-April. My goal was to locate a gobbler while he was still in his roost tree, which is better done an hour too early than a minute too late. The first booming gobble of the season rolled downhill from the rimrocks above the basin just as color began to suffuse the landscape. I offered one soft tree yelp in reply just to let the tom know he had potentially friendly company. Felled by wind during a recent winter storm, a fallen pine offered ideal natural cover. Since the tom's position sounded several hundred yards away through scattered timber, I could await developments without the discomfort of remaining absolutely motionless.

The sound of heavy wings straining against air followed the bird's second gobble just as muted shafts of sunlight began to spread across the meadow. With the bird out of the roost tree and on the ground, I yelped. He answered once and then shut up. The gobbler was not going to charge me. I settled in to wait, already anticipating a long, contemplative morning of the kind Thoreau might have enjoyed at Walden Pond.

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After years spent hunting turkeys in the most difficult way possible—with traditional archery tackle and usually without the aid of a blind—several elements of the experience remain hard to explain. The first is the realization that enthusiasm for hunting wild turkeys has remarkably little to do with killing wild turkeys.

This is not to say that I don't relish the satisfaction of walking up to a freshly killed gobbler, stroking its plumage, and inhaling the rich aroma of wild turkey. I haven't gone all warm and fuzzy and Save the Whales. I enjoy facing challenges in the outdoors and killing a mature gobbler is certainly that, especially when hunting with a longbow, an exercise in voluntary restraint that has now consumed me for several decades. Nonetheless, I do kill a turkey almost every year, a success rate that owes less to skill on my part than to residence in a rural area with lots of turkeys and not many turkey hunters. Somehow, the seasons I end up eating tag soup prove almost as enjoyable as those in which I bring home a bird. Almost.

Geography and the calendar are largely responsible. T. S. Elliot famously begins "The Wasteland" by declaring April to be the cruelest month. He obviously never spent a winter in Montana, where desperation to roam the outdoors again feels palpable by the end of March. Hiking the woods during the month-long turkey season allows the hunter to appreciate spring's arrival day by day. At first, I may be post-holing my way through old corn snow, but by the time it all ends mid-May the landscape will be lush, green, and welcoming. The lure of gobbling turkeys provides an ideal excuse to enjoy this transition of the seasons.

The process of spring turkey hunting can be just as rewarding as the ambience. Nothing is more central to that process than calling a wary gobbler into close range. While I've called in game ranging in size from mallards to moose, none of those experiences proved more exciting than the call-and-response dialogs established with gobbling turkeys. The importance of calling can be appreciated by contrasting spring turkey hunting, in which calling is everything, to hunting turkeys in the fall, when it matters less. I have taken turkeys during the fall and felt proud of every one of them, but few of those experiences generated the shock and awe of a spring turkey hunt. I'm not above taking a fall bird as a target of opportunity but doing so usually feels like ground-sluicing an oversized grouse. Since wild turkeys are so wary they're always a challenge, and fall birds are delicious on the table. However, killing one then isn't really turkey hunting.

The second great mystery of turkey hunting reflects the question of how any creature with a brain the size of a cocktail onion can be so incredibly cagey. While a mature gobbler's wariness has been legendary for as long as people have hunted them, I think this trait has little to do with "intelligence" by any generally accepted definition of the term. Two factors alone—the birds' suspicion and keen eyesight—explain most of the difficulty hunters face closing ranks with a wild turkey. Natural selection by centuries of exposure to predators ranging from coyotes and bobcats to human hunters tricked out in the latest camouflage have made turkeys what they are today. On isolated island ecosystems where wild turkeys have been introduced to habitat historically free of predators, they're dumb as barnyard chickens, which is why friends in New Zealand and elsewhere around the Pacific can't understand our passion for hunting them.

In my own case, part of that passion arises from the most basic motivation for hunting anything: delight in eating what you shoot. Regrettably, not everyone shares that opinion of wild turkey on the table, as is the case with a number of other delicious game species ranging from bears to geese. These biases usually result from an unfortunate encounter with a badly over-cooked specimen. Cooking a wild bird the same way one would prepare a domestic turkey from the grocery store usually leads to culinary disaster. Since this isn't a cooking column, I'm not going to hold forth on the subject other than to state that a wild turkey dinner should be delightful, especially when it includes fresh morel mushrooms gathered during the course of the hunt.

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Whatever one's opinion about the wild turkey as table fare, it is hard to name a gamebird that has enjoyed a more prominent place in American lore, even though the relationship between lore and fact is sometimes tenuous.

