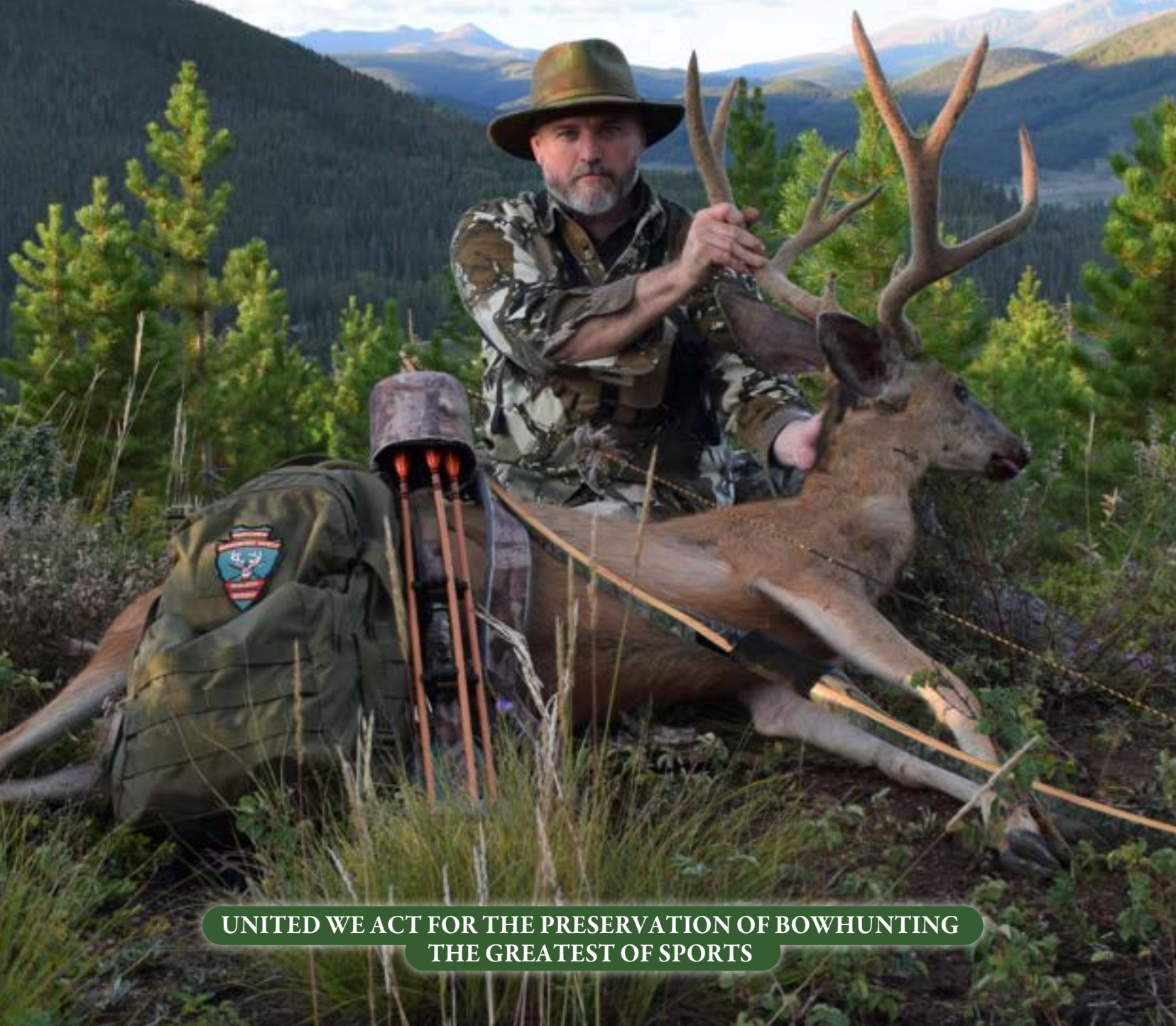


Official Publication for the members of the Professional Bowhunters Society

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE



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On the cover: Chad Slagle

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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President's Message

by Norm Johnson
recurve3691@gmail.com

I must start my first column by thanking Matt Schuster, Terry Receveur, and Preston Lay for their exemplary volunteer service to the PBS. I also want to thank Steve Hohensee and Dave Early for their willingness to run and serve the organization. Thank you to all of those who supported my reelection. Since I left the office 4 years ago, many new members joined our ranks. I welcome you and hope to meet all of you next March at the gathering.

The title of my column may seem as though I am referring to the fact I was given a second chance to serve as president. While I am certainly getting a second chance, this column is not about me. A couple of weeks ago, the council met in Lexington, Kentucky, for the annual business meeting and to begin the groundwork for the PBS Biennial Gathering next March. A big part of the meeting is examining membership numbers in growth and retention. Secondly is a detailed look into the financial numbers. I am familiar with what the numbers and trends were from my previous decade of service, and the turnaround has been remarkable, to say the least. So, what happened? What can we learn from the past? I will give my thoughts below; some may disagree, but this is where I will lay out my case for the "second chance" we've been given.

PBS was founded on the fundamental premise as a service organization all the way back in 1963. The founding members set requirements for those wanting to become a member. These requirements were adopted to recruit experienced, ethical bowhunters as the founding core of our organization. Equipment requirements were included to separate the PBS from field or target archers. This core membership was designed to be a helping friend to all bowhunters, especially beginners and non-members." Exacting standards were

adopted and maintained to help upgrade the image of bowhunters and bowhunting.

Sometime in the late 80s and early 90s, as technology began to reach levels not anticipated, PBS naturally developed into a traditional bowhunting organization. The core group interests remained rooted in simple traditional equipment, woodsmanship, self-imposed limitations, and high ethical standards. In the early 90s, an anti-crossbow committee began to battle the manufacturer's push to include those in established bow seasons. By the late 90s, we had reached an all-time high in membership numbers, but quickly after that, we began a slow decline. So, what led to the decline? The PBS, or anyone paying attention for that matter, was seeing first-hand the erosion of bowhunting as its primitive weapons status came under threat through the advancements of the compound bow and the ancillary equipment that accompanied it. We became highly critical of the technology with good and noble intentions; however, our message of a "helping hand" or "Knowledge Through Experience" was drowned by a long list of all the things we were against.

Fast forward to a few years ago, and we modernized our business model. Harmony has done a fantastic job dragging us old codgers into the modern business and social media age. She certainly deserves a lot of credit. More importantly, we solidly recognized PBS as a traditional organization with a positive message. I can't think of a deeper and more experienced knowledge base than that which exists within the ranks of the PBS. There is a definitive hunger out there for the kind of knowledge and experience we have to offer. We have also realized that technology creep in all aspects of hunting is never going away because game departments around the country show little desire to rein in



technology. Our positive message is designed to win souls to an approach to bowhunting that requires a hunter to abandon the desire to buy success through purchasing technology and embracing a journey that requires dedication, and the challenge of self-imposed limitation is working. We have a winning message and a winning fraternal organization that can change the minds and hearts of hunters looking for a more gratifying experience in the woods. Becoming the equipment police or shaming an individual for their choices will close what might be an open door. It really is no more complicated than that. Insulting a man, then inviting him to church never works.

As I type this column, the state of Utah is in the preliminary stages of redefining differing weapons and their seasons. I believe this will be the future battlefield when states realize that keeping game herds healthy and hunter opportunities at a maximum level requires them to keep primitive weapons primitive and to define a clear separation from technology through more limited season lengths and tag opportunities. This will incentivize hunters to put away the technology to gain the privilege of a more extended season with fewer restrictions. In the meantime, we will continue using the power of email to inform you of the battles brought forth across the nation concerning crossbows and airbows. My contact information, and that of all the council, is in the magazine. We are here to serve the organization, please so feel free to contact any of us should the need arise.

Let's stay positive, stay on message, share the knowledge, and enjoy continued growth in doing what we do best!

All the best,

Norm Johnson

Vice President's Message

by Ethan Rodrigue
ethanrodrigue@gmail.com

I would like to start off by saying thank you to everyone that agreed to run for council. As always, PBS is blessed to have so many good people willing to step up whenever asked. I am very humbled to have been asked to run for Vice-President and am very excited to work with our current council!

We are officially less than one year away from our next banquet. If you've never had an opportunity to attend a PBS Banquet, I highly encourage you to do so. Our upcoming gathering will be in Lexington, Kentucky in March of 2024 and should be within driving distance to a great many of our members. I can certainly promise you that if you attend a gathering, you will never want to miss another one! Preparations are already underway, and while there is much work to be done, we have a good game plan in place to make this banquet one for the books! Council recently met at the Clarion Hotel Conference Center North in Lexington. Lexington offers a lot of attractions for all members of the family, and we hope to see a lot of our newer members, along with their families, in attendance. We have been fortunate to have gained many new members in the last several years. Many are younger, and that's a fantastic thing to see. I thought it would be a good idea to explain a little bit about what one can expect. While the banquet officially starts Friday morning, we always have a Thursday night social. These are always fun and a great way for someone attending their first banquet to arrive a little early and have an opportunity to socialize a bit and meet other members before the activities really get started. Friday morning things kick off with seminars held throughout the day, vendors, door prizes, raffles and lots of catching up with old friends. The vendor area typically shuts down in the evening with a short break for members to re-

turn to their rooms to freshen up and prepare for the evening dinner and presentation, followed by the auction. Saturday is conducted in the same format, with each day having activities specifically for our ladies. There is a lady's luncheon where the ladies of PBS get together for lunch and wine served by waiter's staffed by a handful of PBS member volunteers. There are items donated specifically for this event for prizes and auction. This is a light hearted event and a fun time for everyone involved. Depending on what the location has to offer, a lady's tour is also available for anyone interested. Transportation is provided and typically a sightseeing or shopping tour is organized, along with lunch and or other activities. This provides an opportunity for the "better-half" of our organization to socialize and have a good time visiting local attractions. Details will be available soon regarding specific activities.

There are many things that go into a successful banquet and one of the key elements is definitely our members. It's no secret to anyone that has been involved with PBS for a while, but I truly believe we not only are made up of a fantastic group of bowhunters but just great folks in general, not to mention some very talented guys and gals. It's always humbling to see the items donated to PBS for our banquets, and its once again time to start thinking of projects and items for donation. Councilman Randy Brookshier will be in charge of membership donations. If there is anything you would like to donate, please contact Randy so we can have an accurate list of items. As usual, we will be providing a contact and mailing address for anyone wishing to ship any items ahead of time. If you would like to attend the banquet as a vendor, please contact Councilman Bubba Graves. Bubba will be handling all pertinent questions in regards to booth space,



tables required, internet access, etc... Anyone who wants to donate hunts or trips can contact Councilman Sean Bleakley.

You may have noticed a few email blasts recently with information regarding issues that have potential to affect some bow seasons across the country. PBS has always been a vehicle in which members can reach out for help in fighting these issues. Michael Arnette in Oklahoma, is now our Bowhunting Preservation Representative and will be working to keep our membership informed on issues affecting bowhunting throughout the country. Look for email blasts as well as quarterly reports in the magazine for ways you can be active in helping to preserve bowhunting and bowhunting opportunities.

I once again would like to thank each Regular Member that voted in the recent election, as well as say thanks for taking the initiative to step up to Regular Membership in our organization. I would also like to encourage any Associate Members that feel the time is right to apply for Regular Membership to do so. It's a fantastic way to give back to PBS and become even more involved. And lastly, I want to say a big thank you and welcome to all of our new members! It is very encouraging to see the number of new members PBS is welcoming to our family, and I hope each of your experiences with the PBS is as wonderful as mine have been. We on Council certainly hope everyone is looking forward to the bright future of PBS as much as we are!

Ethan Rodrigue

Council's Report

by Sean Bleakley
seanbleakley45@gmail.com



As we come together as a new PBS Council, I'd like to congratulate Norm, Ethan and Randy on winning their respective elections to President, Vice President and Council. The PBS continues to be in great hands. We had our meeting in Lexington in March, and the Council has come up with some great ideas for the upcoming year! The meeting also gave us a chance to become acquainted with one other. I have to say that it didn't disappoint.

As I've matured as a bowhunter, I have

come to appreciate and embrace the social aspect of hunting. Ideally, sharing a hunting camp is the best way to socialize with like-minded people. Trading hunting stories and showing off equipment around a camp fire is the best way that I know of solidifying friendships. Those friendships made during PBS Membership Hunts have turned into many great adventures.

An official Membership Hunt isn't the only way to socialize. This past NY turkey season, I had Alaska member Mike Schneider



and his son Matt come out from California for some turkey hunting and fly fishing here in NY. Coincidentally, Mark Wang was going to be in the Catskills the same week, so we arranged to meet for dinner. Where else can four people from four different states across the country meet in upstate NY for dinner? The PBS.

If you attend any traditional shoot or rendezvous, you are bound to bump into multiple PBS Members. Jumping in with them on the 3-D course, or talking by the campfire is the best way to pick up or to pass on knowledge through experience.

Sean Bleakley

Council's Report

by Bubba Graves
williamgraves187@gmail.com

The Council has finalized our venue for the 2024 Biennial Gathering in Lexington, KY. And I'm pleased to say that I believe that this Gathering will be a great one. With the venue centrally located for a large portion of our members, I am expecting to see a turnout that will surpass our last. If you have never been to a Biennial Gathering this is your chance to plan it out. Head on over to our website and click on the Biennial Gathering tab to make your reservations. This is an event you do not want to miss. You will not be disappointed.

Over the past few years, I have talked to several Associate Members who have expressed a desire to give more to the PBS. You may have asked yourself the same question.

In terms of giving more, there is no doubt in my mind that the best way for an Associate Member to become more involved in the PBS and to have a voice is to aspire to become a Qualified Regular Member. Many I have spoken to have expressed that they need more time and experience before they can take that step, and some believe that they just don't fit the bill. For some this may be true, for the step of becoming a Regular Member should not be taken lightly. Keep in mind that as an Associate Member you still have value in our organization with your thoughts, concerns, and ideas. It is the responsibility of the junior Councilman to be a liaison for the Associate Members and this added responsibility is now in the capable hands of Randy Brookshier.



As you plan out your yearly adventures, take time and reflect on why you became a bowhunter, especially a traditional bowhunter. There are many ways to hunt, but you chose as your primary weapon a simple device that doesn't need any technology for you to succeed.

The late Jay Massey once said, "*How*

you take an animal and how you conduct the hunt, and what you gain from the experience, is what bowhunting is all about. The value of the hunt is (or should be) proportional to the effort one puts into it."

Keep technology out of our sport, keep it simple and hunt hard.

If you have been an Associate Member for

a while and feel that you need to step up and become a Qualified Regular Member, reach out to a Regular Member that you know and ask them if they will guide you through the process and sponsor you. I also encourage Regular Members to reach out to an Associate Member that you know and that meets the requirements and encourage them to become

a Qualified Regular Member.

As always, I challenge each of you to become a better representative of our organization and the sport that we love. Mentor a new bowhunter, do your best to recruit new members, promote the PBS and be a positive example for all to follow.

Bubba Graves

Council's Report

by Randy Brookshier

stykbow59@comcast.net

This being my first Council report, I would like to thank the Professional Bowhunters Society Membership for their support in electing me to this position. I am humbled by this opportunity and hope I am able to meet your expectations.

One of the responsibilities as Junior Councilman is welcoming new Associate Members as well as being a liaison to the Associate Membership in general. In examining our membership roster it is obvious that we are sorely underrepresented by women in our organization. I would really like to see an increase in the number of ladies involved in and enjoying our group. If you have a wife, daughter, other family member or friend who you think may be interested in the PBS and a good fit, reach out to them. There are a lot of serious lady bowhunters out there, and they

may be put off by the perception that we are all old, gray, and bearded, which for the most part is true. But the gesture of an invite to a shoot, hunt or one of our gatherings may open the door for them into the fellowship that we all enjoy. A good portion of us have purchased an Associate Member's first membership and opened the door to the PBS family for them. This may be a good avenue for introducing a new lady to our organization if you know of a lady who may enjoy and benefit from our association. I would like to see the number of lady members expand to the point where we were able to host some ladies only events.

