



THE UNITED Winter 2020 BOWHUNTER



Official Publication of The United Bowhunters of Missouri



Calendar of Events

January

15th- Missouri archery season closes
 24th-26th- Traditional Archery Expo, Kalamazoo, MI

February

7th-9th- United Bowhunters of Missouri Festival, Springfield, MO
 15th- Missouri rabbit and squirrel seasons close

March

6th-8th- Conservation Federation of Missouri Convention, Jefferson City, MO
 12th-15th- Professional Bowhunters Society Biennial Gathering, Springfield, MO

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⅓ page	\$110.00	Less than ¼ page	\$30.00

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Submission Guidelines

Newsletter submissions must be done using a word processing program like Microsoft Word and must be submitted in an electronic format. Typed and handwritten hard copies will no longer be accepted. All effort will be made to use any submission sent but preference will be given to submissions that have photos accompanying them.

Submit all photos and stories to: Darren Haverstick, Editor
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It is the purpose of The United Bowhunters of Missouri to support and upgrade the sport of bowhunting and foster a spirit of sportsmanship.

The United Bowhunter is published quarterly by The United Bowhunters of Missouri for the membership. This publication is a public forum available to the members to voice their ideas, concerns and to share their experiences.

Written materials, photos and artwork for publication are welcome. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the materials you would like returned. The editors can assume no responsibility for any submitted materials.

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— On the Cover —

Waiting on a moose in
 British Columbia

deadlines for submitting copy and pictures to The United Bowhunter
Mar. 10th, June 10th, Sept. 10th, Dec. 10th



WELL, BY THE TIME EVERYONE IS READING this Missouri archery season will be over or real close. Hope everyone had a safe and productive season. For myself, well, I got skunked again. Not unusual. I always say practice how you hunt. I did but it still did not work out. I practiced, I hunted, I shot, and I wounded one. I backed out for several hours to give it time but never found blood or my arrow. I watched over next few days for coyotes and buzzards but saw nothing. It was the first archery deer that I ever shot and did not recover.

But on to other things - The plans for the Festival are right on schedule. The registration and Black Widow raffle tickets should be in your hands by now or within a day or so. The menu will be set as of December 13th. We have plenty of rooms this year and if we do run out I was assured there would be no problem procuring more. The speakers are set so let's all hope for good weather. See you all there!! ■

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lookout
for our new
website coming
this summer!



HUNTING WITH A PARTNER has always been my preference. In my 45 years as a bowhunter, I have had the pleasure of hunting with some great partners. There have not been that many, because I am really picky about who I spend time in the woods with, but they have all been great hunting buddies. My Uncle Paul has been my primary deer hunting buddy for my entire hunting life. I treasure every experience together and look forward to the next shared adventure. All that being said, there is an immense feeling of satisfaction out of completing a hunting experience going solo.

This story starts back in the late 1990's. That particular day in early November, Uncle Paul was unable to join me on the hunt. We have hunted for years on the property surrounding a little lake where Susie and I have a cabin. We use a canoe to travel part way to the deer stands. It was cold, crisp and dark when I pushed away from the shore in my canoe. Because the lake water level was extremely low, I had to push the canoe through about 40 yards of sloppy mud before it would float. After a half mile paddle, I beached the canoe on another mud flat. The tree stand chosen for the morning hunt was a half mile walk through the pitch-black woods. As I recall, this was a morning filled with lots of deer

activity. They seemed to be on the move everywhere I looked. The rut was at its peak.

Mid-morning, I saw a group of deer moving along a fence line about fifty yards off. Seven does were being dogged by a decent sized 6-point buck. I grabbed my grunt call and tried to get the buck's attention. He would not leave those does. They all jumped to the other side of the fence and started slowly moving away. My calls became more persistent. As they crossed



This doe was taken with my Wild Horse Creek Destiny longbow and a home-made cedar arrow.

the ridge and moved out of site, my grunts were as loud and compelling as I could make them. I thought it was over.

Then the buck appeared heading back toward the fence, coming in on a string. The 6-pointer paused just short of the fence. One more short grunt is all it took. He crossed the fence and continued to within about 15 yards. There he paused and started looking around for the buck who was trying to steal his girlfriends. He turned broadside and the wooden arrow launched from my longbow struck

him in the sweet spot. The tracking job was short. He was a beautiful little buck. At that time, I had not ever field dressed a deer without a partner holding a leg and helping to steady the carcass. Some paracord and nearby trees helped to secure the legs and position the buck for the process.