Many Americans seldom think about turkeys except during Thanksgiving week, although there is limited evidence that the legendary event at Plymouth Colony in November, 1621 actually involved eating turkey (or that the colonists called the event Thanksgiving, or that it occurred in November). Only two written accounts survive, of which

Edward Winslow's reports that "Our harvest being gotten in, our Governor sent four men out fowling…" However, they could have been "fowling" for grouse, ducks, or geese as well as turkeys.

The association of the autumn event with turkey dinner arose through the efforts of a mid-19th century magazine editor named Sarah Hale, who began a concerted effort to have the event turned into a national holiday. (She finally succeeded during Lincoln's administration.) Hale took her cue from another colonist's records, in which William Bradford wrote, with no specific reference to the Thanksgiving feast: "And besides waterfowl there was a great store of wild turkeys, of which we took many…" Growing up, I never fretted much about Thanksgiving's historical accuracy. The tradition provided a school holiday in the middle of hunting season. Who could ask for anything more?

The popular story about Benjamin Franklin proposing that the wild turkey rather than the bald eagle become our national bird is legend as well. Granted, Franklin did admire the turkey more as expressed in a letter to his daughter, in which he described the bald eagle as a "Bird of low moral Character" and the turkey as "…a much more respectable bird and withal a true original Native of America." That, however, is as far as Franklin ever took the matter.

Historical deconstruction notwithstanding, some facts remain indisputable. The turkey is one of only two native New World birds to be successfully domesticated. (The other is the Muscovy duck.) It is the world's largest gallinaceous gamebird. The American wild turkey's population recovery from near extirpation is one of the greatest wildlife success stories of our time. That's enough hard fact for me.

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Hours have passed pleasantly since first auditory contact with the gobbler, despite the absence of turkeys from the meadow. Other avian species are streaming by on their annual northbound migration—geese and cranes at altitude, warblers and waxwings at eye level. Somewhere in the woods behind me, a ruffed grouse has started to drum. Fresh pasque flowers dot the meadow in front of my makeshift blind, lavender pixels that seem to be erupting right before my eyes. For years I've thought of them as "turkey flowers" because their appearance seems to coincide with the elevation level the turkeys occupy as they follow the receding snowline up the mountainsides every spring. Right now, it would be nice to translate this observation into the sight of an inbound tom.

Over the course of the morning I have heard three gobbles since the tom hit the ground, one spontaneous and two in response to my calls. While I have no reason to believe he has left the basin, the sun has climbed above the tops of the ponderosas since I last heard from him. The time has come to shake the dice.

Turkey calls come in many forms—box calls, slates, wing-bones—but I prefer a mouth diaphragm because it leaves both hands free for my bow. Overly loud and frequent calling is usually unwise but having reached the point of nothing-to-lose, I cut loose with a series of excited yelps and clucks followed by a cackle. The gobbler answers immediately from the woods along the far side of the meadow. Round Two has finally begun.

To borrow a metaphor from Steven Spielberg's 1977 sci-fi cinema classic, hearing a gobbler in the woods represents a close encounter of the first kind. Repeated answers from an approaching bird represent the second, but it's the third—indisputable visual contact—that changes the whole context of the hunt. As gobbles from the newly aroused tom echo back from the rimrock at progressively shorter intervals, I train my eyes against the far edge of the trees and wait. The sound of a bugling bull elk could not demand my attention more.

Although Eastern wild turkeys have been introduced at various sites around Montana, almost all the birds I have killed here were Merriam's. Named for the noted biologist C. Hart Merriam, these western turkeys are regarded by some as the easiest of our five wild turkey subspecies to hunt. If true at all—and I remain unconvinced—their alleged naivety likely has less to do with lack of wariness than with a limited turkey hunting tradition in their native range.