The Council just returned from our planning session at the hotel in Lexington Kentucky where our 2024 banquet will be held. This venue looks like it is going to be ideal for an event like ours. There are a good number of rooms that are on the same level with and



in close proximity with the dining area and the convention center itself. There is quite a bit to do in the Lexington area and with that area being within driving distance of seventy percent of the country, I expect this may be one of our best attended banquets. You may want to book early, once the room reservations and tickets packets are opened up.

In closing, I would like to thank Norm, Harmony and the rest of Council for welcoming me and assisting me as I step into the role of a Councilman.

Randy Brookshier

Professional Bowhunters Society® Council

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Chaplain's Corner

by Gene Thorn

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Long awaited - Spring is finally here in the mountains. The first week of May and we just got almost seventeen inches of snow. May in our region means it may rain, it may snow, or it may be sunshine. It may be thirty degrees, may be fifty degrees, or may be eighty degrees. Ramps are up, and morels are also. Spring gobbler season is in. Time for Spring bear hunting is just around the corner. Food plots need tilled and sowed. The carp will be spawning later this month and bowfishing for those who take advantage of it will be awesome. Fall is my favorite season, but Spring is a close second. It is sunny and warm today here in West Virginia, a perfect Saturday afternoon to go fling some arrows. We must seize the day and grab hold of the opportunities that are presented to us. In another couple weeks the ramps and morels will be gone, and Spring Gobbler season will be over. Time does not wait for us.

Mark 10:46 Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

51 So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

So often we are faced with God orchestrated moments that we miss for numerous reasons. Sometimes we are just not ready for what God will do in our lives and we miss a great opportunity. Maybe the timing just doesn't seem right, but we realize afterward that we should have taken advantage of the moment. There are those times that we just outright blow it, and hope that one day God will give us another shot.

One of the lessons we learn early on as bowhunters is that the window of opportunity on a game animal is usually brief and you must learn when to take the shot. We have all blown opportunities. I remember a big bear I had broadside at fifteen yards in Quebec. I had him dead to rights. I even drew on him twice. I was waiting for him to quarter just a bit. All I had to do was release the arrow. I waited too long. The wind shifted and he caught my scent. He was gone in a flash. It was tough. Instant regret. You must get up, shake it off and strive to do better next time. What else can we do?

Spiritual matters are much more important than anything else. There are eternal consequences to our decisions. The reality is that God

SEIZE THE MOMENT!

wants us to seize those special God moments in our lives so He can move us from where we are, to where He wants us to be. However, in order to seize those moments, it requires wisdom, and dedication to understand and embrace what God has for us.

In Mark 10, a huge crowd was following Jesus as he left Jericho. A man named Bartimaeus was blind and begging by the roadside. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was nearby, he began to shout, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" (Mark 10:47)

When Bartimaeus got up that morning, he had no idea that Jesus Christ was going to be passing by him that day. He thought it was just another ordinary day: same place, same cry for help, same situation. But suddenly Jesus was there. Bartimaeus had no time to prepare or think through his response. It was just an opportunity that dropped in his lap. And he chose to seize the moment. He decided not to delay or procrastinate. He was going to do it—now.

That's the key to a fresh start in your life too: Whatever you're going to do, do it now. Don't say, "Next year I'm going to make a fresh start" or "Next month I'm going to make some changes" or "Tomorrow I'm going to make that a priority." It's now or never. Ask God for what you need. Commit yourself. Seize the moment!

We can have opportunities for a fresh start, but don't take advantage of them. Why? We procrastinate. It is human nature, but it is a bad habit. Procrastination is a strange thing. You think it will make your life easier, but it does just the opposite. It's a stress generator! When you know the right thing to do, today is the time to do it. Don't assume you can wait for tomorrow. The Bible warns over and over about presuming upon tomorrow. Jesus said, "No procrastination. No backward looks. You can't put God's kingdom off till tomorrow. Seize the day."

Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

We have no guarantee that we will have the next breath, much less a tomorrow. Whatever you're going to do, you better do it now. Is Jesus inviting you into a relationship with Him today? Call on him. Is He calling you to a deeper walk with Him? Do not delay. Follow the example of Bartimaeus and **seize the moment!**



BIGHORN MOUNTAINS ODD YEAR GATHERING

Dates: July 13-16, 2023
(come early and stay late)

NEW location is in the central Bighorn Mountains of North-Central Wyoming. From Buffalo, go west on Highway 16 about 37 miles, turn left (south) on Canyon Creek Rd for 1.5 miles to the copse of trees on the left. From Ten Sleep, go east on Highway 16 for about 26 miles, turn right (south) on Canyon Creek Rd for 1.5 miles to the copse of trees on the left. The access road is very good gravel and will not hinder safe passage of large trailers and motorhomes.

*****IMPORTANT NOTE!** We have no control over our selected site and the Forest Service has not been enforcing their 14-day camping restrictions. If too many people/trailers are left at our selected location, and we are forced to select an alternate location, I will notify each registered participant prior to their arrival with directions to the alternate site, it is therefore imperative that I have a contact method for each attending member***

- Primitive camping with outhouse provided
- Live music by Chad Slagle and Brian Koelzer
- Centralized kitchen/social area for community meals (kick in food or a donation to PBS)
- Practice range of member loaned/donated targets (no scoring, no awards)
- Clout Shoot Tournament (Winners Award)
- Troll Shoot Tournament (Winners Award)
- 3-D Novelty Shoot, TBA (Winners Award)
- *9 Hole Archery Golf Tournament (Winners Award) (*dependent on occupying our 1st choice location)
- Other local activities include trout stream fishing, Medicine Wheel archaeological site, hiking, marmot hunting, tree hugging.

Event donation is \$30 per attendee.

Award contests \$10 each event. Archery golf rounds are unlimited at \$10 per round.

BRING PLENTY OF ARROWS, at least a dozen! A few flu-flu arrows may come in handy.

*****NOTE*** Attendance limited to the first 74 people that RSVP!!! (A Forest Service permit is required for groups of 75 persons or over).**

Please consider carpooling to the event to moderate high fuel prices. I will attempt to suggest people I suspect may be traveling on the same routes. If anyone is considering flying to the area I suggest flying into Billings and those of us traveling by road can hopefully accommodate a few of you in our tents/tipis.

**RSVP to Steve Hohensee
if you plan on attending!**

Text to 307-299-7040 or Email
steveh.wyoming@protonmail.com

MIDWEST ODD YEAR GATHERING

Dates: July 14, 15, 16, 2023

Hosted by Ojibwa Bowhunters of Milwaukee, WI at 3045 S. Johnson Rd., New Berlin, WI.

2-3-D Shooting Ranges with some elevated stands – 1 Broadhead Range-Novelty Shoot. Shooting Passes are One Day \$15.00 – Two Day \$20.00. Three Day Pass is \$25.00 Kids 12 and under are FREE.

FREE VENDOR SPACES AVAILABLE - We do have vendors signing up already.

Bucket raffles & silent auction.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday food and beverage can be purchased including breakfast.

Friday Night Pot Luck with FREE barbecue venison (while supplies last)

Saturday Night Hog Roast. Courtesy of Hog Master, Doug Rullman and the Ojibwa team.

We are very pleased to announce our very first speaker at our Midwest Odd Year Gathering. Terry Receveur will be sharing some of his accumulated knowledge of Adventures, Stories, Tips and Tricks from forty years of DIY Bowhunting.

Free camping with limited electric supply. Many other hotels in the area.

For More Info Contact:

Brian Tessmann

bowretev@execpc.com
1 (262) 389-6319

Chris Bahr

cbahr@heartlandtoolsupply.com



The Hunt for Fellowship and Camaraderie

... along with missing sleeping bags and forgotten arrows



Member Hunt Photo by Rick Wildermuth-(L to R) Kevin Hall (and his setter), Rick Diaz, Mathew Wilson, Steve McCloskey, Ron Grist, Mike Haynes, Andy Myer, and Rick Wildermuth (hunt organizer).

By Mike Haynes

I moved slowly up the bottom of the desert wash where I had seen fresh “pig” sign the afternoon before. This morning was still, cool, and quiet. The bed of the wash was soft and slightly muddy from the recent rain and snow storm that had just passed through the eastern edge of the Sonoran Desert in southeast Arizona. Small cloven hoof tracks were soon everywhere in the arroyo. My heart began to race as I was sure I was close to a “squadron” of these diminutive “skunk pigs”. Just then I was wondering why I hadn’t nocked an arrow as javelina seemed to race in every direction. The sounds of woofing and the popping of tusks came from all around me as these little collared peccaries scurried up from the wash every which way. I quickly got a wood arrow on my string and as many times happens when pointing a shotgun at a covey flush of quail, my bow pointed in many directions following noise and movements and looking for a shot at a broadside target. Javelina busted out of the steepest and most brushy part of the wash with no opportunity for a shot. As the initial action waned, I began a slow step by



Mike's camp kitchen.

step progression hoping to catch a straggler. Unfortunately, the very light breeze had been

at my back moving up the draw and I'm sure the entire pack of critters had winded me.



Matt Wilson's wall tent and wood stove that warmed our souls each morning.



An always chipper Rick Wildermuth.

I slowly ascended the ridge separating my draw from the next one to the south and met up with a new buddy of mine, Rick Diaz, a fellow PBS member, from Las Cruces, New Mexico (as an interesting side note, we had fully half the New Mexico PBS members attending this hunt—all three of us!). He had been as caught off guard as I was when six of the little “pigs” ran past him, a short bow shot away. Neither of us was ready for the crazed exodus of javelina and no arrows were loosed at our elusive prey. Hopes were high for us to catch up to our prey, but unfortunately, neither Rick D., nor I would lay eyes on another “pig”.


Rick D. is a new bowhunter and PBS member, and he was counting on me, a supposedly experienced archer, to show him how this javelina hunting is done. Unfortunately, having been on only two javelina hunts prior to this one, I had missed the only shot opportunity presented to me on my first hunt and I obviously was not necessarily a good example of an accomplished or keen-eyed bowhunter on this stomp through the desert. As it turned out, although fresh tracks and javelina digs were seen each day, this would prove to be the only close call I would have on my cagey quarry

during this hunt. I was able to bag a nice male specimen of the Gamble's quail that inhabit the desert hills of Arizona with my 28 gauge double gun the day before javelina season opened though.

Rick Wildermuth, from Chandler, Arizona, the hunt organizer and leader for this time-honored PBS membership hunt. I had met him the prior summer in northwest Colorado at the Colorado Traditional Archers Society High Country Shoot, where he and Kevin Hall had manned the PBS booth. Rick W. had promised classic Arizona desert weather for this middle-of-winter pursuit of javelina and desert deer, both muleys and coues. And maybe that's what we had. Prior to my arrival, the “atmospheric river” had flowed for several days through the Desert Southwest so the normally dusty desert roads were somewhat muddy and full of puddles. As luck would have it, my seventeen year old Ford F250 was diagnosed with a bad alternator just before I left and I had to drive my AWD Ford Escape on this hunt—not exactly an all-terrain vehicle.

The day I arrived, one day before the opening of javelina season, was beautiful with


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A view of the 2023 Arizona PBS campsite.

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blue skies and temperatures in the sixties. I set a nice camp with my large four person dome tent and a twelve foot by twelve foot tarp strung up to cover the tent's entrance and my sitting and cooking area. Fortunately my shelter was weather proof as the next day the skies opened up and a powerful winter storm unleashed her fury on our desert oasis. Winds howled and rain pelted the camp putting a damper on the first day of hunting. That night the pitter-patter on the tent turned to a gentle whisper sound on the rain fly and the next morning we awoke to everything covered with an inch or so of wet snow and a day of on and off squalls of wind and graupel accompanied by cold wind chills, at least by Arizona standards. This storm did shorten our hunting the first couple of days, forcing us to seek the shelter of our tents for much of that time.

Thankfully the first PBS brother I met when I pulled into camp



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was Matt Wilson from the Elko, Nevada area. He had camp set in an old army-style white canvas wall tent with a nice wood stove in the corner. Although I had not met Matt prior to this outing, he invited me to pull my chair into his tent and warm myself by the fire he had stoked up during the storm. Winter mornings in the desert can be quite chilly and each morning, it became my habit to brew a fresh cup of coffee, head to Matt's tent for some cast iron prepared bacon and eggs and to lay out the day's hunting plans. Although we were always up early, the fact that javelina don't like the cold desert air either, we and they stayed holed up until the sun began to warm the hillsides.

Each night we gathered around the fire pit that my camp mates had so graciously stocked with firewood before my arrival. Rick W., Matt, Ron Grist of Yuba City, California, and Steve McCloskey of La Luz, New Mexico, had all made sure a proper supply of firewood was gathered from the surrounding hills. The smell of sweet burning western juniper and mesquite filled the air each night after the rain and snow moved east. The one night we were rained/snowed out from the fire pit, Rick W. opened his wall tent for everyone to gather around Mr. Heater's propane burner for some spirited conversation.

A couple of days into the hunt, Rick Diaz from New Mexico, who I hunted with one day, and Andy Myer from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, arrived in camp. Kevin Hall from South Lake Tahoe, California, also arrived, albeit several days late because of having to shovel the several feet of "atmospheric river" that fell on his part of the world. Other than a slacker or two (read yours truly) most of the gentlemen in camp brought a main dish or appetizer to share with the group each night for dinner. Ron brought a host of grills, stoves, and smokers to camp so the food was fantastic. Ron also brought a couple of berry cobblers that I was assured wouldn't raise my glucose level, but fortunately, I was able to resist. Andy brought a supply of Wisconsin cheese and smoked salmon (not to mention cans of PBR) that were quickly inhaled. Steve made some Hatch green chile chicken stew. Rick W. made sauerkraut and pork one night. Matt provided charcoal grilled chicken thighs, and Rick D. grilled some incredible pork chops. The food couldn't be beat. Dinners and dialogue around the campfire each night was a real treat and are the best reason for attending a PBS member hunt.

Matt shared tales about his solo moose hunt to Alaska. He had a fantastic time and found several bulls, but unfortunately they didn't measure up to the fifty inch minimum in that part of the state. He also told a great story about the grizzly bears he saw near his camp. Flying in, his pilot spotted a large boar. Matt was comforted by the fact that he had stopped



A view of the incredible Arizona desert landscape and Mike's prized 1961 Kodiak.

at the sporting goods store in Anchorage and purchased a portable electric bear fence. After setting his tent, he quickly got to work setting the posts and attaching the wire that would hopefully keep the big bruins away from his sleeping quarters. When he was done, he attached the fence controller and tested the wire for "juice", but he found none. Resorting to the instructions for his newly purchased gizmo, he read on the box, "requires two D-cell batteries, not included". Guess what he failed to buy before leaving town? So much for a comfortable night's sleep! I made sure Matt knew that if he ever made another solo moose hunt to Alaska that I would love to go with him?!

And speaking of a good night's sleep, on this hunt, Matt also left home for Arizona with his comfy zero degree sleeping bag still stored on the shelf in his garage. Not to worry, he picked up a fine quality pink sleeping bag from Wally World on the way through Phoenix. It would have been a great investment if he'd been invited to his granddaughter's slumber party, but for the frosty January nights in the desert, it didn't work so well. Several other PBS brothers offered him an extra bag, but Matt figured he needed to pay the price for his forgetfulness and suffer through the cold nights. Once his firewood dried out, he was able to keep the woodstove hot and his tent toasty during the night, but I bet he never forgets that sleeping bag again!

But when it came to forgetfulness Andy from Milwaukee took the award for absent-mindedness. The way he told the story, he re-

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"Pig" tracks in the soft sandy soil at the bottom of a desert wash.



A fresh "pig dig" - where javelinas root for food.



Sign of recent javelina feeding activity.

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

alized midway through his long drive, that he had more than likely left his shooting tab at home. Not to worry, as he put it. He had an extra in his arrow box. Problem was Andy had left home without his arrows, too. Unlike ammunition for your favorite hunting rifle or shotgun, you can't stop at the local sporting goods store to replace your prized custom-made woodies. Fortunately he had brought a spare bow and had some arrows for that bow. He also called his wife and spent a good portion of his life savings to have his arrow box shipped to a gun store in Willcox. Once again all of our new PBS buddies offered extra arrows in case he needed them.