With the buck field dressed I just had to get the deer back to the boat. I was much younger at that time, but the drag was still extremely difficult. The route seemed more uphill than downhill. With every break, I would remove another layer of clothing. Finally, I had the canoe in site. The problem was that there was about 40 yards of gooey mud flat to traverse. I was already physically spent from dragging the deer, but I was able to muster enough energy to half carry the deer through the mud and somehow lift him into the front of the canoe. After

securing my longbow, pack and extra clothing, I sank into the rear seat of the canoe. Even though the temps were in the low 50's, I was stripped down to a T-shirt and totally sweated out. Poling the canoe through 40 yards of canoe-sucking mud was not easy either. Finally, as the mud released its hold on me, the canoe with its heavy load glided into open water. At that moment, I looked up and saw something amazing. Five bald eagles were hovering directly above me. I could see their heads turn from side to side as they inspected the work of a fellow hunter. For

me, this experience held a great deal of symbolism. This was my reward for the extra effort of my solo hunt.

Let's fast-forward the story to mid-November 2019. Same location, same circumstances. Uncle Paul had a commitment and couldn't join me that morning. With the heavy rains in the spring and summer, the lake levels were up. After beaching the canoe, I made the hike to a new stand Paul and I had placed in a location to take advantage of a north or east wind. The ENE wind that morning was perfect.

I have always believed that there is some experience that takes place during every hunt that makes the hunt memorable. The experience may not involve shooting an animal, but it makes the trip to the woods worthwhile. After about an hour in the stand, I saw a large doe moving toward me through the woods. She was on full alert. Did she catch a whiff of me? Not a chance with the wind like it was. Her attention was on something north of me. She was standing 15 yards away in an opening, but I didn't want to shoot with her on alert. Turning to see what had her so excited, I saw the bobcat 50 yards away moving up the hill. I expected to see the doe blast off once she identified the predator. But instead, she started running toward the bobcat, snorting all the time. The doe literally chased that cat up and over the hill. How cool was that? That was my memorable experience of the day. I could have gone home feeling complete.

Five minutes later I caught the twitch of a tail in the brush south of me. Then there was a flick of an ear a few yards away. Soon I could make out two large does moving up the hill. Mid-way up the slope,

they made a right turn and started slowly walking my way. As they approached closer, I was trying to determine if they would go right and pass in front of the stand or if they would go left and pass behind me. There was a large oak tree 15 yards away, directly in line with the path of the deer. When the lead doe reached the tree and was obscured by it, I could tell she was going to turn left. Not good for this right-hand shooter. With her head behind the tree, I started to turn to be in shooting position. Mid-turn she caught me. Her head came from behind the tree and jerked up as she looked directly at me. I froze and squinted my eyes to avoid eye-to-eye contact. After 30 seconds of head bobbing, the doe turned to her left and proceeded up the hill.

My focus shifted to the second doe, who followed the same path. As I followed the doe, with my longbow at three quarter draw, I felt some resistance on the upper bow limb. It was bumping up against the tree next to me. I let down and moved the bow to the other side of the tree. The doe was quartering away at almost eye level. The wooden shaft buried to the fletch as the big 4-blade broadhead cut through both lungs. She traveled less than 50 yards.

By this time in my bowhunting life, I was experienced in field dressing deer on my own. With this task behind me, I just had to get the doe to the canoe. Since the path to the canoe was mostly downhill, I decided to drag her rather than quartering and packing her out. After a separate trip to the canoe with my hunting gear and an extra layer of clothing, I returned for the deer. Securing the doe's front legs to her head kept those parts from snagging in the brush. I used my safety belt as a shoulder

strap, hooked on to the doe and drug the deer down the hill.

At 68 years old, dragging a full-sized doe through the woods is not easy, even downhill. At the canoe, there was a lot of tugging and grunting, but eventually the doe and gear were loaded and ready for the return trip. I was plum tuckered out from the tasks and ready for a gentle canoe ride. As I pushed out into open water, something caused me to look up. Eighty yards above me soared a bald eagle. His head turned from side-to-side as if it were inspecting my work and granting his approval. My efforts as a solo hunter were again rewarded. ■



I'LL BE HONEST, my relationship with traditional archery as it pertains to hunting has been rocky. I got into bowhunting in general at 14 years old, but that same fall I picked up my first copy of "Traditional Bowhunter" magazine at Wally World. I was instantly enthralled by the romanticism of hunting with a pretty recurve and finely-crafted cedar arrows as I dove deep into magazine articles and online forums.

I had a new 45# Martin recurve by the next spring and some custom cedar arrows to boot. We terrorized the local squirrel and rabbit population that first fall together, and I even managed to down a quail with a blunt that year as well.

That being said, I was raised by non-hunting parents, so it took me several years to simply learn how to read sign and find deer to hunt, so obviously modern equipment won out for the first couple years in the tree stand or ground spot. But, I do remember killing a young doe when I was 16 with my wheels and finding myself holding my recurve the very next night because I thought I had that whole finding deer part now figured out.