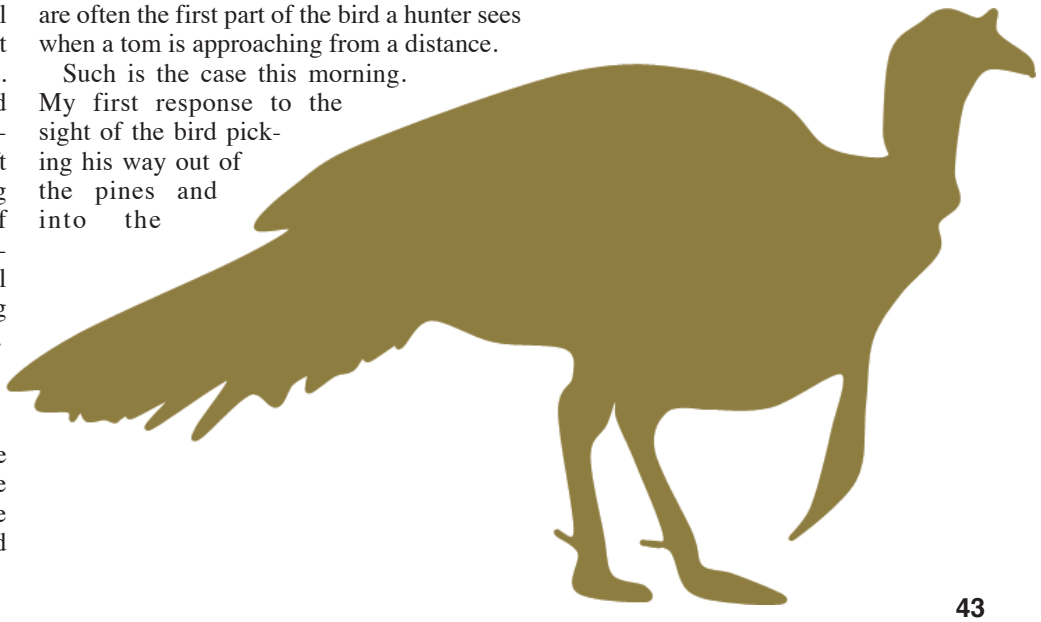
However, many also consider the Merriam's our most beautiful wild turkey. I agree, and I've spent time with them all—Osceola, Rio Grande, and Gould's in addition to Eastern and Merriam's. It's the pale tips of both the outer and inner tailfeathers that demand the eyes' attention when a tom is in full strut, and those two juxtaposed white semi-circles are often the first part of the bird a hunter sees when a tom is approaching from a distance.

Such is the case this morning. My first response to the sight of the bird picking his way out of the pines and into the meadow is, as usual, a question: How can anything so small make a sound as thunderous as a gobble? The bird has arrived in full strut—tail feathers fanned with a draftsman's precision, wingtips dragging the ground, erect body feathers doubling the size of his silhouette, naked head aglow in a fluctuating tricolor of red, white, and blue. Like most acts of courtship this one is simultaneously magnificent and ridiculous, but as always this close encounter of the third kind leaves me mesmerized.

As the tom starts across the meadow on a vector toward my position, the game becomes mine to win or lose. With the bird's radar locked onto my hen decoy, I reduce my calling to an occasional soft cluck or purr. As the gobbler approaches step by measured step my only responsibility is to hold perfectly still, which may be the most difficult part of the hunt. Then the bird is in range—longbow range, no less—but I still need him to do one more thing, and he does it. When he pivots in full strut ten yards away his extended tailfeathers eclipse his vision briefly, allowing me to draw my bow and release the arrow undetected. The stricken bird collapses in plain sight 50 yards away in the meadow, surrounded by a bouquet of purple pasque flowers.

Moments later, I'm cutting notches in my turkey tag and running my hands across tailfeathers that will eventually produce a season's worth of hopper imitations at my fly-tying bench. This is my close encounter of the fourth kind.

The only way to improve upon the morning would be to find a patch of newly erupted morels to serve with the bird after it's hung for a day or two. That's why I choose a route down the mountain that takes me through several aspen groves, while keeping my eyes trained upon the ground. The calendar may claim that Thanksgiving still lies seven months away, but I've already found one of my own.



Another Story to Tell

By Neil Yoder

For the past forty years I have bow hunted along side of my father. In the early 80's dad hung up his slug gun and began bow hunting exclusively. So as you could imagine, forty years of bow hunting has created its share of memories and stories. Many times the day's hunt was discussed beside the truck or with a late night phone call, which would almost always begin with, "Well what did you see tonight?" As often as we compared the events of any given hunt I can't recall a time when my story outdid dad's. Whether it was him having another encounter with the big buck, or the time he had to hurry to get up his tree because he had seen deer coming up the trail then realizing that he had forgotten to tie his bow to the rope and seven bucks came by to lay at the base of his tree. This may have been the moment that we realized how the deer seemed to know when they were safe. Dad seemed to have more encounters like this and with big bucks than any one person could handle.