Another highlight of this hunt was the trade blanket night. This was not a sales event, but a time where the hunters each brought an archery related item. Numbers were drawn and guys picked an item according to their number. I wound up taking home a beautiful pair of walking sticks that Rick W. made out of a pair of yucca stem shafts. Rick took time to smooth the shafts and seal them. They will be a treasured part of my hunting and archery collection displayed in my home office. Rick W. also made a dozen native mesquite wood spatulas to give to each hunter for their cook kits as a souvenir of this hunt. I had each of the eight hunters who were in camp with me sign my spatula as another moment of the great friendships that were kindled on this trip.

If you haven't figured it out yet, PBS Member Hunts are an awesome way to connect with other PBS brothers who share the same hunting culture and values as you. Although I have only been to two of these hunts, I am



One of the numerous spectacular desert sunsets.

treasuring the fellowship I've gotten to share with my bowhunting brothers. I would certainly encourage each of you to make a plan to attend a hunt in your "neighborhood" in the coming year. If there's not a hunt close to you, do some research and make a plan to host a member hunt in your area. These hunts definitely promote the PBS motto, "Knowledge through Experience". You will come away richer as a person and wiser in your bowhunting knowledge after spending time with other "Professional Bowhunters". I will guarantee it!

I am thankful for the PBS members I've been able to hunt with the past two years. They each have embodied the mission of the Professional Bowhunters Society:

- That by choice, they have selected bowhunting as their primary archery interest
- To share experiences, knowledge, and shooting skills

- To set a good example and to serve as a role model for youth and others in the hunting fraternity
- To abide by game laws and support sound scientific management of our outdoor resources
- I am looking forward to another member hunt next year and a chance to meet more new bowhunting friends!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike makes his home in Los Alamos, NM, along with his wife of almost thirty seven years. He has been a PBS member, on and off for approximately twenty five years, and recently was accepted as a qualified regular member. Lately, Mike has been collecting 1961 (his birth year) Bear recurves. On this hunt he carried a 45# @ 28" Bear Kodiak. He hunted with doug fir arrows, of his own making, tipped with 160 gr. Grizzly broadheads.

Welcome New Members to the PBS family!

MARCH

Paul Branaman - Salem, IN
Rick Muncey - Raceland, KY
Patrick Foley - Phenix City, AL
Vince Shaw - Worthington, PA
Bob Flores - Algonquin, IL
Caleb Holmes - New Park, PA
Seth Holland - Carrollton, GA
Arthur Henry Kanneman III - Warrensburg, MO
Jesse D Cales - Hot Springs, VA
Kenneth Fournier - Costa Mesa, CA
David Poeta Jr - Harborecreek, PA
John Schneider - Sturgeon County, AB, Canada
Gregory Stuart McCausland - Marcellus, NY
August Desson - Cody, WY
Ron Johnson II - Carrollton, OH
Jason Garner - San Antonio, TX
Gil S Gabriel - Crafton, PA
Michael Roberts - Belfry, MT
Robert Rudd - Sac City, IA
Kip Cowher - New Castle, PA
Jerome Milbert - Loraine, IL
Robert Jones - Dorr, MI
Shaun Wells - Winchester, TN
Bradley A. Thayer - Harrison, NE
Todd Britton - Fort McCoy, FL
Calvin Hudson - Dry Prong, LA
Andrew Dewar - Tuscaloosa, AL
Ben Bolson - Sheridan, OR
Craig Hermance - Belgrade, MT
Brad Roepke - Waterford, WI
Daniel Hopkins - Dunlap, IL

APRIL

Nicholas Gillott - Oakman, AL
Zachary Ruble - Billings, MT

Kent Breland - Sandy Hook, MS
Jason Beaudry - Channahon, IL
Barry Hibbard - Sadieville, KY
Antonio Bravo - Falls Church, VA
Dan Stewart - Syracuse, NY
Dale Charles - Taylorsville, KY
Travis Snider - Morgantown, IN
Kaleb Stutzman - Clarkson, KY
Lowell E. Halcom - Grand Island, FL
Dustin Gray - Corbin, KY
Bryce Austin Duncan - Pawnee, OK
Robert Carter - Baxley, GA
Myron Trent Wengerd - Sandpoint, ID
Tim Hoeck - Henry, SD
Kevin Kucera - Darien, IL
Todd Heck - Greenville, IA
Virgil Vosse - Paris, France
Jeff Copper - Oracle, AZ
DJ Kilpatrick - Sadieville, KY
John Mitchell - Carl Junction, MO
John K. Adams - Fairfax Station, VA
Chris Sekol - Factoryville, PA
Joseph Natale - Matamoras, PA
John Lemmons - Kaufman, TX
Joseph Dimino - Lewiston, NY
Trenton Quay Ward - Canton, PA
Robert Schultze - Eastham, MA
Eric Sprick - Pacific, MO
John C Ford - Peru, KS
Taylor Bryant - Carnesville, GA

MAY

Merek Hilliker - New Providence, PA
Ryan O'Sullivan - Union City, PA
Vincent Klonowski - Grove City, PA
Brian Kaveney - Waterford, PA

Heather Wooddell - Hookstown, PA
Tom Dyll - Alden, NY
Jason Reynolds - East Aurora, NY
John Wiehe - Orchard Park, NY
Wayne Warren - Highland Lakes, NJ
Matthew Cornell - Bentonville, AR
Brandon Mason - Heber City, UT
Chad Creppel - Raceland, LA
Matt Breeding - Devils Lake, ND
Thomas O'Connor - Longmeadow, MA
Steven Mitchell - Cadiz, KY
Ray Tapscott - Paris, IL
Kyle Taylor - Pedro, OH
Jamie Wright - Mountain, ON, Canada
Danny Nugent - Bossier, LA
Sean Bradley Babb - Clarksdale, MS
Patrick Blank - Midland, TX
Guy Litt - Laramie, WY
Jimmy Marquardt - Fitchburg, WI
Justin Rountree - Statesboro, GA
Jeffrey Deprey - Duluth, GA
Gareth Brandl - Virginia Beach, VA
Massimo Castello - Vicenza, Italy
Casimir Leknius - Sun City, AZ
George Johnson, Jr. - Crownsville, MD
Dave Hill - Hibbing, MN
Drew Aiello - Malibu, CA
Robert John Daniel Macina - Shamrock TX
Randall Taylor - Lancaster, KY



REGULAR MEMBER PROFILE

JESSE JOHNSON

FLOWER MOUND, TX

I am originally from south Louisiana but currently live in North Texas with my Wife – Rachel, and daughter – Hayden. I am twenty eight years old and work as a construction manager. I also serve as youth pastor at my local church.

I began bowhunting with a compound at the age of twelve. Earlier in my life, I was blessed to have access to private land behind our home and

family hunting clubs that allowed me to do a lot of hunting and fishing. However, during my junior year of high school, my dad moved our family to North Texas. I continued to be passionate about the outdoors. However, public lands became my only option for access. To my surprise, I fell in love with exploring, protecting, and preserving those lands and continue to do nearly all my hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping on

them.

In recent years, I have transitioned to using a traditional bow. My first few years were rough! Numerous tough lessons, terrible advice, and blown shots. It was not until I started listening to sound advice from successful bowhunters (most of which are PBS members) that I started connecting on game animals. However, I still have a lot to learn! My biggest lesson learned so far is that the journey



is the true success. Being a bowhunter is more than just punching tags. It's about representing and preserving the heritage of bowhunting, being ethical

in my pursuits, and influencing others to do the same. I hope to share a campfire with each of you – one day!

REGULAR MEMBER PROFILE

BRYAN BURKHARDT

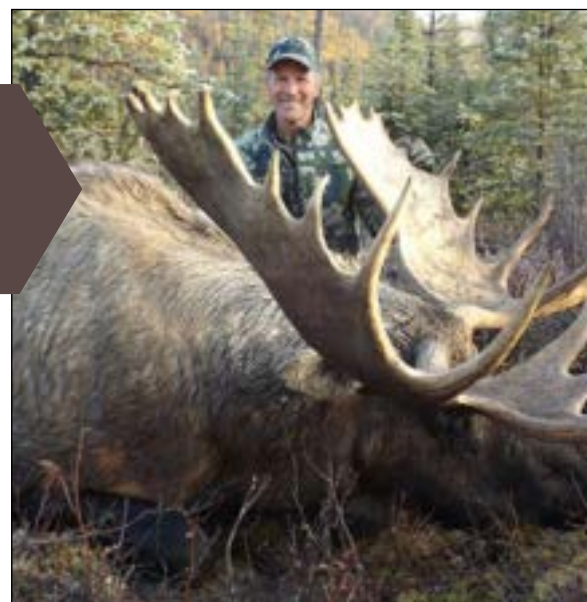
CLARKSTON, MI

My name is Bryan Burkhardt. I recently turned sixty years old and I live in Michigan with my wife Kim of thirty four years. We are blessed to have two adult daughters and a son-in-law. Five years ago, I retired from General Motors as the executive responsible for global logistics operations. I'm currently the executive director for the Automotive Logistics Executive Committee which

represents all the major auto manufacturers.

I was fortunate to grow up in a bowhunting family. My father shot his first whitetail with a recurve in 1961 and served as a great mentor for myself and my four brothers. Growing up in Michigan, our family vacations to northern Michigan always included a visit to the Fred Bear Museum in Grayling, Michigan. The museum was filled with Fred's bowhunting trophies from around the world and served as fer-

tile ground for creating childhood bowhunting dreams. Occasionally, Mr. Bear would be at the museum and I was fortunate to meet him a few times. He became my childhood hero and inspired me to hunt far away destinations. I have been bowhunting with traditional equipment for over forty six years. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to bowhunt several exciting destinations from the Arctic to Africa and many places in between. I absolutely love the challenge



and adventure that goes hand in hand with traditional bowhunting. I enjoy bowhunting a variety of species and the Alaskan moose has become my absolute favorite animal to hunt with a longbow

or recurve. This year will mark my sixteenth consecutive DIY bowhunt for moose in Alaska. I've told my pilot to book me through 2030 and hopefully, beyond.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER PROFILE

EARL COWHER NEW CASTLE, PA

I am Earl Cowher. I joined PBS at the Kalamazoo Expo in January of 2023. I have been hunting with primarily longbows, and occasionally recurves since 1993.

I was first aware of PBS in the early 1990's and a friend suggested that I join, but I was under the impression that PBS was for industry sponsored shooters that were all about self-promotion and I wanted nothing to do with it.

I made a career change in 2001 that prevented bowhunting for several years. I changed careers

again in 2019 and once again had free time to bow hunt. I am completely (re) addicted. My friend Kegan McCabe from Omega Longbows suggested that I look at PBS membership again.

I have been gifted with a beautiful wife that both supports and takes part in my obsessions. We had free time in January, so decided to attend the Expo in Kalamazoo. What a terrific time! Kip, (My wife) struck up a conversation with Harmony and the die was cast! I became an associate member. I honestly didn't expect much, other than a really

nice magazine. I had met Dalton Lewis at ETAR in 2022, and Ethan Rodrigue at Kalamazoo. Ethan mentioned that they were affiliated with PBS. Both men struck me as quality people with similar values to mine, so I started listening to their podcasts.

I have never hunted feral hogs before, but after listening to several podcasts, have become very interested in trying it. I posted a question on the PBS forum and Facebook page and was blown away by the volume of people contacting me offering to help me out, even invitations to accompany mem-

bers on their hunts!

My wife and I are board members of Lawrence County Sportsman's Association, a large Sportsman's Club in Western Pennsylvania, and have recently started an archery program, complete with a "bowhunter trail" of 3-D targets, and

hope to have a PBS event in the future.

We are both very excited by the potential of new friends and adventures by being members of the PBS. Please look me up if you find yourself in Western Pennsylvania.



ASSOCIATE MEMBER PROFILE

BRIAN WILSON HARDY, VA

Greetings from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Southwest Virginia! My name is Brian Wilson (not the Beach Boy or the baseball player) and as of March 2023, I am a new PBS Associate Member.

Archery has been part of my life since I first picked up my Dad's old Shakespeare recurve at age five. We rescued it from Grandma's yard sale around 1985. It had been

Dad's first store bought bow twenty five years earlier and would be my son's first thirty years later.

I shot that one and a few others until one Christmas, Santa worked a miracle and delivered the Brackenbury Phantom I had lusted over in the pages of TBM. I shot that one throughout my high school years until sports and girls took precedence over weekend 3-D shoots with Dad.

College, war and as-

sorted life interrupted archery for the better part of the next twenty years, until one day, my son picked up that old Shakespeare and asked me to shoot. We joined a local club (full of PBS members), shot 3-D across the region and took to the woods after deer, turkey and small game.

In October 2022, after three years, I killed my first archery deer; a mountain whitetail doe with my trusty Brackenbury. I'm looking forward to hunt-



ing with other members this year and hopefully acquiring some 'knowledge through experience.'

Three generations of my family will be camped at the Appalachian Re-

gional Odd-Year Gathering at Sherwood Archers this June. Stop by, we'll have something hot on the grill and cold in the cooler.



ONE FOR "THE DAVE"

By Chad K. Slagle

The mature tom's gobble thundered through the budding aspens like a train whistle when you are playing a little too close to the tracks. As usual, I found myself on the wrong side of the tracks—this time, downhill and well out of reach of my quarry's likely travel route. I made some quick calculations based upon my knowledge of the mountain (a place I had hiked and scouted many times), and then, taking into consideration my current circumstances, figured my chances were somewhere between "danged unlikely" and "ain't no way in hell". But then, a man who chases longbeards with a longbow does more than flirt with impossibility—he practically marries it and does his best to make an honest woman out of it.

This particular hunt, in many ways, had started more than a quarter of a century or so before my dilemma in the aspen grove. In fact,

it started in a grove of mature oaks some 1500 miles east of my home in Colorado. It was on an eerily foggy morning in the hills of West Virginia that two boys barely old enough to drive completed a four-year quest and put to rest a fine mountain gobbler. My good friend and hunting partner, Allen Schnopp, had offered to teach me what he knew about turkey hunting and calling, and in return I would teach him about bowhunting. Being that we were both around twelve or thirteen at the time, I am not sure how much either of us had to offer, but it seemed like a fair trade. And so, it is this affliction of which I have carried for three decades now that I blame (and mostly thank) my good friend.

Allen and I shared many adventures throughout our teenage and young adult years. From floating Big Sandy for trout, chasing girls and whitetails, to college fraternity parties and varmint hunting—and of course, chasing many a tom turkey. And at the end

of nearly every adventure was a jovial smile, bright eyes, and inquisitive spirit ready to hear every detail of the events when we returned (except for the fraternity parties—those were met with some stern warnings and occasional guilt-ridden anecdotes). Allen's father, who would become affectionately known to all who loved him simply as "The Dave", was always ready to hear what experiences we had in the field, and on certain occasions, got the camera out for some "hero" shots.

Dave had never picked up a bow and arrow, and he never turkey hunted, but when he was younger and in better health, deer hunting with his trusty 30-06 was one of his favorite things to do. And, even with his health struggles, he still managed to join us on a few deer drives and put some venison on the table.

Dave was a walking encyclopedia of jokes. His memory was uncanny. He could tell me the cost of the 1957 Chevy he purchased brand new off the lot to the penny, and turn around

and tell a joke that would have you rolling, only to follow it up with something like, “Old Dave Milburn told me that one back in 1954 right after we beat Terra Alta in the school baseball tournament and your grandpa Lawrence hit two homers that game...” I think Dave just loved life so much that he did his best to set moments to memory. He recognized the importance of simple life moments the way he did a good joke. I think that the heart condition that developed early on in his life only made him that much more aware of how precious life and family were.