I then hunted on and off with both weapons for the next few seasons and managed to take two whitetails with my recurves, but both experiences were quite sour for me due to poor shooting or animal reactions that resulted in lethal but non-ideal shot placements.

I delved even deeper into the rabbit hole and sold my compound when I was 19 to hunt solely with my custom longbow for a couple of years. Unfortunately, a couple of more ill-placed shots ensued, and

the sleepless nights and heartache caused me to throw in the towel with trad gear for about five years.

Don't get me wrong, I was still shooting and even learning to build bows of all types, but the

idea of hunting trad, as ideal as it was in my dreams, was simply not appealing to my reality. I had come to understand that, even when I shot lights-out in the backyard, that the scenario of shooting at a live,



The deer I've waited a long time for



A hard won javelina



Bear of a lifetime!

big game animal was a far different situation, and I had fallen apart at every opportunity.

Fortunately though, I was accruing experience with game at a steady rate with my wheels and I do feel that this gave me a chance to learn the act of controlling my anticipation and shot process as the years went on.

So, crazy short story long, this past year I decided that I would get back on the horse and hunt trad as much as possible. It started with the javelina hunt in March with fellow UBM'ers. I'll be brutally honest, my shooting at those little critters with my short, forward-handle longbow on that hunt once again made my stomach turn. We did manage to tag our piggies, but I was starting to think about retreating again.

But, I jumped back on the wagon with my bear hunt in Ontario this June. My confidence soared on that hunt when I double lunged the largest bear I'll likely ever kill at six yards with my Palmer recurve.

You might think that would be enough to win me over, but truthfully, I was still hesitant when it came to whitetail bunting here at home with a stick.

The cool thing, though, was that my hunting partner, co-worker/boss, and friend, Lyle Shaulis, had built me what I had always dreamed about when reading all those TBM articles and ads as a kiddo, a red-cedar veneered, R/D longbow. She was a sweetie at 62" and a good rounded 46# at my stubby 27" draw. The best part was that I was shooting it as well as any bow I've ever owned to boot!

So, when this season started out here in good ole' Missouri, I was taking my cedar bow to the stand. I did admittedly miss a chip shot the first week of season, but I felt more driven rather than deterred. I even took my Osage selfbow with cane arrows out one night and missed again, but I felt confident that my chance would come.

When I would hunt public land on scouting/new spot set-ups I still was and do take my compound, so I was able to arrow two does in October that way.

But the "magic" occurred one evening

when I found myself hunting a place near Lyle's cabin at the lake. In fact, I had just closed on Sarah's and my first home earlier that afternoon, so it seemed fitting to grab that cedar gal and just enjoy the night.

I didn't get to enjoy it very long though before a sleek two-year-old doe came into view and meandered my way through the oak trees. She was quite calm and seemed content to hang around, so I felt the shot would eventually happen as she browsed on acorns. Unfortunately, she eventually fed away and down the hill towards a neighboring lake cabin and property.

Ironically, the owner of said property began working on his tractor during that same time period, and when he started clanging his wrenches around, the doe decided she didn't like the nuisance and started back up the hill and straight at me. And, when I say straight at me, I mean STRAIGHT at me. I wasn't able to get a broadside shot until she was a mere two yards out from my ladder.

You might be thinking this is where I landed a textbook shot through her lungs, but what really occurred was that I awkwardly tried to clear my longbow limbs around the stand platform to shoot straight down and I flat sent my shaft right over her back!

I was mentally berating myself as soon as I watched that arrow strike dirt and the doe bounded back downhill. But, again, fate seemed on my side when the neighbor started making noise again and the seemingly unfazed doe came right back at me!



The finished product



Mr. Shaulis working on my bow

This time she came in at an angle that would give me an eight yard shot, broadside. I, yet again, came to full extension and released another 2-bladed projectile. This time I watched in awe as my shaft spun the short distance right into her chest cavity. The shot was a bit forward, but when her front half buckled at impact and she bulldozed a mere 25 yards before piling up on a lot and expiring within ten seconds, I found myself literally shaking like that 14-year old kid when he'd shoot at a deer again.

I will never cease to be amazed by the lethality of double-lung hit with a simple weapon like a broadhead-tipped shaft. But I stood in an umpteenth level of amazement over my first, well executed whitetail harvest with traditional gear!

Even several weeks later, the backstraps from that doe seem to taste more tender and savory than the other cuts of meat from my freezer.

Of course, I owe Pastor Lyle an immense amount of gratitude for both the weapon and place to hunt for this hunt!

Does this mean, I'm selling my compound, muzzleloader, and centerfire rifles? Nope! I am always going to be that guy that simply loves hunting in general in many facets, and I'll never feel that I owe anyone an apology or explanation for that.