As the years seem to somehow get away from us, my father has turned eighty-one. Until this year he had put up his own stands, continued to climb trees and endure long sits waiting on another good story to present itself. But this year radiation treatments have temporarily sidelined his hunting and my collection of stories. So this year my son seems to have been the one to step up and came up with the "better story". While he and I were bow hunting this past November, he came up with the one that rivals any story dad has ever told. His text to me: "Just watched the big one breed a doe. Then I think he killed her. And saw another good one". My response. "He killed her?" Come to find out the buck had bred the doe at least twice. She then staggered around and fell over dead. My son seems to have temporarily one upped my father in storytelling.

So as we sit in our stands waiting for dad to return to his, we will continue to add to our stockpile of stories and anxiously wait for that one more story from dad.

~ continued from page 39

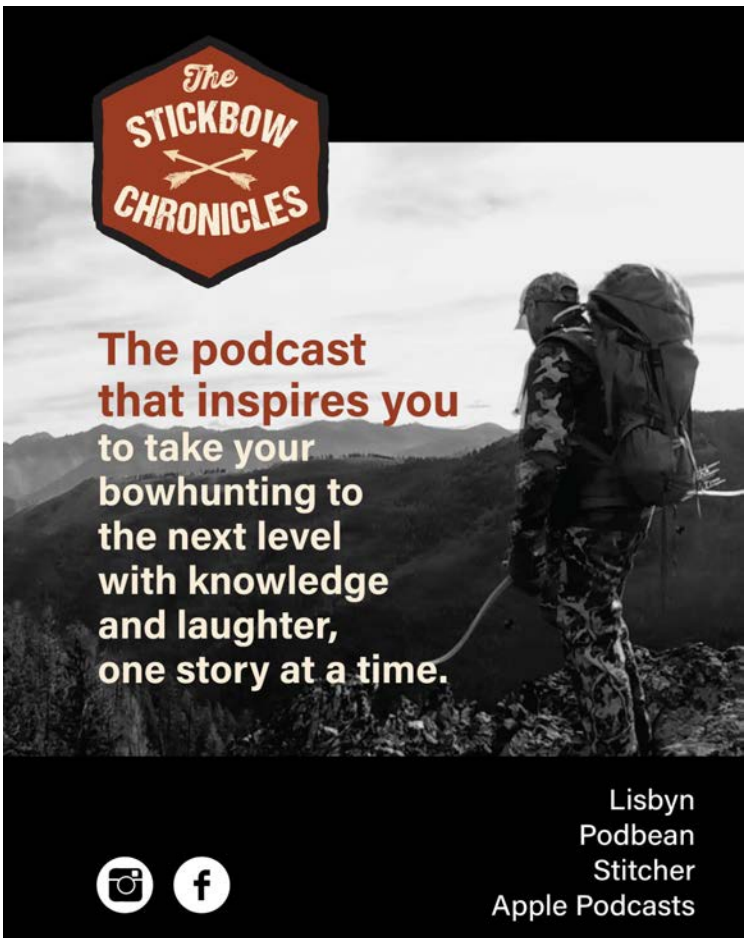
beast tried to figure out how an intruder had slipped into his comfort zone without being detected. I was waiting for Jeff, who was ten yards from me to release an arrow to end this stalemate; when a flash of yellow caught my eye and sped past the hog's nose. Later, Jeff would tell me that a wayward stem of grass, about the size of his pinky finger, jumped out in front of his arrow and saved the hog's life.

Knowing that my hit was a bit back, I rose to my feet and kept track of the hogs as they ran back to the south. I noticed that one of the hogs was lagging, so I ran down the hill as fast as I could on an intercept course and got in front of my hog. With a cross wind, I slowly made my way down the trail that I had seen the other hogs flee on and scanned the tall grass for any sign of movement. I went about forty yards when I spotted her lying near some blackberry bushes. I slowly made my way towards her and took a knee about ten yards from her and watched for any sign of life. Just then she rose from her bed and started quartering past me to my right. At five yards I picked a spot and came to full draw. Using my second arrow, I downed her for good.

After congratulations and pictures, we made quick work of the field dressing process, quartered her and made our way to the truck wet and cold, albeit happy hunters.

Throughout the three weeks we enjoyed together, stump shooting, great meals and good conversation filled the gaps between hunts. Fred had several opportunities on hogs that did not pan out. Yet, we all agreed that a good time was had by all, and that too much time is spent on work and not enough time enjoying the simple things in life.

No matter how hard I try I cannot think of a better way to make up for lost time than to make new memories with good friends and longbow in hand.



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