Dave was a second father to me, and in many ways, was the perfect compliment to my own father. My father ran his archery shop while working the midnight shift in the coal mines six nights a week. Dave was semi-retired and very available when I needed advice. My father was enough of a handy man to fake it, but when I really needed help fixing something, Dave knew how to fix it or could figure out how. And later, when my father and I could no longer see eye to eye on a number of things, I always felt like I still had someone I could call if I needed to. At least, until the spring of 2018.

“The Dave” had been told that he would likely not live long enough to see his five children grow up. Not only did he do just that, but he also watched them have their own families. By the time he was finally called home, he had enjoyed meeting and getting to know his nine grandchildren. I think it was the love for his family that helped him beat the odds.

I had been in communication with Allen and knew Dave didn’t have much time, but I prayed he could hold on a while longer. At the end of March that year, I had to have a total knee replacement due to an old injury that finally caught up to me. My surgeon was very clear about the fact that I shouldn’t fly for several weeks after the surgery, as it could cause a blood clot. I was already all too familiar with that fact since I had a friend and fellow musician who didn’t heed his doctor’s warning after having a similar surgery. He passed away on the plane at the age of forty-seven. Unfortunately, On April 15th, just two weeks after my surgery, Dave lost his fight to prostate cancer and my adopted father was gone.

I knew there simply was no way for me to make it back to my hometown to pay my respects. Flying was out of the question and being in a car for 1500 miles was simply impossible. I knew there was only one way I could say goodbye

to “The Dave” at that point. Turkey season opened in Colorado the day before he passed and that Thursday, while the rest of the family would be reciting stories and saying their farewells, I was going to have my own kind of ceremony and say goodbye the best way I could—on a mountain chasing the birds that Allen and I had brought home to him so many times over the years.

This, of course, was easier said than done. I was able to get around, but with about a forty percent bend of the knee at that time and a leg bruised from the bottom of my foot to my groin, I knew I had my work cut out for me. Just driving to the area I wanted to hunt was going to be tricky—almost as tricky as sneaking out of the house without my wife finding out. I simply told her that I needed a different place to walk than our little valley. She, of course, knew better. But she also knew I needed to work things out my own way. “I suppose you might do a little stump shooting, too?”. “I saw the longbow and quiver in the truck”, she said. “I might”, I replied. “Probably ought to take your hunting license, too”, she continued. “Just in case”. “Well...just in case”, I said.

I was up and out the door the next morning well before daybreak, knowing full well I was going to need plenty of extra time to get setup. I had made myself a makeshift netted blind with some old tent poles that was about four foot high. This would allow me to sit in my small camp stool with my leg straight and still be hidden. I set out a couple decoys just a few yards away on an old logging road that cut through the aspen grove. It was less than a hundred yards away from where I could park the truck, and relatively flat, so it all seemed

feasible. At least, until that moment when the tom, after thirty minutes of rapid-fire gobbles from his roost a few hundred yards away to within sixty yards of my position, decided the old hen skirting across the edge of the aspens sounded a bit more enticing than yours truly. In his defense, she was quite the talker.

After letting them move past and out of sight, I began the slow process of getting my stiff knee moving again and gathering my setup. It was about that time that the dark clouds that had rolled in from the west decided to open and a fine mountain shower was upon me. Try as I might, there was simply no moving quickly. By the time I stiff legged myself back to the truck, with my camo skivvies soaked to the bone and the temps hovering just a few degrees above freezing, I was shaking uncontrollably.

I cranked up the heat in the truck and pulled my woolies and camp towel out of my pack. With dry skin and fresh clothes, I pondered my next move. I knew that the rain wouldn’t last long, but my knee had begun to tighten and ache from the swelling. Feeling a bit defeated, I simply blurted out loud, “Well Dave, that is the highs and lows of turkey hunting”. Instantly, I felt a sort of calm wash over me. I knew Dave was with me in that moment. I knew he was on his first turkey hunt. And I knew we weren’t done just yet.

The grove of aspens I had been hunting rested along the spine of a long ridge. Below that point were a series of benches that ran parallel to the ridge, cascading down the mountain until reaching a series of small parks running along the stream at the bottom

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »



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of the valley. With a fresh rain, one of those small parks was the most likely destination for the gobbler.

I raced my truck down the winding mountain road until I reached the bottom and slid it into a small pull-off beside the stream. The rain had stopped, and rays of sunlight were finding their way through the clouds. I slung my daypack and gear on, cut off a strong piece of willow to act as a walking stick, and headed along the water's edge. The willows and small cottonwoods provided me enough cover to slip along for a few hundred yards; stopping every so often to make some light purrs and yelps. Finally, a familiar gobble sounded off a couple hundred yards ahead and slightly uphill. I quickly setup my decoy at the corner of a small park, just a few short yards from a clump of cottonwoods.

As I began to call lightly, the raspy yelps and clucks of the feathered tramp who had foiled my earlier plans began to increase. Learning from my previous mistakes, I put in my old "Black Diamond" mouth call with more rasp than a middle-aged, chain-smoking biker mama. If he liked trashy, it was time for the proverbial red lipstick and mini skirt. For every bit of sleazy hen talk she could muster, I sounded back two-fold. She quickly decided there was only enough room for one feathered hussy on this mountain, and in she came.

The gobbler stayed back a bit, having enough sense not to get into the middle of such shenanigans (the true sign of a mature male, of course). The hen walked straight up to my decoy and laid into her like a "Jerry Springer" episode. Once my hen was clearly defeated and motionless, the tom raced right in for a better look. With both standing over my hen at barely eight yards away, there was little I could do. Finally, after several minutes of him circling around in a half strut, he fanned out and turned his back to me and blocked the hen's view. The Texas heart shot proved deadly, and the tom barely took four steps before stumbling for good.

Forgetting myself for a moment, I jumped up from my stool only to be quickly reminded of the invasive procedure I had just a few weeks prior. The bewildered hussy quickly put two-and-two together when I let out a few choice words and off she went. "Sorry, Dave", I said through my clenched teeth. It wasn't until I hobbled over to the bird that was finally still that I realized what a fine specimen he actually was. And, to do it in my condition with a longbow seemed to almost border on the supernatural. But then, I realized the supernatural is exactly what I was dealing with.

I admired the full beard and iridescent colors for a long while. "Well, Dave", I said, "I believe these Merriam's are the prettiest of all the turkeys". As I ran my hands over the white tips of the tail feathers and my adrenaline began to lower, I felt the emotions coming. The sun was streaking through the clouds as I looked up at the familiar 13,000-foot peak; still covered in snow. The aspens at the edge of the park were just beginning to bud, the buffalo grass was greening up after a long winter, and the small creek roared from mountain runoff. This place was as good as any to pay homage to one of the finest men I had ever known.

Over the next few weeks, I got to hear about the wonderful tributes that each of Dave's children gave him during the funeral service. I also enjoyed receiving photos of Allen's bird he got a couple weeks later, as well as other family members including Dave's grandson Easton (I'll give you one guess where his name came from).

As I prepare for another long winter here in the high mountains, I know dreams of spring are right around the corner. And for Allen, myself, and several who loved Dave, springtime and turkey hunting will forever have a new meaning for all of us. It will be a time to remember the jokes, the stories, and the smile of a very special man. And I feel confident that as the sun begins to break over the horizon, and the thunderous gobble of an old tom on the roost echoes through the mountains, we will all say a small prayer as we try for one more for "The Dave".

New Qualified Regular Members

We list the following names of members who have applied for regular membership in PBS and have been approved by the Council. These individuals have completed a lengthy application and are currently in their one-year probationary period. If you are a regular member and see any reason why any of these applicants should not be accepted, please send a signed letter stating your reasons to PBS Senior Councilman Preston Lay, PO Box 73, Jennings, OK 74038.

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

-PBS Officers and Council

Associates applying for Regular status:

Bryan Burkhardt - Clarkston, MI

Jesse Johnson - Flower Mound, TX

Robert "Bobby" Parrott - Knoxville, TN

DO YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY OR PICTURE?!

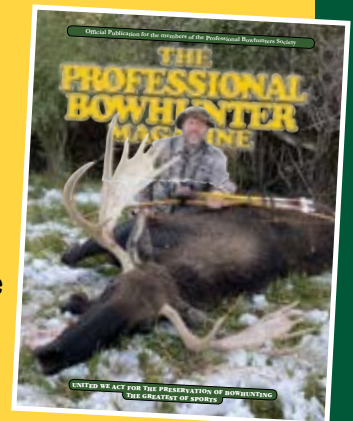
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SEMINOLE SWAMP BUCK

By Joe Fiorilli

The morning of September 10th 2022, I set out to meet a friend and head to a piece of public land just outside of West Palm Beach, Florida. My prior hunting experience has been mostly in West Virginia and Ohio not terribly far from where I grew up outside of Wheeling, WV. The heat, wetlands, and Florida prairies were all new to me other than what I saw hunting hogs the couple times I went in 2021. This year I was set to deer hunt Florida because my annual rut trip to WV just wasn't enough hunting for me anymore, i couldn't take it.

I finally knuckled up and decided to hunt the hot, humid, reptile and bug infested wet terrain of south Florida. I arrived at my friend's camp, and we loaded up into the swamp buggy which could only be driven on designated trails. High deck swamp buggies are a huge advantage to accessing trails because the water levels change drastically between wet and dry seasons. In September areas may be flooded and by the winter months the same grounds can be bone dry.

We drove into the swamp with three other guys had set up stand they hunted frequently so that is where they went. These spots were on transition areas that typical hunters hunt with far viewing distances. They were set up on trails going from small pine and palmetto brush islands. These islands are dense and hard to navigate, and many times surrounded by water - thick with mosquitos and the occasional alligator.

I figured my best chances on a buck was to push into the thick islands and try to set up there. That meant wading through eight to eighteen inches of water to get to these islands, so I did just that, going a few hundred yards, still-hunting through water until I got to the edge of some cypress trees.

I ended up bumping a deer on one of the pine islands when I was making my approach through the flat pond, and the deer snorted multiple times, but never saw me. I knew my wind direction was good, so I figured it didn't know for sure I was a human.

I slowly pressed on, finally reaching dry land, and found a few tracks and deer beds, along with a small rub. I crawled through a small

opening in the brush and found an area with several trails intersecting between the palms and the pines. The wind was in my favor and I decided to set up in my tree saddle about twenty five feet up.

I wasn't sure if it was buck or doe bedding but my thoughts were maybe a buck would come downwind and scent check the bedding area. I picked a tree as far downwind of the bedding and trails as I could hoping the buck would undercut me if he made an appearance.

I got settled into a tree around 8 o'clock a.m. I was toting a 57# Bob Lee recurve, shooting a 165 grain Zwickey two-blade broadhead. I sat for a while and let out subtle sparring sequence with my rattle bag. According to my sources and research, the peak rut happens sometime in September in this area of Florida.

After a couple hours of sitting I saw a shrub shaking thirty yards away and immediately grabbed my bow and got in a ready position around the left side of the tree. I couldn't tell what it was, then all of a sudden I saw the rack of a buck.

At this point my heart was pounding out of my chest as I sat in my saddle. The buck comes in to about twelve yards, and I have a perfect slightly quartering away shot. My whole focus was on the spot of the vitals of that buck - the rest of this hectic world was at a momentary stand-still. I picked my spot, drew my bow, hit anchor, and let one go.

I heard a thwack and saw what looked like a good shot. The buck crashed through the thicket as adrenaline raced through my body, and I let out a big Rick Flare "wooooooh!"

I sat for twenty minutes to settle down my off-the-Richter scale nerves. When I got to the ground, I didn't see my arrow right away but immediately got on blood. I followed it through a thick trail for about fifteen yards and there he was.

The buck was down, the arrow was perfectly placed passing through the lungs and exited through the brisket piercing the heart. I could finally relax and appreciate the moment.

I drug him out of the water to a buggy trail and laid my eyes on him. It was a perfect seven-point Seminole Swamp buck. I was grateful for my harvest. Another hunt was over and another unforgettable memory in the outdoors was added to my soul.

ONE MEMORABLE ARROW

By Sam Roberts

Several years ago, I saw a post on TradGang about a moose hunt in Newfoundland on tribal land that had not been hunted very much. There had been some sort of outfitter problem, and the first people were going to run hunts on their lands. WOW! What could be better than hunting moose on unpressured land with the first hunters? Well, that is another story. Let's just call the Newfoundland hunt a total bust but I did meet and make friends with Michael Ruggerio, which was worth the trip. Neither of us were drunks, and we did not smoke, and we were both Trad hunters; therefore, we had a good foundation for a friendship.

After the Newfoundland hunt, we talked about going to Alberta to hunt moose. The moose were bigger, the terrain better and the mountains were amazing. Michael got to work and found us two openings with a reputable archery outfitter in a pristine area that was loaded with moose. That hunt was another bust. As a result of the second failed hunt, I joked with Michael that he was going to be placed on double secret probation as hunt planner. But this story is not about a hunt – it is about one memorable arrow.

As an aside, Michael redeemed himself by getting us on a covid-delayed fall bear hunt in Manitoba where we both killed great bears. We are planning more hunts in the future and mostly we talk about moose. But let's get back to the arrow.

In Alberta we were the only trad guys out of ten in camp. There were the usual introductions and questions about where everyone was from, and they were mostly from Ohio or had friends in common. I think this was their first moose hunt, but they hunted deer quite a bit at home. As we were getting ready for our first day of hunting, they saw our recurves and of course we were hit with the question, "How far can you shoot?". As trad hunters we have all been asked that question. My stock answer is "Most of my shots are about fifteen steps, but I like to get closer". There were some eyes rolling and maybe some smiles passed between them, but generally they were nice guys.

The third day of the hunt after a big snow that lasted all night and most of the morning, I decided to practice on the block target that was outside the cabins. We were going to hunt that afternoon and I was tired of being inside. When I was walking back to the lodge two of the compound guys were coming down the steps. One of the guys asked me if I could hit the target from where we were standing- maybe he had a smirk on his face. The target was a good bit farther than where they were planning to shoot. Michael later told me that he estimated the distance was between fifty and sixty yards. It was a long shot.

I looked at the target and said, "if I hit the target will you go get my arrow". He answered with a condescending "YEAH". To myself



Sam and Michael Ruggerio with the evidence of a couple more good arrows.

I thought "SUM BEACH" and not in a good way. There was a small square of orange tape in the center of the target. I faced the target, came to full draw and released the arrow. You can watch an arrow traveling 160 FPS a long time at that distance. I knew it was a good one. It stuck in the target about two inches to the left of the orange tape.

With a hint of amazement, the compound guy said "I thought you couldn't shoot long shots" and channeling Quigley Down Under I answered "I never said I couldn't, I just like to get closer. I will sit on this bench while you get my arrow". It was a bit of a walk.

Michael loves to tell this story. He even tells me from time to time.

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E.R.A In Elk Hunting

By Robert C. Gibson

With the exception of some 13,200 nimrods in northern Idaho. Gem State elk hunters will be going to the field again this fall with the authority to shoot only bulls.

And, if past precedence is any indicator, bulls-only hunting is here for a long stay. Unless some changes are made in attitudes, regulations and hunting patterns. Idaho hunters can look forward to steadily declining numbers of elk and, as a result, more and more restrictions and closures

Deer herds are likely to start showing the same signs of demise if some steps are not taken now to stop them from the fate now faced by the elk. And a state-wide bucks-only season is a very real possibility in the near future.

Until several years ago, it was commonly thought that the way to build elk and deer herds was to restrict harvests to the males of the species only. That may reduce the harvest, but biologists now know that killing only the bulls and bucks is no way to increase herd sizes.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission had made a half-hearted stab at initiating an alternative to bulls-only elk hunting in an attempt to rebuild herds and allow some hunter harvest at the same time

The concept is called limited entry. Hunters in a specified area are allowed to shoot at either sex. But the number of hunters in the area is restricted. This year - the first year the program has been tested in the general Gem State elk season - only 12,000 residents and 1,200 nonresidents will be allowed to hunt either sex of elk in an area roughly encompassing Idaho's five northern counties. And those nimrods will not be allowed to hunt in any other area of the state.