All I do know for certain after this year is that I finally got the King Kong that's been sitting on my back for over a decade to get lost, and I finally feel like I actually can get it done confidently and routinely a traditional bow. And, that my friends, the greatest feeling I think I've ever experienced in the hunting woods. ■



EVERY FALL I TRY TO get in early enough from work to get a few evening hunts in. I had been out a number of times but with Halloween approaching I was anxious to spend as much time in the woods as possible. October 29th was one of those days. We finished up on a job an hour early and I headed home with the intention of hitting the woods. I got home and cleaned up and got ready to hit the woods. Going out the back door I'm thinking, "Which spot do I head off to?" I had a stand down in the bottom behind my house that I hadn't hunted in quite a while because the wind was always wrong. I had a picture of a beautiful tall 8-point buck around there. As I headed out, for some reason I thought the stand at the far end of the property would be good with the NW wind tonight. This stand had been up a month and a half and I hadn't been in it in weeks.

I sneaked into the stand which was easy as it was only 30 yards into the woods off a corner of the field. The leaves were damp and I didn't make a sound getting in. I sat there enjoying the quiet for a

half hour then rattled a bit with my rattle bag. Ten to fifteen minutes later, I heard a little something and looked straight down between my feet to see a young 4-point buck at the base of my tree. He had come up the hill behind me and I watched as he wandered off to my right. Now this stand is about 40 yards from the top of an east/west ridge right where it starts to fall off a bit steeper. The plan when I set this stand was for the deer to come from my right and pass just uphill from me heading into the field corner. Now I always have a vision of how things are supposed to work when I hang a stand, but I haven't figured out how to let the deer know the plan because they never seem to follow it.

About 30 minutes after I saw the little buck, I glanced over and saw a small doe coming from my right. She walked past me about ten yards uphill but she didn't give me a shot with the different branches in the way and I didn't try to stop her. After she disappeared, about ten minutes later I see another deer coming the same way. I can tell this is a bigger deer then I see it's a buck.



Halloween Memories Fifty Years in the Making

John Sanderlin III

At this point I can't tell how big he is. He stops about 25-30 yards away and turns broadside to me facing uphill while he starts to rub a little on a sapling. He then paws at the dirt a bit and reaches up and rubs his face on a branch over his head. I'm watching this and thinking this is pretty cool. He then turns and starts to come toward me. At this time I can tell he is definitely a buck I will take. At first he is walking straight at me and I'm thinking "He's going to be too close". At the right moment he turns slightly and follows the path the doe walked. He walks out in front of me and I gave a low UHHH with my mouth. At the sound, he stops and I'm already drawn. Right in front of me there are two small branches about 8" apart horizontally and I have to shoot between them. For some reason this calmed me and I made a perfect shot. When I saw the arrow hit him, I instantly knew I had him. He bolted forward out into the field and between gaps in the leaves I could see him stumble and go down. So quick! I don't think it was three seconds.

I could see him lying there and I didn't wait. I was pumped. I made my way out to him and my arrow was lying five feet from him missing the broadhead. I later found the head inside him and I put it back on and that arrow is back in my quiver. I'm amazed at how everything went right tonight. The best buck I have ever taken. He has ten points and dressed 165 pounds. Really a great buck for this area where they don't survive many gun seasons. ■

Equipment notes for the interested. I was using a 53# Mohawk longbow with a fir arrow and a Magnus I broadhead.



MY DAD WAS EARL'S GENERAL MANGER AT HOYT ARCHERY in St. Louis when I was a kid in the early 1970's. Dad brought home a small 15# Hoyt recurve bow for me sometime in those early years which started this bowhunting lifestyle. Reflecting on life, I have realized it is the smallest thing that starts you down a particular path. Dad and that little recurve bow (which is hanging in one of my bow racks as I type this) started me...

My dad taught me how to be an archer. He was as patient as a dad can get teaching me the fundamentals of good archery form. He was a tournament league shooter and this target shooting form is what he taught me. As a kid I remember trying to pop the balloons he put on the straw bales for me. FUN..! As the years went by that little bow was put away as school, work, and of course, women, became more important. This all changed the summer after I graduated high school. For some reason, all that summer, I kept thinking about trying to bowhunt deer. No one in my family was a bowhunter. My entire family were rifle deer hunters. My earliest memories in life were of my uncles processing

rifle killed whitetail deer. Great memories...! The late summer of 1986 I was thinking out loud about bowhunting deer and one of my first college roommates overheard me. He said, "John, there is no way in the world you could ever kill a deer with a bow. It's just not possible!" During the mid 1980's bowhunters were pretty rare. I knew no one that bowhunted. An offhand comment by a college roommate turned bowhunting from a daydream into an actual goal of killing a whitetail deer with a bow...