Limited entry is a feasible idea. But, if it is to save the elk population, it must be carried throughout the state. And the smaller the area a person is allowed to hunt, the more closely the harvests can be controlled and the more likely the herds will not be over-harvested. Limited entry throughout the state, however, means that some nimrods are going to have to stay home. The number of hunters in the Gem State is growing every year with limited entry some hunters would have to be told "I'm sorry, but all of the tags in every area have been sold." Limited entry also would limit the Department of Fish and Game income, which comes almost exclusively from tag and license sales.

Former Fish and Game Commissioner Wynne Blake of Lewiston often contended that hunters, at some time in the future, would have to be restricted to primitive weapons - archery equipment or muzzle loaders - if a limited harvest by an unlimited number of hunters was to be accomplished.

It is no secret that the bow hunters and muzzle loaders kill less game per day in the woods than the rifle nimrods. But they seem to enjoy their sport more than their counterparts with rifles and they appear to be more conservation minded and greater lovers of the outdoors. Primitive weapons hunters are a nearly-nonconsumptive use of the wildlife resource. That is what is needed in Idaho. The problem, however, always has been that only a few people enjoy hunting with primitive weapons. And the ones that do are penalized with a three dollar charge for a special archery stamp, above the cost of the required hunting license and stamp.

Now archers and muzzle loaders have short, special seasons, during which they may use only primitive weapons. The longer general seasons, during the "prime time" of the fall, are for the gun hunters. Archers and muzzle loaders who want to hunt during that part of the year must compete with the rifle hunters.

A more feasible idea would be a long general season during which primitive weapons only would be allowed. During the middle of that season a special short season, during which rifles could be used, would open. The rifle hunters would, of course, have to carry a special three dollar - or more - stamp. Archers and muzzle loaders would be allowed to hunt with their weapons - without extra charge - during the rifle season. The season - basically the reverse of the status quo - would serve to encourage hunting with primitive weapons and discourage high-powered rifles. An unlimited number of hunters would be allowed in the field to hunt either sex of elk. But, because of the primitive weapons, harvest would be low. The large number of hunters permanently attached to their rifles - as one Lewiston fish and game official says, because they view their guns as an extension of their masculinity - would penetrate more income for the department than the few archers now in the fields.

Our Public Lands

According to figures recently published, the Federal government holds more than 725 million acres of national forests, parks, wildlife



"BUCK"

Paul "Bill" Meyer regular member of Zanesville, Ohio, did not wait long to nail a dandy in mid October of this fall. Hunting near his hometown, Bill took this 8-pointer that green scored 147 pt. PY. Has 26 3/8" outside spread. Bill used a 68 lb. Bear Alaskan with 2219's tipped with Roger Rothhaar's "snuffer" head.

refuges, public domain and other lands in trust for the American people. This land has been acquired, in large part, by money supplied by hunters. Statisticians at Remington Arms have determined that taxes levied on sportsmen have raised more than \$3 billion over the past half century. These dollars have contributed greatly to the cause of wildlife preservation and land conservation.

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A Little Luck at Land Between the Lakes

By Randy Brookshier

The Land Between the Lakes area of Kentucky and Tennessee is a truly beautiful and unique location. What makes it even more attractive for me is the fact that for the past several years a group of PBS members have descended there for a week of early season bow hunting. Mark Wang has hosted a members hunt there for several years running now. He does an excellent job of getting things organized, cabins rented and bow hunters pointed in the right direction for a deer encounter. The camp is always filled with a motley assortment of guys that cover the spectrum from new hunters looking for their first bow kill to the guys that have been doing it for decades and have several hundred bow kills behind them. This cross section of bow hunters makes for some interesting chats around the camp fire in the evening, one of the most enjoyable aspects of any hunting trip. Besides the fact that I have had to endure the ride back to Virginia with a near fatal dose of chigger bites following some of these excursions, this is one trip that I look forward to each year.

As I rolled in to camp on Saturday evening of the 2022 trip, I had the feeling this was going to be a special year. The camp was filled with old friends from around the country as well as soon to be new friends that I had not yet met. I knew the week was off to



a good start when I was still unloading my gear and received a text message from Rob Burnham that he had a doe down. The hunt was off to a promising start!

The first evening we had our traditional steak grilled over charcoal and then spent several hours catching up with the guys from around the country... Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Louisiana, etc. The next morning, we settled into the normal routine of a deer camp. Mornings out early to a stand, scouting and lounging around mid-day and then back on stand in the evening. The nights were filled with stories of encounters from the day while enjoying good eating.

Monday evening Bo Slaughter and I went out to an area that we had hunted in years past. I had shot a doe on a low-lying ridge the year before and wanted to check out that area for deer sign. The previous year that lit-

tle ridge had been covered up with horned saplings and a few early scrapes. I was a little disappointed when I walked along it this time as there was very little buck sign, or deer sign at all for that matter. There was a single scrape and two little hornings over the length of that ridge. The area was experiencing a massive mast crop and acorns were raining down at the time, causing the deer to be more scattered and less attracted to the fields. I struggle a bit hunting this area and figuring the deer out. I am from the Blue Ridge mountains of SW Virginia, steep up and down ridges, and I tend to hunt saddles and crossings. This relatively flat land and huge agricultural fields is a challenge to me.

Looking around the area at the end of the ridge I saw some evidence of feeding activity around a huge white oak tree, and nearby was a beech tree that several squirrels were

very active in and the ground underneath was torn up. I then noticed a large persimmon tree growing on the edge of an overgrown field. It looked as good as any place else I was apt to find so I climbed a tree in the center of the activity and settled into my Summit for the evening.

An hour or so before sundown I noticed movement across from me. This wispy hint of movement materialized into four does that fed their way to the base of another white oak tree. I had the frustrating pleasure of watching them feed on acorns for the next hour, fifty yards away. As it got later they started to move in my general direction, heading towards the overgrown field. The closest they got to me was about twenty five yards away and then they disappeared into the field. I was already making my plans for the next evening and had picked out my tree for the next hunt over by where they had been feeding, when I picked up movement about fifty yards to my right.

It was a large bodied deer heading towards the field at a very quick walk. It was coming down a faint trail that passed on the other side of an oak tree twenty yards in front of me. If it continued on I would have a wide-open shot at twenty yards after it passed by the tree. As it got closer it crossed a dry creek bed and as it turned its head I could make out a set of large main beams. I couldn't tell much else about the deer as things were happening fast and I wanted to prepare for the shot. Events were evolving quickly and I was already at full draw when the buck crossed behind the oak. As he stepped clear I released the arrow. He made a couple quick jumps and then disappeared into the overgrown field. It was getting darker and things had unfolded fast but my impression was that I hit him low, in the brisket.

I had to let the emotions settle down for a few minutes then I climbed down and retrieved my arrow. I was shooting a sixty-pound Bear Take down with a 2216 arrow and 175 grain Iron Will broadhead. I had a complete pass through and my bloody arrow was buried in the ground on the off

side. I eased out of the woods and walked back to the truck to wait for Bo to return.

Once Bo got to the truck we unloaded our packs, stands and other gear and went back in with lights to attempt to recover the deer. This turned out to be very discouraging. The buck only went about twenty yards before he was in the overgrown field in which the grass and weeds were literally up to the top of our shoulders. We were unable to locate any blood sign between the shot and the field, and I didn't want to risk losing him by thrashing around in the field at night, so we backed out to wait for the morning.

Those that have experienced situations like this on game animals can understand what a long, sleepless night this turned out to be for me. Replaying that shot in your mind and second guessing yourself. It makes no difference if it is a large buck or a yearling doe, the uncertainty of the situation makes for an emotional time.

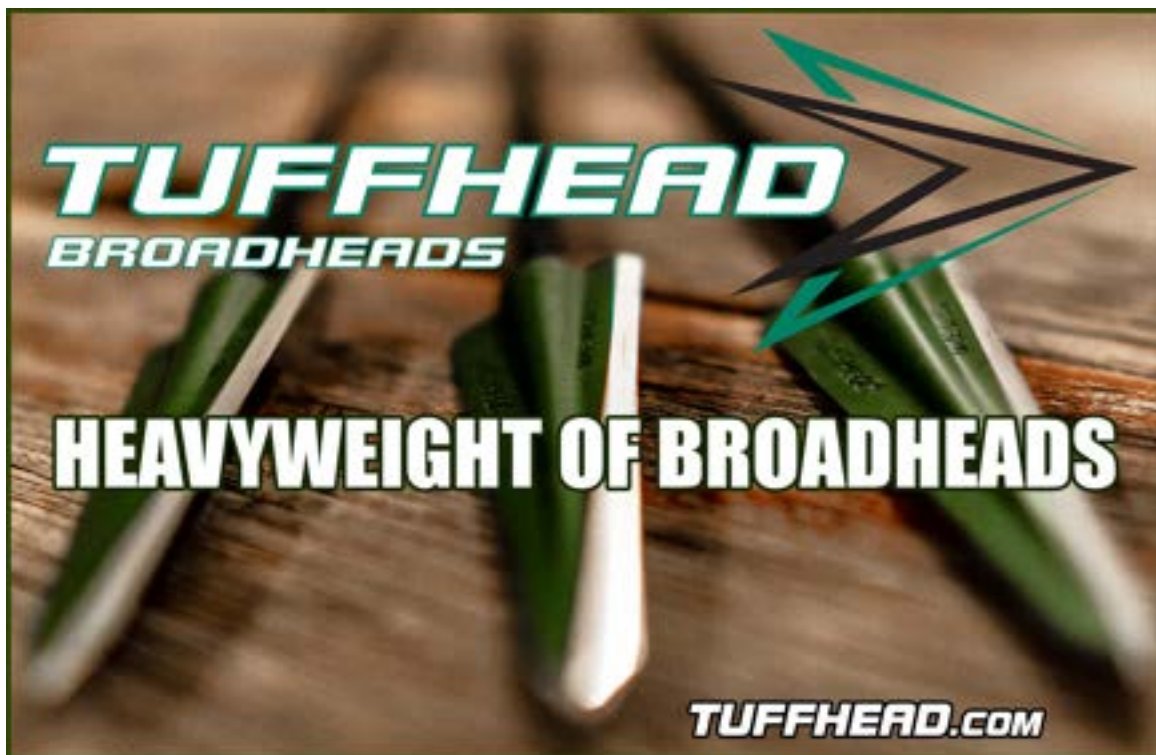
The next morning Bo, Rob Burnham and myself went to the same general area with plans to hunt until an hour or so after daylight and then attempt to recover the buck. I half heartedly hunted until there was good light out and then climbed down. The other guys met me at my truck shortly there after and we proceeded to start trailing the buck. We kind of joked a little as we were heading

out that between the three of us we had well over a hundred years of bowhunting experience and had collectively been involved in the recovery of several hundred bow shot animals.

I think we were all shocked, and very pleasantly surprised when we walked into the field and found a large, mature ten pointer laying dead about forty to fifty yards from the point where I had shot him. I would have easily heard him go down if he had been in the woods instead of the grassy field.

Then came the congratulatory handshakes, photographs, field dressing and dragging out to the truck. I have to say, it is a pleasure, as well as a learning experience, to have a professional photographer in the form of Rob Burnham along with you when you recover a nice deer like this!

This buck was one of four nice bucks that were brought into camp on this hunt, along with a couple does. The hunt at the L.B.L. is always enjoyable, whether I shoot anything or not. Despite the chiggers, it has become one of the highlights of my fall and I look forward to it each year. Thanks again to Mark Wang for all the work he puts into hosting this hunt.



FIRST ANNUAL PBS VIRTUAL CLOUT TOURNAMENT



By Steve Hohensee

Results are in for the 1st Annual PBS Virtual Clout Tournament! We had about thirty members shoot the event and ten to fifteen nonmembers participated as invited guests. Participants were from eleven states including Virginia, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Iowa, Wyoming, Nebraska, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Colorado, Arizona, representing two countries, the USA and New Caledonia!

WINNER: Randy Brookshier, VA score: 96

2. Vince Shaw, PA, score: 80
3. Josh Bashaw, VT score 68
4. Tony Middleton, VA score 66
5. Jacob Silvey, AR score 59

We had three door prizes for this event and tickets were drawn at random for each member that participated.

Prizes:

- 1). Custom turkey call donated by Chris LaTona
- 2). Hand forged PBS arrow bottle opener donated by Dan Brockman of Crossfire Forge
- 3). Hand forged PBS arrow bottle opener donated by Dan Brockman of Crossfire Forge

Door prize winners:

- 1). Steve Hohensee
- 2). Joe Kobert, PA
- 3). Rick Wildermuth, AZ





CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »





SUCCESS IN THE SWAMPS - END TO BEGINNING

By Newman Landa

Many great hunting stories take the reader through grueling, exciting journeys filled with challenges, missed opportunities and rebounds; and on the last day, everything comes together with an arrow sailing through the sun's final orange purple hues and finding its target. This is not one of those success at the last moment hunting stories, which is why the best way for me to tell this hunting story is in reverse.

Day Three was a beautiful Saturday morning in the swamps of South Carolina. Yesterday's rain was gone and the temperature had dropped just enough to keep the mosquitoes at bay. With PBS members Mike, from Delaware, and Blaine, a South Carolina native, I headed to the trailhead where we would make our way through the flooded timber in search of wild hogs. The swine in this area had been giving Blaine the slip for the last few days, and Mike and I were there to help funnel the hogs towards him in the middle, or else get a shot

ourselves. I had hunted this particular slough a couple times so I had a mental layout of the terrain and an idea of where the pigs may be waiting as the sun warmed the swamps. I was thankful for this mental map which, only a couple days prior, had been a blank slate.

On this particular piece of public land, sign of hogs was everywhere, but days prior, I learned from Blaine and Mark, the PBS member who had organized the hunt, that if I got distracted by old sign, I would never find the hogs. As we continued on the main trail, passing torn up roots, wallows, and scat, my mind was sifting through all the data determining what was worthy of paying attention to. Days before on this same trail, it would have taken me hours to make that determination and get to the areas that were actually holding hogs. The wisdom of good mentors like Mark and Blaine proved to be extremely valuable.

Mike, Blaine, and I reached our rallying point and split up, cutting the area into thirds in order to make our parallel paths through the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »



» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

swamps. The wind was giving us fits, just as it had the past two days. Skirting the edge between the higher ground of pine forest and the lower ground of knee-deep swamp, I made my way, working slowly but methodically, trying to cover ground but keeping my head up and aware. I had learned in the days prior that hogs, even the big ones, can easily be within bow range before you spot them.

After a few hundred yards, I heard rustling in the leaves, and squeaking, and snorting. A small procession of ten tiny piglets, about the size of my boot, came trotting by. They seemed to be moving with a purpose but at the same time, looked lost. I assumed that they were looking for “mama”. They moved only a few feet from me going in the direction from where I had come. They stopped, did an about-face, and headed back to my right. I pursued the piglet parade without being noticed. Now all of us were looking for “mama”.

After only twenty or thirty paces, with my heart pounding just a little faster now, I saw a big red figure move from behind the dense brush, letting out a snort as she did. My plan had worked and I was now within thirty yards of two sows. Reunited, the group started pushing forward as I tried to stealthily gain ground on them. Despite the close proximity I was maintaining, the vegetation prevented a clear shot. At one point, taking the advice Mark and Blaine had given me about being aggressive, I made a quick dash over a berm to move parallel to the group and get ahead of them. I ran down the berm as quickly and quietly as I could, paralleling the pigs’ path. When I dropped back down into the thickets, I was in front of them, with a favorable wind, and with hogs working their way right to me.

I readied an arrow and tried to quietly clear shooting lanes. The piglets were squealing and squeaking every so often but the grunts of the big sow put them back in their place and sent excitement through me. The smaller of the two sows crossed the slough to my right, swimming to the other side. I made ready for the bigger sow to follow her. Tension on the string, shooting lane picked out, I came to full draw as she approached, then stopped and turned back to her piglets. I waited. The fickle sow started moving back in the direction we had come. The ever-swirling winds had changed just enough to make

her suspicious. I pursued the group as they back-tracked, coming to full draw two more times but never able to get a clear shot. Eventually the sow crossed the slough as well. I hoped she would move to where Blaine or Mike could intercept her.

A few hours later I met up with Blaine, who also had struck out, and we walked back to the truck defeated but not disappointed. Mike had already returned to camp not having any close encounters on his side of the slough either. As I packed up camp and loaded the truck to head home, I was more than happy with the conclusion of my hunt.

Day Two began with scattered showers and the dreary gray light of dawn following a night of storms. The other hunters in camp that morning, including Mark, Blaine, Mike, and two others, Sam and Patrick, were wavering on whether or not to set off after pigs first thing, or wait until the rain slacked off, then hunt hard the second half of the day. I’m not sure who we thought we were fooling. After a quick breakfast everyone was off to try and use the cover of the rain to get an arrow in a big boar or sow. Still very unfamiliar with the majority

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of the land we could hunt, I ventured off solo to a spot that looked good on the map. My plan was to work quickly and methodically through the swamps and do a bit of scouting, hoping it would turn into hunting. With a steady rain falling, I left my truck and ducked off the trail into the woods, immediately walking through a huge hog wallow. I made note of it but with no fresh sign, I kept moving. After several miles, and little indication of anything bigger than squirrels and beavers, I began to realize that the pigs may simply not be in this area. By mid-morning I had made it back to the truck and headed to camp to regroup and plan the afternoon's hunt.

The areas close to camp appeared to be productive and other hunters in our group had mentioned that the swamps close by held lots of pigs in the past. I decided in the afternoon I would stay close and maybe get a chance at the animals that had been passed by when other hunters ventured deeper into the Wildlife Management Area. The rain ended, and after lunch I entered the woods where I was immediately greeted by clouds of mosquitoes. I pushed into the swamp but it seemed my bug spray was seen as more of a challenge than a deterrent. I drew my bow a few times to rehearse the moment of truth but with mosquitoes exploring every orifice they could find, even an archer with the strongest iron mind would have been hard-pressed to execute a good shot. I made the call to head back to camp a little early, conceding that the mosquitoes had won this round.

Day One of my first hog hunt began with a crisp clear morning full of unknowns and excitement. I had arrived at camp the night before after an unproductive day at work. After a quick cup of coffee the next morning, I was riding with my new hunting partners, Mark and Blaine, to a spot they had seen hogs in the days prior to my arrival. After confirming to Mark that this was my first hog hunt, he designated me as the "Number One" shooter. To say I was excited would be a severe understatement.

Mark and Blaine made it clear that the key to success was to cover ground. The phrase I kept hearing was, "If you walk enough, you

will find pigs." As soon as we got out of the truck and grabbed our bows, we were making our way down the trail. I couldn't believe how quickly we were moving. This truly was a "Movement to Contact" as Mark, a twenty-three year Army veteran, put it to help a Marine Corps veteran like myself understand the current mission. We kept passing sign of hogs and I kept making a mental note that we were bypassing it. As we waded through the swamps we began to see fresh sign: scat, wallows, trails; and we kept pushing forward, moving to contact. It was a challenge trying to keep my head up to scan for movement while also trying not to trip over all the thick underbrush and submerged logs. Every stump and dark log tricked my senses into seeing an imaginary hog. Despite all these little challenges and the sensory overload, I was having the time of my life.

We waded through flooded slough and eased our way through saplings and briars, weaving my Black Widow longbow and quiver through as best I could without sounding like a clumsy oaf. I heard a noise and saw its source. A grunt, then what appeared to be two black fifty-five gallon drums foraging by a fallen tree. Within an instant I had a flood of thoughts including, "Dear lord, look at the size of those things!" and "Was a longbow really going to be enough?" I signaled to Mark that I had spotted pigs. He whisper-yelled "Get up there!" I nocked an arrow and started slipping through the trees to get closer. I had initially seen two huge black sows but as I moved to within thirty yards or so, I saw there were numerous pigs. Trying to weave my bow with a nocked arrow through the brush was tricky and after a few steps I could see the animals begin to move away. I remembered what Mark had told me. Get aggressive. The sounder began to scatter as my presence became known. The two massive black sows took off into the woods so I scratched them off the list and focused my attention on the two smaller red sows that had not yet fled. One darted from right to left too fast and obscured to offer a shot. I kept an eye

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »

on the other red sow and saw her moving in the same direction but a bit closer than the previous one had. I picked out a small window between two saplings. I knew if she stopped in that window I would have a brief opportunity to loose an arrow. I came to full draw and she stepped forward, slightly quartering to me, but with her shoulder in my window. The Doug Fir shaft and Zwickey broadhead were on their way. I snapped a mental image that I pray never fades: the red nock and red and white fletchings flying perfectly true and sinking into the shoulder of that red sow. I looked back at Mark and pumped my fist knowing it had been a lethal hit. That is when I snapped a second mental image I hope never to forget: Mark's reaction to my excited fist pump. It was a very clear non-verbal message basically saying, "No time to celebrate hot shot! The job isn't done yet!" This look locked me back into the moment and made me turn around just in time to see my sow tumble after only making it twenty yards. As piglets continued to orbit around us, I stood over the sow admiring her stout build and copper red bristling hide. I was trying to take it all in and wrap my head around what had just transpired, barely an hour after we had exited the truck.

After getting my sow dressed, packed out, and on ice, the afternoon of Day One

concluded with several more hours of stalking through the swamps. We jumped a few more pigs and I even had a pair of sows come within ten yards of me. At full draw, the bigger of the two sows was facing directly toward me, and while the little devil on one shoulder told me I





could kill it with an arrow between eyes, the little Angel on the other shoulder reminded me to wait for a quartering or broadside shot. After a short stare-down, the two sows ran off unharmed. I went back to camp without a second hog but with an amazing experience and more knowledge to file away for future use.

This hunt validated all the practice and preparation I had done prior, and confirmed that not only was I mentally and physically prepared, but that maybe I could walk among the successful bowhunters that I admired so much. As a lifelong hunter but relative newcomer to hunting with a recurve and longbow, I've been striving to get the experiences under my belt I felt like I needed to truly belong. This hunt did a great deal to solidify my love of not only traditional archery, but more importantly, for the community that makes it great. I had been successful on my first hog hunt, on the first day, within the first hour. The only thing now that worries me is the "Curse of the First Cast." Catch a fish on your first cast and it is all but guaranteed you are going to get skunked for the rest of the day. I just hope that getting a nice sow at the beginning of my hog hunting career does not mean there will be a long dry spell to follow. There is only one way to find out though. I've already got my calendar marked for next year's PBS Member Hunt and am looking forward to spending as many days as I can between now and then "moving to con-



A Big Kid Bow

By Justin Webb

“Dad, when can I have a big kid bow?” My three-year-old mini me, Anderson, asked as he was watching me shoot at milk jug lids across the back yard at our house. He was holding onto his nerf bow that my parents had given to him as a birthday gift a couple months before and the oversized, rocket type projectiles were only floating about ten feet before hitting the ground in front of him when he would shoot. This was our typical ritual whenever we had some free time, and I was really enjoying spending time with him doing something that I am passionate about. It was also a joy to watch him become so interested in it. He was constantly reminding me that the silencers on the string were made of beaver and that he was never allowed to touch the “pointy end” of my arrows. My answer to his question though was “someday buddy, you will be big enough to have a “big kid bow”. “Then we can go hunt deer?” was his reply and I answered with a smile “yes sir, we will.”

What Anderson didn’t know is that I was already contemplating getting somebody to build him a bow that he could practice with and do some shooting in the back yard with me. He was going to be a big brother in the next few months and my wife Emily, and I had been discussing getting him a “big brother” gift for some time. I did some research and found that there were several bowyers around that made bows catered to children of all ages and sizes and they were very similar to full sized bows for adults. I



reached out to my friend, Shad Vanatti, for a recommendation on a kids bow, and he quickly let me know that David and Tracey Balowski, up at St. Joe River bows in Michigan, make great bows for kids and that I should call Tracey and talk to her about it. Never one to waste good advice, I called and left her a message letting her know about my son and after a few days of playing phone tag we were finally able to talk. I could instantly hear the excitement in her voice as I explained what my plans were for Anderson, and I began picking her brain with questions about the options for her bows and what she

thought would be best suited for him. It was decided that he would be getting a blue with black glass, 10# draw, Lil Rapids longbow complete with six arrows that would have white and orange fletching (his favorite color).

About five weeks later I got another call from Tracey, and she let me know to be expecting a package in the next few days. Even though this bow wasn’t for me I was filled with the same excitement as if it had been. As promised, the UPS man dropped off a tall skinny package a few days later while Anderson was taking his afternoon nap. I



snatched it up off the porch and ran inside to open it up and show Emily the new bow moving into our house (it was the third bow in two months). The bow came out great and was complete with the St. Joe River arrowhead medallion in the riser. Realizing that Anderson had about 30 minutes of his nap left I ran down and grabbed some leftover wrapping paper from his birthday, crudely wrapped the arrows and the bow separately, and placed them on the TV stand. When he walked out of his room after his nap, he instantly noticed them, so he picked up and unwrapped the arrows. I asked him, "What do arrows go with?" "A big kid bow!" was his answer. Shortly after we were in the back yard working on form and flinging arrows at a box target. The smile on our faces said everything and I don't think the smile left for a few days afterward.

The next few months of our lives would prove to be hectic, but we would still take time to shoot our bows and spend our time bonding in the back yard while we still lived in our house. We were building our temporary living space on our little twenty-acre strip of heaven north of Bedford, Indiana and we would be moving soon. Anderson became a big brother on August 5th, 2022, as we were blessed with another baby bowhunter, Lincoln. After moving to our place, my thoughts naturally started drifting to that magical time of year, Fall. Acorns were falling all over our place and the deer sign was starting to show up. I started looking for spots where me and Anderson could slip into cover and possibly get a close encounter with a deer. That chance would come in mid-October when I got out of work a little early and rushed home to grab Anderson and our bows. We were going to be hunting close to our newly constructed pole barn house, but it was a natural corridor that the local does liked to use due to the abundance of white oak and pin oak trees. I wish I could say

that we sat down in our chairs and ten minutes later a big stud buck came walking out of the hayfield and we put an arrow in him. This would have made for a great memory, but what actually happened was quite memorable in itself and makes me appreciate what my dad did for me and my brothers when we were kids. While walking to our spot, Anderson, carrying his monster truck toys, trips, and falls, making a loud crashing sound in the leaves. A split second later I hear the sounds that we've all heard before, branches breaking, leaves crunching, and the dreaded blow of a doe.

After helping Anderson back to his feet, he yelled excitedly, "Look! There's a deer!" Sure enough, there were 6 does disappearing into the woods. We sat down in our chairs in the weeds to try to salvage our hunt. Anderson sat playing with his monster trucks while wrapped in my Asbell wool jacket for a few minutes and then proclaims, "I have to pee!" and proceeds to do the deed right where we are sitting. This was followed up a few minutes later with the question "Where are the bucks at Dad?" and "How long are we going to sit here?" After about 45 minutes we decided to pack it in and head to the house for some dinner. Although this was not the action packed hunt we all hoped, it was easily the best part of my season. Even better than taking my first mule deer in Wyoming two weeks later. I got to spend time with my son while doing something that I long for all year. It reminded me not to get too attached to the idea of just killing a deer but rather enjoy the moments you get to spend in nature and the time spent with your loved ones. I didn't see any bucks that day but what I saw meant so much more. I saw the smiling face of a proud little boy, hunting with his dad, carrying his own big kid bow.

PATIENCE, PERSISTENCE, AND PERSEVERANCE

By Gary W. Brown

When I was nineteen years old I met a man by the name of Frank Simpson. Frank lived in my hometown of Columbus, Indiana, and had a small traditional archery shop in the basement of his house. He sold Indian and American recurve bows, an

occasional longbow, and Acme premium Port Orford cedar arrow shafts by the thousands. Frank and his wife Sarah were much older than me but as I have always gravitated toward older people, we became very close friends until the time they both crossed to the other side.

In 1977, I and three other hunting buddies were bowhunting deer in Northern Wisconsin and Frank and Sarah were staying in the cabin next to ours. One of the members of our hunting group made a lethal hit on a big Wisconsin doe right at dark. He came back to the cabin and we all went back to the woods to hopefully track and retrieve the doe.

Frank came with us and it was that night that I received my first lesson on how to truly track wounded game.

I thought I had a good handle on tracking but soon realized that Frank had forgotten more about tracking than I would ever learn.

Four hours of tracking on my hands and knees turning leaves and scanning every blade of grass for blood sign by the light of a Coleman lantern was the beginning of a good foundation on the art of tracking. I learned that night it was about using your five

I learned that night it was about using your five senses but more importantly it was about patience, persistence, and perseverance.

senses but more importantly it was about patience, persistence, and perseverance. I would spend the next several decades building on what Frank set as a foundation that night in Wisconsin.

Fast forward to 1985, bowhunting for whitetails in Brown County, Indiana. It was the first week of bow season and I was just above my aunt's home deep in the woods at the north end of a deep wide valley, twenty feet up in a portable tree stand. I was at a junction of two game trails with one running parallel to the valley edge with the other trail coming across the valley and up to my location. It was frosty that morning but was going to warm by noon. My bow was one of Ken Beck's Black Widow Greybark takedown recurves. I was shooting Easton aluminum arrows and my broadheads of choice were two-bladed Zwicky's sharpened to a razor's edge.

I was starting to really get cold when the sun finally crested the ridge to the east. I turned to face the tree and simply leaned back on my safety belt, set the tip of my recurve on the toe of my boot, closed my eyes, and began to soak up the morning sun. Ten minutes into this warming, I heard them coming out of the valley and toward the junction of the two game trails. I opened my eyes, placed an arrow on my string and prepared for a twelve-yard shot. The first three that came up were all does moving in single file with the fourth being a fat little buck.

The does never slowed down as they crested the edge of the valley but the little buck hesitated just long enough for the Black Widow to send a Zwickey broadhead through his ribs right behind his front shoulder. In two bounds he was out of sight moving through the heavy cover to the south. I closed my eyes and leaned back for some more sun. Thirty minutes passed before I decided to climb down from my stand but I knew the shot was lethal and after having shot several deer, I was sure it would be a short blood trail.

Right.

Upon inspection of where he was standing

when the arrow hit him, there was no sign of blood and no arrow. Just hoof divots in the soft earth from his initial jump. I marked the spot with an arrow and moved ever so slowly toward the south following the disturbed leaves. After twenty yards I had yet to cut a single drop of blood but kept moving in the same direction for fifty yards. The woods opened up at that point and I looked in all directions thinking my buck had to be lying close. Nothing. From the sign it was obvious the does quit following each other as the tracks separated and began to dissipate in the leaves and foliage. I marked this spot and walked back to where my initial shot had taken place and begin to mark the trail with small pieces of toilet paper along their path of travel to the spot at fifty yards. As I moved, I was on my hands and knees several times looking for the smallest drop of blood to no avail. From that point, I began sweeps from left to right moving in the same direction as the initial direction of travel based on the toilet paper trail. At a hundred yards and still no sign, I returned to the fifty-yard marker and dropped just into the edge of the valley and repeated my sweeps in the same direction to the south. Nothing. I once again returned to the fifty-yard marker and moved uphill out of the valley and repeated the sweeps. Nothing.

I repeated this process in every direction for the next two hours.

In one of my initial sweeps to the south, I skirted a thicket of multi-floral rose which is almost impossible to penetrate unless you enjoy great pain and bleeding. I decided to go back to the edge of that thicket and really take a close look. Upon examination, I saw the back half of my arrow lying on the ground in the middle of that thicket. I placed my bow on the ground and belly crawled along a rabbit path and finally retrieved the arrow with the help of a stick. The arrow, including fletch, was clean and I could not find one drop of blood on the ground entering or exiting any area around this thicket. The thicket was twenty feet across, six feet high and to this day I have no idea how that arrow got in the bottom of that thicket. However, I had a new point of last contact with the buck. I began sweeps in all directions from that point with absolutely no sign of blood.