Home from college the next weekend, I asked Dad to help me set up a hunting bow. I remember him laughing while telling me that



Me and the Hunter waiting for something to show up



Success!

it had been over ten years since I had “wanted anything to do with a bow”. He helped me get correctly spined arrows for that Darton SL 50 compound bow and showed me how to properly sharpen a broadhead. It was on...! In those years if you actually saw a whitetail you got home (long before cell phones) and called all your buddies to tell them. Two self-taught and humbling bow seasons later, I killed the first archery-hunted whitetail deer in my family. What a great day! All the shooting practice and hours spent in the woods made it even sweeter. If this was easy it would not be any fun! Dad was almost more excited than I was over that first little button buck. He rode with me to check that deer in and did so for about every deer I killed for the next fifteen years. It became a family tradition for Dad to go with me to the check station. I missed this ride along father-son time when the fancy telecheck modern system was implemented.

After a few bow seasons, I tired

of the gadgets and bought my first recurve bow. Dad really helped me getting it set up and tuned. He knew how to tune for a quiet bow. I knew next to nothing about traditional archery. Any new traditional bow I bought over the years, Dad would rub on the finish and look these bows over saying, “This never would have left the shop at Hoyt.” He did this with every new custom bow no matter who made it... (smile) The quest was on for a St. Louis made Hoyt bow to actually bowhunt with. I looked for close to ten years, trying to find a good condition hunting weight St. Louis made Earl Hoyt Jr. recurve bow. With help from the magic of the internet, I finally found a 52# Pro Medalist Hunter recurve bow in almost new condition. No one knows for sure (I’ve asked a few old timer bowhunters that actually knew Earl) but this is a 5PMH serial number bow so most probably it was made in the very very late sixties to early seventies - possibly

when Dad worked for Earl.

I took this PMH on a 102 degree sweatbox fifteen hour a day marathon antelope hunt in the sand hills of Nebraska in 2016. Needless to say, I never

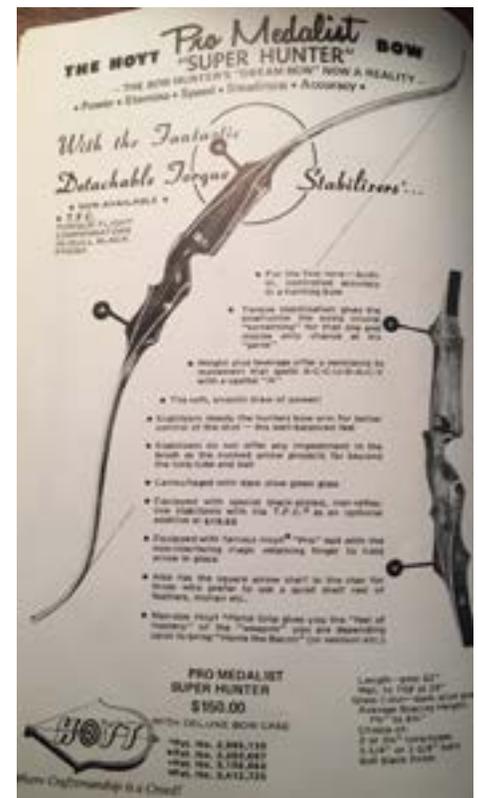
One of Dad's old business cards

drew the bow on that trip. 2017-2018 I bowhunted with a brand new Black Widow because that’s what you do with a new bow. 2019 I decided to blow the dust off of my Pro Medalist Hunter and ONLY hunt with this bow as a tribute to my Dad.

September was just silly hot. I love to bowhunt but 95 degrees with a thousand percent humidity is simply not even a bit fun. October was the busiest October we have ever had in Hermann. Every Amtrak train into town was loaded full of winery tourists with pockets full of cash. We were busy...! I had only two days off the entire month. October 30th was one of them. Having not bowhunted a single minute of the 2019 season had me in a motivated to hunt funk! I was going to bowhunt no matter the weather. Lightning, and only lightning, would have stopped my hunt this evening. It was drizzle raining with a steady northeast wind and in the fifty degree range. PERFECT!