It had been four hours since I put an arrow through that buck and I was frustrated, to say the least. It was at this point I sat down on a stump overlooking the valley and simply asked God for a sign. As the words were coming from my mouth, seventy five yards to

the southwest, in a dense pine thicket, there were several blue jays that just went berserk. It sounded like someone put them in a gunny sack and was shaking them. I said "Thank You" in a loud voice and stood up.

I could see the jays on a downed log (commonly called a "Widow Maker") that was caught in the fork of another tree. The log was almost parallel to the ground and still eight feet high. The jays were on this log and still raising all kinds of hell as I approached.

Making my way through the pines, thick brush, and cedars, it opened to a small clearing and directly under the log was my buck. He had covered over two hundred yards from the base of my tree stand.

It was then I could hear Frank in my head telling me to use all five of my senses while tracking. He told me to always pay attention to the jays, crows, and squirrels.

Today I listened to the jays.

He wasn't a big buck but quickly went to number one on my toughest tracking challenge list

Before I even moved the buck for several yards looking for blood. There was not one drop that I could find. The side of the buck that was exposed did not have a mark on it so I rolled him over. There, where the arrow had entered was a white "glob" plugging the hole. It simply appeared to be fat. When I began field dressing, it appeared as if every drop of blood in his body had collected in his chest cavity. My arrow had entered the sweet spot but had stopped when it hit the leg bone on the opposite side. The front half of my arrow and Zwickey broadhead were still in the chest cavity.

It took me over four hours to find him with help from above and a handful of noisy blue jays but nonetheless, I found him.

Patience, persistence, and perseverance.

"Thank you," Frank.



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2023 PBS MEMBERSHIP HUNTS

We're now in the dog days of summer but should be shooting, preparing our gear, adding new items to our packs and getting ready for our fall hunts. We've had some good membership hunts this year already and should be able to continue the streak with the upcoming fall membership hunts. What's more fun than camping, cooking, sitting around the campfire at night, and bowhunting a new area with your PBS buddies? Contact me at jeffreyholchin@gmail.com with questions. By the way, it doesn't

have to be exclusively a bowhunting event – there is a possible saltwater fishing trip in the works and maybe even a Burmese Python "hunt" in the Florida Everglades right before the 2024 Banquet.....I've also heard rumblings about a Maryland sitka deer hunt but it's not official yet. We're all about adventure and fellowship here at the PBS! Hope to see you at one or more of the following hunts:

1. Georgia mountains black bear hunt

- Jerry Russell will lead this public-land hunt in September. You will learn how to do it from an expert in bowhunting mountain black bears but you had better be in shape. The key is to find the right elevation where the white oaks are producing and be willing to get there for spot/stalk or to hang a stand on a tree that's dropping akerns. Pro tip 1: do NOT trash talk the Georgia Bulldogs football team or you will be sitting the stand next to the outhouse! Pro tip 2: did I mention that you need to be in very good physical condition? This hunt is already full, sorry, but you can contact Jerry at stickbowjerry@hotmail.com for more details or to get on the back-up list.

2. Land-between-the-lakes (LBL) hunt

on the KY side from September 30-October 6 for whitetail deer and Turkey. Thousands of acres of prime public land country to hunt. There are multiple cabins for rent but also tent camping available, and unbelievable cooking! Some nice bucks hit the ground here in 2022. Contact Mark Wang at markhw19@yahoo.com if interested - pretty high capacity but the cabins fill up fast. This annual hunt has become a classic as the hunters figure out the area and fill some tags. Many of these hunts either have a low capacity or fill up very quickly, but this one is an exception to that rule.

3. Blue Ridge VA hunt for whitetail deer, turkey and black bear – this year the dates are October 22-28 but unfortunately this hunt is already full. There are many thousands of acres of hardwood ridges on public land to hunt, but it helps to be in decent shape for this hunt. Randy

Brookshier hosts this annual hunt and does all the cooking, which is awesome and not for those on a diet; contact Randy at stykbow59@comcast.net if interested. Size limit is usually around 10 hunters. Whitetails, black bear, turkeys and small game abound, and great fishing to be had as well.

4. Northern PA deer hunt

with Tim Denial and the Mercer County bowbenders - come experience the hardwoods of PA with Tim Denial and friends from October 29 to November 4. Stay at a nice campground with showers and hunt thousands of acres with Tim. This will be in Warren county, management unit 2F and PA hunting licenses go on sale on June 1. This is a great time to experience the Northwoods of PA. Contact Tim Denial at zebdenial@gmail.com if interested.

5. Blackbeard Island GA hunt

for deer and hogs - this is the nation's oldest organized archery hunt on an island with ancient oaks, Spanish moss, giant rattlesnakes, big gators and lots of history. The deer are tiny but still fun to hunt, there were plenty of hogs for the 2022 hunt and the weather is usually pleasant. This hunt is usually the first full weekend in December (arrive and scout on Wednesday, hunt Thursday-Saturday, and depart on Sunday), there is no limit on the number of hunters who can join this hunt, and our own Jerry Russell will use his boat to shuttle hunters to/from the island. You will need both a GA big game license with deer tags and the NWR permit to hunt, and must follow the refuge rules to the letter. Contact Matt Schuster at matt@easterndynamicsinc.com to sign up. How often can you enjoy a beautiful

sunrise over the ocean and hear waves crashing on the beach while watching deer or hogs feeding towards your stand? That alone is worth it.

6. Arizona hunt

for javelina, mule deer and coues deer from January 1, 2024 until about January 10th or 12th or 14th or whenever folks decide to head home. This is a truck-camp type of hunt on public land. Rick guarantees warm clear sunny weather (jk)... and adventure with great food for sure! Contact Rick Wildermuth at Rwildermuth2@cox.net if interested. This is a classic Membership hunt and we sure appreciate the work that Rick puts into this hunt.

2024 Membership hunts

– let me know the details if you are planning a Membership hunt for 2024. I do know that we will NOT have the annual coastal GA hog hunt in 2024, as the public area we have hunted for years doesn't have the hog numbers anymore to be worth the effort; we're searching for a replacement area and have several candidates that might work out. Councilman Bubba Graves will again host the famous Davis Mountain Hunt for hogs and javalina from January 27 to February 4, 2024; unfortunately, it is already full but if interested, you should contact Bubba ASAP to get on the back-up list because cancellations do happen and you might still have a chance. I am looking into a combo FL hog hunt/Burmese python rodeo in March, right before the Banquet, but need to check out some areas and do more research before I decide if it is practical. It might be worth it just to see Steve H single-handedly wrangle a twenty foot long angry python with no weapon except for his teeth and claws....

**For additional information and an updated list, check out the website
www.professionalbowhunters.org/member-hunts-2023.html#/**

Just in Case: Adding a Handgun to Your Kit

By **Brian Wilson**

In June of 2021 I was introduced to Joel Riotto at a local 3D shoot. I recognized him immediately. When I was younger, I read his articles in major bow hunting publications touting trophies and adventures of which I had only dreamed

A topic which seems to arise often without a great deal of discussion is the carrying of a concealed firearm while bowhunting. From Maurice Thompson drawing his revolver in the face of a Florida alligator to Fred Bear famously packing a .44 magnum on Alaskan adventures to bowhunting friends who have off-handedly mentioned “having my sidearm, just in case,” the carry of defensive firearms while bowhunting is long established and seems widespread.

Having spent a lengthy career carrying guns in remote places, there are a few considerations one should make when adding a defensive firearm to your hunting kit.

The first question is legality: Open Carry, Concealed Carry with a Permit or Constitutional Carry (no permit necessary) are legal methods. State laws vary, learn them. My home state of Virginia allows the carry of a concealed firearm by a license holder while hunting, as long as the possession is not otherwise restricted by law or a property owner.

The next question is purpose. Is your primary concern protection from two or four-legged critters? Weapon choice can and should be dictated by the intended need. A threat from a chance encounter with a bear or lion, verses the possibility of stumbling into a clandestine drug manufacturing site deep in one of our National Forests may require different defensive tools.

Here in the South, our potential threats runs the gamut from black bears to stray dogs to the full spectrum of people problems. Proximity to population centers may make your

woods-carry look a lot like your Walmart-carry. For me, that means a moderate capacity (10-15rd) sub-compact 9mm, such as Sig Sauer’s P365, Springfield Armory’s Hellcat or any of the smaller GLOCK designs. Any of these, and others, are small enough to be carried without excuse and capable enough to solve most handgun problems.

A greater four-legged concern would necessitate a more powerful, less comfortable to carry option such as a 10mm semiautomatic or magnum revolver. Most carry options will exist regardless of weapon size.

Now that we have established the Why and the What, let’s look at the How.

With few exceptions, your firearm should be carried in a holster. The holster will protect your gun from the elements, and safely keep it within reach if needed. Security, speed and concealability will always



Belt-mounted outside the waist (Simply Rugged Holsters). Comfortable and classy with matching leather, but problematic when your waist is occupied by a pack or harness.



Wilderness Systems Safepacker easily connects to harnesses or packbelts using an integrated Velcro strap. Protection for you and your gun, while providing quick access.

be a compromise.

Finding a holster that works with your hunting system can be a challenge resulting in a box of lightly used holsters and eye rolls from a non-packing significant other (try “you can’t put a price on safety...”). Luckily, we live in an era of near unlimited holster varieties, each with extensive online reviews of varying expertise and motivation. Unfortunately, this variety can be paralyzing to the hunter looking to add a handgun to their loadout.

Belt, or outside the waistband (OWB), holsters are the most common holster type providing a balance of speed and security. Inside the Waist (IWB) holsters provide deeper concealment where desired, but will likely not be practical while wearing hunting layers. Belt-worn holsters will also interfere with tree stand harnesses or pack belts.

Pocket holsters are little more than a sleeve used to isolate a firearm from other pocket detritus and position it for a draw. I have found them to work best with small revolvers in outer layer pockets,

Chest-harness holsters provide access and security when the beltline is otherwise occupied. Options include open-carry models from various manufacturers as well as concealed options such as one of the Hill People Gear Kit Bags. I have used the HPG bags for years and have found them to be comfortable and accessible when a traditional holster would not work. Another plus of the HPG Kit Bags is that they go unnoticed in most social encounters. My HPG Snubby Kit Bag carries my P365, headlamp, and an energy bar conveniently without fouling

the draw of my 62” recurve.

The Wilderness Tactical makes a non-standard holster called the Safe-Packer, originally designed for mountain Search and Rescue teams to securely carry firearms while wearing climbing harnesses. The Safepacker is available in a variety of sizes and colors.

While much-maligned, fanny packs can provide a functional, adaptable backwoods carry system. Purpose built fanny-pack holsters abound, but some creative DIY can convert any pack of appropriate size to securely pack your pistol. Larger variants, such as the Mountainsmith Lumbar packs incorporate pockets that accommodate handguns.

Once you have settled on a carry system, it’s time to practice. Ideally, live fire drills can be incorporated into archery practice. Here, on the mountain, I have the freedom to set pistol targets along my 3D range and transition from bow to gun while carrying a pack or wearing a harness.

If that is not an option, the next best thing is dry practice. Practicing drawing your unloaded handgun while wearing/carrying hunting gear will expose problems in your chosen system. Drawing your handgun for defensive needs is not the time to discover that your coat catches on your holster or that your pack straps block a retention device.

Ultimately, the decision to carry a firearm while bowhunting, or any time, is a deeply personal one rife with responsibility. Whatever you choose; plan, prepare and practice. Good hunting.



Hill People Gear’s Kit Bag is available in sizes ranging from the Snubby (shown) to the Full Size accommodating a 4” Revolver or 5” Semi-Auto with room for additional gear.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian recently joined P.B.S. after learning about the organization through his local archery club. Brian and his family settled in Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains after bouncing around the country on behalf of the U.S. Army and multiple Federal Land Management agencies. When not working in the mountains, he is likely still there- packing a recurve after anything in season.



Larger fanny-packs, such as this Mountainsmith Tour, can serve as a great option when gear requirements fall between pockets and a full pack. Great for quick hunts and off-season scouting.



One of the author’s holster boxes, he might need them again...



The PBS Survival Hunt Challenge

By Steve Hohensee

When was the last time you shot an azimuth? How about built an overnight shelter without just pitching a tent? Even we PBS members are prone to just pushing a button and having our electronic location appear before our eyes and walking fifty yards into the woods and climbing into a tree stand as the extent of our adventuresomeness.

Back in the late eighties and early nineties, traditional bowhunter and author Sam Fadala often wrote about going on survival hunts for several days or more at a time, limiting himself to one cup of rice per day to survive on plus any game that he could bag with his bow. I believe that Sam was living in Wyoming at the time but may have done some of his hunts in Arizona or New Mexico. The details that Sam wrote about have faded over the years in my mind, but the concept has stuck with me, and I brought it up to Bubba Graves a couple years ago and told him, "We need to do that sometime."

There is nothing that makes the mind reflect more than when you are sitting in a scorching hot antelope blind for sixteen hours a day, no book to read, no antelope in sight, so I started to plan for my own Survival Hunt and then realized it would make a great PBS program! The ultimate goal of the PBS Survival Hunt Challenge is to build and hone woodsmanship skills in a wildland setting with an emphasis on utilizing bowhunting skills. The Survival Hunt is also a great opportunity to do some exploring, adventure seeking, photography, look for arrowheads, shed hunting, fossil collecting, and scouting for the upcoming season.

The beauty of a survival hunt is the opportunity for off-season adventure; a survival hunt can be done nearly anywhere, at almost any time of the year including outside of regular hunting seasons and should only cost dollars per day which is significant for most of us in these days of out-of-control inflation and insane fuel prices.

Yes, the timing seems to have parallels to the TV programs "Alone" and "Naked and Afraid" but my motivation for a PBS program was truly 100% Sam Fadala's writings.

Planning For Your Challenge

Every person's Challenge is going to be different. The number of days may vary, terrain, season, size of the landscape available; site specific conditions will change what gear you should plan on taking on your Challenge. Site specific conditions should be considered when planning your Survival Hunt and selecting gear.

The intent of the Challenge is to be mobile and that any overnight camp locations would be abandoned after each night and the individual or team would trek and explore and use a new camp location each successive night. There is no reason a canoe or kayak couldn't be a part of an individual's Challenge. A Challenge, either in part or in whole, could be accomplished with a partner.

To properly prepare for a Challenge will necessitate knowing hunting and fishing regulations for both game and non-game species, learning to positively identify any edible plants and learning how to prepare and cook that which is unfamiliar ahead of departure.

Duration

Any combination of days for a total of seven days and at least one bow kill (to include field processing, preparation, and consumption) of any legal species is required to meet the achievement of completion of the PBS Survival Hunt Challenge. We can revisit and modify the number of days or establish different levels of accomplishment in the future if there is enough interest.

Patches For Participants

We now have a patch design for the Survival Hunt Challenge thanks to the skills of Rob Burnham. About twenty patches will be made and available to members that

complete the challenge. Only one patch will be made available per member for each seven day challenge completed. One of my new years goals is to complete the Survival Hunt Challenge during 2023. The first ten members that complete the challenge, complementary patches are on me! I'm looking forward to hearing about other members' journeys in completing their challenge.

Final Thoughts

Not every PBS member is going to be interested in taking the Survival Hunt Challenge but hopefully it will generate enough interest for some of us to refine our woodsmanship skills while having another excuse to roam the woods and hills with a bow in hand! Any member out there that decides to do the Challenge, please document, and share your journey with other members on the website and in the magazine.