Hoyt hawking its wares



An old catalog entry for the Pro Medalist Hunter

Set up on a reliable funnel trail in the timber leading to a clover plot. The drizzle had turned into a steady light rain. I only saw one deer on this evening bowhunt and it all worked out just like you dream about. She took thirty minutes to meander into my shooting lane twelve steps from my tree. Even I can usually hit a whitetail at twelve steps. Usually... LOL

As per normal, I went into automatic mode - next thing I knew I was at anchor then watched my fletches spinning in super slow motion as they passed through her lungs. It was getting dark and raining harder now. I knew the

shot was perfect but I decided to just sneak out mouse-quiet and come back at first light. The next morning, Halloween, I was headed out barely able to see in the pre dawn light. I snuck over to that tree line and even in the gray dark I could see her white belly shining against the leaves. She had went about sixty yards from the shot and I'm sure was dead before I climbed down the ladder. So happy to have finally accomplished killing a whitetail with a Hoyt from St. Louis. All I could think about while dragging this doe out was the craftsmanship put into this bow and I thanked my dad out loud

for starting me so many years ago. Close to fifty years since this bow was made and just as good as the day it left the factory. Awesome, quiet, accurate, and beautiful. All you could ever ask for in a recurve bow. This is my public thank you to my dad who started it all and to Earl Hoyt Jr. who was an absolute archery engineering genius. Bowhunt hard with dedication and ethics everybody. Only in the dictionary does success come before work... Making memories is as good as it gets with a bow in your hand! ■

From The Designer

Elise Haverstick



HELLO
AGAIN
UBM
READERS!

I hope that your hunting seasons have been fruitful and there is

a large amount of new deer meat in your deep freezers to keep everybody happy and fed for quite a while. I'm partial to fried deer meat myself but I hear deer jerky is quite tasty too. I look forward to going back home and having some of that with all the fixings that come with it.

Quick reminder: if you want to write a story about your hunting adventures this season you can send it to Darren, and we can put it in the next newsletter. * wink, wink, nudge, nudge*

Not much has changed in my life since I last wrote this column in September. Work is still going well, and I got past the 90-day review mark, so I'm calling that a win.

Outside of work not much has happened, as per usual. However, with the winter weather upon us I'm rapidly remembering why I hated living 40 minutes from work.

I don't mind the drive usually, it's a good time to mentally prepare for the day or decompress at the end of it. That being said, when I have to deal with icy roads and largely untreated rural highways, the commute becomes 75 minutes or so of stress and internal panic. Needless to say, it's not fun, and I hate winter with a fiery passion.

On a brighter note, my side business of pop culture designs has really taken off in the past few months! I don't know if it's the shows I chose to make, or some outside word of mouth but I'm not complaining.

Another cool thing that happened with my side business is that I reached "Master Status" on TeePublic.com, which means that I am, or at least was, one of the top 25% of sellers on the site, so that's pretty cool! They sent me a notebook with one of my designs on it, and a Master Status emblem on the back to commemorate my achievement so that's pretty neat! I'm slowly making my way in the world of flat illustration and t-shirt sales!

A few quick things of note that happened in the last 3 months; I went to a pin-up competition in St.

Louis and got to spend the day with my friend who lives there so that was nice bonus.

I also placed 3rd in a Halloween costume contest. Granted it was applause based and at a bar, so I lost to a store-bought plague doctor outfit, but playing to 90s Disney nostalgia worked in my favor and pin-up Powerline (from A Goofy Movie) was a success. I did learn that Powerline hair is too tall for my car so I spent the drive to the bar and back hoping and praying it wouldn't start raining, as I had the sunroof open to accommodate the zig zag hair sticking out of it.

In theory I will see you at the Festival this year, but as it gets closer to the day, I will know for sure. Weather, lack of vacation time, and the 3.5-hour drive may change that though.

I wish you all a very happy holiday season filled with joy, time with loved ones, and many successful hunting days. I know I'm looking forward to going back home for Christmas and seeing my folks for more than 36 hours before I have to head back to my place. ■

Happy hunting!
Elise

I WALKED INTO THE SMOKE-FILLED GAS STATION and told the lady behind the counter that I'd like to buy a non-resident archery hunting permit. I watched intently and answered her questions as she put down her cigarette and scribble printed in my information, pressing hard enough so the carbon copy showed well. In a gravely smoker's voice she said, "That will be fifteen dollars and forty cents, young man." It was my very first "Out of State" hunting trip. At 17 years old, one year of bowhunting experience, I was a totally green bowhunter. I couldn't have been more excited if I were going hunting in Alaska! It was a big deal hunting out of state. It was a whole 135 miles from home!

Four and a half decades later, the lady behind the counter at an old convenience gas station that still lingered of smoke and nicotine, reluctantly pecked away at a computer looking for the right page on the Missouri Department of Conservation website. Her coworker asked if she needed help before she went outside for a smoke. Intently I watched on, as she clicked away at several wrong choices. I was wondering what kind of a permit I'd end up with, until I couldn't stand it anymore. "Right there, that one!", I pointed to the non-resident archery hunting permit. She clicked the button and, like magic, using my well-worn Missouri Conservation Heritage Card, all my information popped up complete. The lady hit the "Print" button, and then said, "That will be two hundred twenty-five dollars, sir." With that I just purchased my 45th consecutive Missouri non-resident archery hunting permit. In 45 years, the



Tags past and present

license price went from \$15.40 to \$225.00 and I went from a "young man" with a scrawny brown beard, to a "sir" (old guy with more salt than pepper in his beard). The Missouri bowhunting experience has been a wonderful journey.