SAMPLE GEAR LIST:

- ✓ Archery Gear: no limit on arrows!
- ✓ Ruck Sack
- ✓ Bed Roll (i.e., Wool Blanket and Pad)
- ✓ 8' x 10' Tarp
- ✓ Climate/Weather specific clothing
- ✓ Poncho
- ✓ Knife
- ✓ Hatchet or Saw
- ✓ Matches or Fire striker (no lighters)
- ✓ Map and Compass
- ✓ 50-100' of Cord
- ✓ 2 fishhooks and 2 flies plus 30' fishing line per day
- ✓ Canteens or Water Bottles
- ✓ Water treatment/filter
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Pot with lid
- ✓ 12" x 18" sheet of foil per day
- ✓ 1 cup of uncooked rice or beans per day
- ✓ 2 bouillon cubes per day, salt, pepper
- ✓ 1/4 cup coffee grounds or 2 tea bags per day
- ✓ Any prescriptions, sunscreen, toothbrush
- ✓ TP
- ✓ Small 1st aid kit
- ✓ Camera/paper/pen: to record your journey
- ✓ Wallet/any licenses/permits

For more info.visit:
www.professionalbowhunters.org/pbs-survival-challenge



PERSEVERANCE & GOOD MOJO

By Todd Brickel

My anticipation for the day was as high as the elevation I'd be hunting. Stalking bighorn sheep in the Colorado Rockies at over 13,000 feet in November is not an activity to be taken lightly. My first days on the mountain the prior week proved to be quite productive as I found sheep right away and even had a few relatively close encounters. Truth be told, I had more stalking opportunities in those two days than I had in all my prior sheep hunts combined. But it seems I'm getting ahead of myself. To really appreciate the whole story of my sheep hunt, I need to rewind the clock twenty eight years and start at the beginning.

I moved to Colorado in the spring of 1994 with a singular focus of expanding my bowhunting opportunities. I didn't know anyone in Colorado but had been making annual excursions for the past three years from my home in Nebraska to pursue Colorado's exalted elk. Like so many, I was drawn to the expansive beauty of the mountains. Upon arrival I im-

mediately joined the Colorado Bowhunters Association and the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society. Within these great organizations, I drew inspiration to expand my dreams beyond bowhunting elk to include the many species available in Colorado. However, one surpassed all the rest, the state animal and undisputed king of the mountain, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep.

Over the years I had the privilege to serve both distinguished organizations on their respective Board of Directors. In doing so I befriended many successful Colorado bighorn bowhunters that came before me and learned they each had a story that included numerous hunts over the years and many days before finding success. They could all easily recite their numbers associated with hunting bighorn sheep like a badge of honor: "sixty seven days"; "eighty nine days"; "I had five tags in nine years"; "I hunted sheep three years in a row"; everyone had their own story. What quickly became obvious is that tagging a bighorn sheep with a bow is no easy task. I started my application journey the following spring.

To successfully hunt sheep, you must spend time in sheep country observing sheep, learning their habits and behaviors. My volunteer work with RMBS and the CPW opened the door for many opportunities to "Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain". From trappings to transplants, vaccinations to guzzler building, and many sheep counts, it was satisfying to know I was investing in the future of our bighorn populations. I also accompanied several other bowhunters on their hunts and got to experience the highs and lows of sheep hunting.

In 1996, I received that special envelope in the mail with a bighorn sheep tag inside. It was a tag to hunt bighorn ewe in unit S-34 Rampart Range. Drawn on a second choice my second year of applying I don't think I fully appreciated the opportunity. I hunted six days without success but thought I would have many more chances in coming years not counting on the rapidly rising popularity of bighorn sheep hunting. Turns out I never drew a second-choice tag again, and today such an

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opportunity simply fails to exist.

Finally in the spring of 2003 I drew my first bighorn ram tag in unit S-32 Georgetown. I spent the summer scouting and participated in the annual sheep count. I found rams scouting and knew where I wanted to be on opening day. I packed in the night before, set up camp and waited for sunrise. When I awakened, I felt unwell – like I had picked up a bug, but I grabbed my pack and bow and headed toward Cloud Gulch. I found rams that opening morning at a distance, but never got within range. By mid-day I was really feeling lousy, unsteady on my feet, and weak. Returning to camp I slept the afternoon away and all night. By mid-day the next day, laying on my back in my tent I knew I had to get myself off this mountain. After a slow hike out, I made the long drive home and went to the doctor the next morning. They thought I had West Nile disease but weren't entirely sure. Three weeks later I finally recovered enough to return to the mountain and pull my camp, my long-awaited dream season was over. Heartbroken over this lost opportunity I wrote a letter to the DOW telling my story. I knew what the regulations said, and I admitted that I did hunt that first morning, but I would sure appreciate consideration to get my points restored. Remarkably they did, and I was back in the game.

Three years later I drew my second ram tag in unit S-12 Buffalo Peaks. Here a bow-hunter can use their eyes while scanning the

alpine for sheep, unlike the timber dwelling sheep of Georgetown. Plus, many of the men I most admire had taken their sheep here: Marv Clyncke and Wayne Depperschmidt in 1977, and G. Fred Asbell in 1979. Now I had my chance to hunt these same craggy peaks and lush basins. My Dad had recently retired and planned to join me on this hunt. Unexpectedly, my phone rang, and Dennis Howell was on the end of the line. He asked if I would like company on my sheep hunt and then shared that he too had drawn S-12. As two of the ten tag holders, we made plans to hunt together and see if we could beat the historical odds of ten percent success.

Drawing S-12, I had one concern; a concern learned from prior hunter's stories. Would there be too many hunters gathered in one location? Would it become a foot race to the sheep? My fears were founded on opening morning as another hunter beat us to our glassing location finding the sheep we had put to bed the night before. Moments later he took off on a stalk. It was only right, he got there first, and I'm not about to push in on another's hunt, but here we stood on opening morning, glassing six rams and not able to do anything about it. Over the course of the next few days Dennis and I traded stalks on different groups of sheep. On day two I had my first stalk on a group of three rams bedded below a boulder in the middle of a scree field. Prior to the stalk, other hunters joined us in the viewing. Everyone proclaimed a stalk undoable but

being young and ambitious I decided to give it a whirl. Two hours later with flagging assistance from far below, I found myself thirty five yards above the bedded rams. Peeking through a crack in the rock I could see the back of the horns of the largest ram. I thought to myself "wouldn't this be something, to take a ram on the second day and the first stalk of the hunt?" I should have known better as moments later rocks were rolling as they sensed my presence and beat feet out of there. Still feeling proud of myself for the effort and getting this close, I truly felt it was only a matter of time until I would grab those curled horns in my hands.

On the afternoon of day four, we spotted a group of four rams bedded on a ridge over a mile away. Quickly we relocated and made our way up the backside of the ridge. Coming over the top Dennis asked, "you spotted them, where do you want to position, and I'll pick another approach". Figuring our odds were slim on this open hillside, I took a stand at the saddle they came through to reach their bedding area. Dennis came from above using the roll of the mountain to hide his approach. I could get no closer than a hundred yards, but Dennis first saw their horns just under fifty yards away and made a shot as they stood; taking a great Buffalo Peaks ram, his second Colorado ram in thirteen years.

After that, hunting grew more difficult as the sheep seemed to disappear. After nineteen days, I was tired – physically, mentally, and emotionally. Rain filled days and cold nights



had brought on a sinus infection, not enough to keep me down, but uncomfortable never the least. Dad suffered from the same. I decided I needed a break and returned home. I had lost eleven pounds and was exhausted. I slept and recovered and found myself already dreaming about future sheep hunts; at thirty-seven, how old will I be the next time? The break from the hunt gave me strength and I knew I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I didn't return for the remainder of the season. Over the final four days I found rams again but never got close. As the season ended on the final evening, the walk down the mountain was emotionally hard. I was disappointed for sure. Mid-way down I stopped; glad I was by myself. I tipped my hat to the mountains and declared them tougher than me, and I tipped my hat to the sheep that call these mountains home and declared them the winner. A tear ran down my cheek, but that tear was not merely disappointment, but also pride knowing I had persevered through the toughest and best 23-day hunt of my life.

Wanting to hunt again, under less pressured conditions, I started looking at other sheep units. Unit S-35 Greenhorn had fewer tags, the best draw odds in the state, but also lower success rates to go with it. Knowing I had at least three years before I could draw, I began scouting. If there are sheep there, it could be a viable option. Over the next 10 years I scouted the unit extensively from May through November. The more I scouted, the more I convinced myself that if I drew a tag, I could make it happen in the Greenhorn Wilderness. In 2017, I drew my third ram tag and looked forward to putting all my scouting to work. Days run together in sheep country and frankly there isn't much to

tell. Monsoon rain ran me off the mountain for a few days, and in eleven days, I saw six bear, a handful of deer, and only eleven ewes and one lamb. My hunt ended without finding a ram. Now what am I going to do?

By the spring of 2022 I was back in the draw with three preference points and 1 weighted preference point. While there is a chance to draw, the odds were certainly not in my favor. Where I decided to apply likely didn't matter, so I picked unit S-6 Pikes Peak because it is close to home, a November rut hunt, and only has one archery tag. Imagine my surprise when I checked the website and found the word "successful". I had to review the hunt code to make sure I didn't make a mistake. It shouldn't have happened, yet it did.

Preparing for what may likely be my last chance to hunt bighorn rams, I thought I should bring all my good luck charms on this hunt. First there is my Bighorn recurve bow, with sheep horn tips, G. Fred Asbell signature, and Marv Clyncke scrimshaw. I wore my Bighorn Bowhunting Company t-shirt during the hunt. Yes, I know that cotton kills, but overheating was not a risk at this high elevation in November. Then I almost jinxed myself when I decided for the first time in my life to get per-

Todd with his "RAMHNTR" plates.

sonalized "RAMHNTR" license plates for my new truck. That could have turned into the epitome of "all hat, no cattle". And I carried two knives with me. The first made by my good friend Wayne Depperschmidt. It has des-

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Todd Brickel with his Colorado bighorn sheep and fellow hunting buddy, Jim Anderson.



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ert bighorn sheep handle from a picked-up set of desert sheep horns from Nevada donated by another good friend Craig Schoneberg. Then at the CTAS High Country shoot this year, good friend Scott George had a beautiful sheep horn knife in a cross-draw sheath on his belt made by PBS brother Brian Hallstead. I had to have one for my hunt, and Brian had just enough horn for one last knife and then customized my sheath to commemorate this special hunt. Finally, when hunting at over 13,000 ft in the Colorado Rockies in November you must wear King of the Mountain wool when hunting the true king of the mountain.

Camping at 10,000 ft in November is a challenge. The nights are long and cold. My hunting buddy Jim Anderson and I endured that first night as the temperature dropped to -1 degree. The next morning, we made it up the mountain and found sheep. Over the next two days we found 8 rams and another eighteen ewes and lambs. I had a few stalks but couldn't get much closer than sixty yards. Well out of range for my recurve and wood arrows. Jim had a group walk by him within twenty five yards and he got some photos. After two days

I felt confident that if the weather held out it was just a matter of time until I could get close enough for a shot. As relayed at the beginning of this story, that is when the weather deteriorated, and the next six days were unhuntable.

Mike Schlegel, a life member, my sponsor and retired wildlife biologist in Idaho called me after seeing Jim's photos and suggested I give the "lost wallet trick" a try. In other words, pretend you're pre-occupied looking for your lost wallet. Essentially, get below the sheep, let them see you and get comfortable with your presence. Never move directly towards them and do not make eye contact. Sit and wait with your back to them. Only move at a diagonal to them when they are relaxed feeding or bedded. If they show any concern, stop, and wait. Time is

your friend and patience will be rewarded. He had used the tactic many times over the years to get close to dart and tranquilize sheep and was sure it would work with these sheep. After three blown stalks earlier in the day where I tried to stay hidden from the sheep, I found myself three hundred yards below a group of sixteen sheep including four rams. Having nothing to lose I decided to give Mike's lost

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wallet trick a try. Over the next ninety minutes I made my way up the slope towards the sheep. It seemed to be working. When it comes to bowhunting bighorn sheep, there is an awful lot that needs to come together at one time to be successful. With my back turned I looked over my right shoulder and saw a ewe not more than twenty five yards or so upslope from me. Pivoting to look over my left shoulder I saw the ram I named “Big Heavy”, the largest ram I found during my hunt. Standing broadside to me, at about forty yards, I just feel calm and confident that I can make this uphill shot. I nock an arrow, slowly turn, and come to full draw and release. The arrow arches towards the ram in slow motion as I watch it pass completely through him and come to a stop in the snowbank beyond. The group moves upslope and Big Heavy slowly brings up the rear. The shot is a bit lower than desired but should be fatal. Giving him about forty five minutes I take up the abundant blood trail. I relocate him bedded and alone. Wanting to get another arrow in him I make another stalk. At thirty five yards is he bedded facing away. He stands and walks straight away moving purposefully downhill dropping over five hundred feet in elevation over rocky terrain. With the sun rapidly

descending in the western sky, it was obvious I wouldn't be able to safely recover him before dark. I marked my location and got off the mountain.

Experienced bowhunters know the gut-wrenching feeling of leaving an animal overnight. Relaying the news of the day to Jim, he abandoned his whitetail hunt on the eastern plains to join me in the anticipated recovery of my ram the next morning. Within a few moments after we arrived, I located my ram down the mountain within a hundred yards of where I last saw him the night before. Disbelief followed by immense elation consumed me as my twenty-eight-year quest reached conclusion, and the tears on my cheek now are only tears of joy.

Jim descended the mountain in a straight line through the ankle breaking boulder field

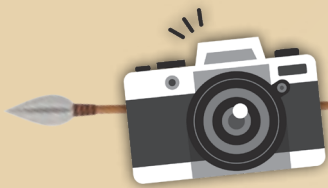
towards my ram while I repositioned the truck down the mountain two miles to facilitate an easier pack-out. As I approached my ram, I slowed my pace trying to take in as much of the moment as possible; never wanting to forget this feeling. At long last I knelt and finally laid my hands on those magnificent, curled horns as success was finally mine.

It has been a life-long dream fulfilled. So, when you see a hopeless romantic traditional bowhunter smiling over some trophy of a lifetime, know that he was successful because of experience, practiced skill, great advice from good friends that have been there, done that, inspiration from bowhunting heroes, and a heaping dose of good mojo.

Cheers to good mojo!

Todd Brickel with his ram and the Depperschmidt knife.





MEMBER PHOTOS

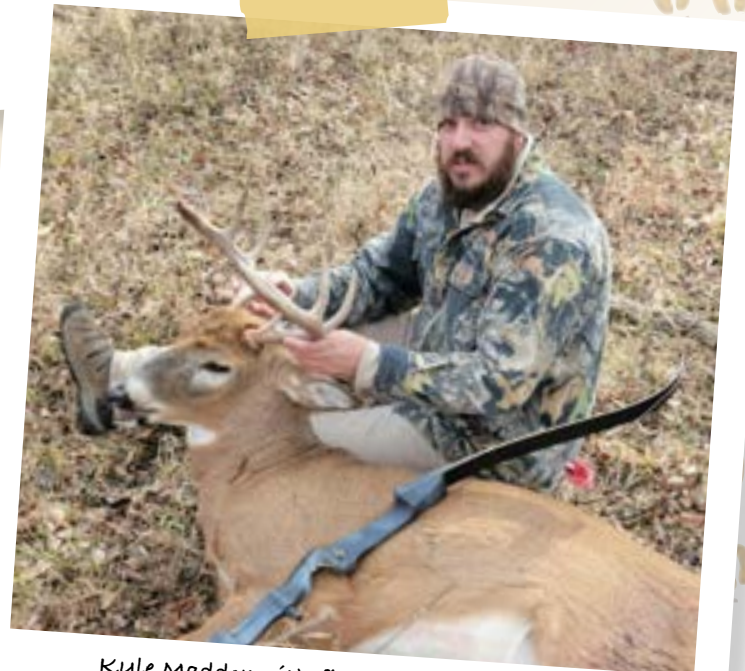


Bubba Graves circa 2009,
Texas pig taken with Wes Wallace longbow.

"I was awakened from a nap by a group of pigs and
shot this one at five yards."



Sean Bleakley with a Spruce grouse taken
on an Alaska float trip September 2020.



Kyle Maddox with first traditional kill on
Nov 12, 2022 with a recurve in Kansas.



MEMBER PHOTOS



Chrispin Henry September 2023
Osage Selfbow, Surewood Douglas Fir Shaft with
Simmons Interceptor.



Eric Dickerson killed this Indiana Turkey with 52# 62"
Wes Wallace longbow, Surewood shafts and
190 grain cutthroat broadhead.

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