Over the last 45 years I've been fortunate to have hunted several places but like they say, there's no place like home. Technically, home is Illinois, but we'll consider the Midwest as hunting around home. I have experienced and can appreciate the beauty and sounds of true wilderness, which we often read so much about. But there is also an appreciated beauty of the sounds and scenery of the Midwest. As a novice writer I'll try to describe a picture for your mind of my version of what it's been like hunting Missouri for the last four and a half decades. In my mind's eye, it has been like living in a painting combined of, and created by, Terry Redlin and Norman Rockwell.

I couldn't hardly wait for school to let out that Friday afternoon the first week of October in 1975.

Harold "Bear" Gardner, owner of one of the local archery shops, and his son, Derrick, who I went to school with, asked me to go along on a bowhunt in Missouri, at a place called Deer Ridge Wildlife Management Area. They didn't have to ask twice, any place called "Deer Ridge" had to be really good. We stopped for fuel and to buy our archery permits along the way and were able to get there in time for a couple hours of hunting that evening. We parked in a designated parking spot and I was told to drop down over the hill and hunt along the creek until dark. Recurve bow in hand, off I went until I found an oak tree I could climb and worked my way up into to a crotch of the tree. There I stood shifting from one foot to another in the crotch of that tree. Homemade portable treestands were just being invented, I heard talk of them, but I'd never seen one, or knew anyone who had one. The amount of wildlife in this place called Missouri was amazing. There were so many squirrels, fox and gray, it seemed as if the trees were alive. That evening I saw my

first real wild turkey as a flock of a dozen or more scratched their way through the timber seeking acorns. That would also be the first time a wild turkey saw me and gave me an education in how good their eyesight is, what an alarm putt sounds like, and what happens after an old hen starts putting. Non-residents could not hunt turkeys at the time, but they were a blessing to watch as they moved through the timber, the evening sun reflecting off their iridescent feathers, changing shades of color from black to, greenish shades of purple. A doe and a yearling showed up and competed with the turkey and squirrels for the acorns. There was way more wildlife here of all kinds than at home. About a half hour before dark there was a whistle. Derrick had shot at and hit a buck and had come to get me. We went to where he hit the deer and marked the spot and followed the blood trail a very short distance. It was getting dark and we decided we better meet his dad back at the truck. After the details and discussion, the elder Gardner said we needed to wait until morning to look for the buck. After a brief hunt in the morning we were on the trail when we found the deer, already field dressed and partially drug kind of in the direction of the truck. Some other hunters had found the deer. As I remember there was a little discussion between adults and they fessed up and Derrick tagged his deer.

I had joined the Central Illinois Bowhunters and probably 20 – 25 of the members hunted in Missouri. Six members went in together and bought one acre of ground with a one room old schoolhouse on it. The old “One Room School House” quickly got some needed repairs, a new roof and coat of paint and



New Paint Job & Roof on Missouri School House 1973

became a cabin. Through CIB I knew all of the owners, two of which were Fred Miller and Jerry Pierce. Those two men would become the mentors, idols, and local legends to many aspiring bowhunters. There was a wide variety of “characters” who hunted out of the cabin over the years.

Long since abandoned as a typical Missouri schoolhouse, as a cabin the School House became a facility of higher education, one of bowhunting education. Basic to advanced bowhunting skills and lessons were taught and learned in the School House over the last half century. Still typical of a one room schoolhouse, students, boys and girls of all ages, 9 – 60 went to school on bowhunting. Timing or dumb luck, I am forever grateful to have become a small part of CIB. Although the mentors shared knowledge freely, it was however, a school of “Hard Knocks.” Those guys were eager to help you, but smart enough to let you, or make you, earn your own successes. There were NO Participation

trophies in this group, and in retrospect that was one of the best lessons they could give. It was true bowhunting. Success was measured in lessons learned and doing things in the “Right Way”. It was bowhunter education before there was such a thing.

Stories of “Hot Spots”, “Sure Fire Set Ups” and “Can’t Miss Opportunities” and “Just Missed Him” hunting stories filled the cabin every evening around the long dinner table containing a wide variety of food for all to share, much like a buffet. At the sound of an alarm, a wooden Strike Anywhere match brought the hissing Coleman lanterns to life, lighting the cigarette smoke filled room in the early mornings and late evenings. After the lights went out, the mice came out, their feet pitter patter as they ran around the chair rail boards, and sounds of Jerry’s grinding teeth filled the room, now only lighted by the glowing tip of Fred’s cigarette coming from his sleeping bag.



*Jerry Pierce 75 lb. Button Buck, Pat Cebuhar 140 lb. 5 pt., John Barrett 67 lb. Doe
Missouri Nov. 5,6,7, 1982*

Just down the road was the Deer Ridge Store. A small mom and pop shop with a well-worn to a polish black pipe handrail leading you to an old wooden screen door. One of those with a long spring that had a certain creaking noise to it when opened, slamming closed with a distinct sound of two pieces of wood slapping together. The narrow boards making up the oak wood floors had their own distinctive creak, pop, and crack as you walked across the store, there'd be no sneaking up on someone. It was a sound and scene of past generations. A small bench, a table and chairs next to an oil burning stove was a place for customers and locals to talk about the weather, chew the fat, have a coffee, or drink a bottle of pop. It was a place where you could get a few groceries, fill your water jug at a well pump, get a tank of gas, heating oil, or O'l Bill or his wife Sue, would make ya a cold meat samich with bottle of pop out of a chest type Coca Cola

cooler. It was a nice midday break and public relations opportunity. Wishing all good-bye as you pushed on the metal panel advertising soda that was protecting the screen door, the spring creaked, then pulled the door shut with the distinctive board slapping sound. Today the wind whips through the skeletal remains of the little old store lost to time.

I was a slow learner at the School of Hard Knocks. The Show Me State showed me multiple ways a guy could screw up an opportunity to harvest a deer and I seemed to experience every one of them. It took seven years before it happened. It was the first week of November 1982. Hunting out of the Old School House with Jerry Pierce and his son-in-law John, we scouted and found one of those "surefire can't miss hotspots". A beautiful secluded narrow creek bottom, bean field on the east side and hillside on the west side full of oaks bearing acorns. An intersection of trails coming off the hillside, into

trails paralleling the creek and more coming across the creek to the bean field. It truly was a hot spot. We shot three deer out of the same stand in three consecutive days. It was an exciting week at the cabin and with that being my first Missouri deer it is one that is extra special. Along with another special one a few years later, a nice little 10-point that Jerry insisted that we haul back in the trunk of his Mustang II along with our hunting equipment. Yeah, it wasn't pretty, but we managed it, and the Clampett's Granny and Jed would have been proud of us!

In 1983 hunting with Gary Orwig, owner of the other local archery shop in Canton, Illinois at the time, we found some private ground to hunt in north Missouri. A local acquaintance had family ties in Missouri. Back in the day getting hunting permission was much easier, especially when they saw you were hunting with a stick bow and string. They just knew you were "No Threat" to the wildlife population, and they seemed kind of amused at the idea. There was a wide variety and abundance of game at the time. With an impressive number of pheasants and quail, that greeted each orange sunrise with rooster calls and quail talk. I learned quickly that the opening day of bird season, which traditionally is November 1st, is a good time to be in a treestand. Between the starting of the rut and the orange clad bird hunters, the deer were kept moving. It was entertaining to hear distant birddogs with bells on, being directed by shouts, hollers, and whistles from the hunters. When the bells stopped ringing the dogs were on point, and the silence was followed by a barrage of shotgun fire. It became fairly common to see



at Cebuhar MO. WET Hen Turkey 17 lb. Live weight Oct 22, 1983 Scotland County

deer moving well ahead of the bird hunters. But over time the caravans of SUVs and trucks, pulling dog box trailers has long since passed with the depletion of upland game numbers. Gentlemen bird hunters were a part of a nostalgic fall scene of an autumn horizon that I miss.

It was a cold damp overcast October 22nd afternoon when I saw a flock of turkeys feeding in a bean stubble field as I was walking back to the stand for an evening hunt. I slipped into a little brushy draw that ran up into the field and found a good place to hide hoping the turkeys would pass by my lair. As rarely is the case, everything worked as planned. As the turkeys fed up to me, I released the wood arrow hitting the first bird. All 20+ went in different directions. The one I hit was flipping and flopping around and, having never shot a turkey before, I wasn't sure what to do. I shot again, missed, and then

started to chase it down. The chase ended in a very small but deep pond, with me up to my waist in the pond, hanging on to a soaking wet turkey by the neck. That was my very first turkey and he wasn't getting away. By the time I'd walked the 3/4 of a mile back to the camper I was chilled to the bone. Not sure which one looked worse, me or the dead turkey.

Continued next issue... ■



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IT ALL STARTED WHEN Judy and I went to the Bass Pro Hunting Classic in 2018! We stumbled into a friend of mine named Roger at the ScentLok display. We visited with him awhile but we had an appointment on the other side of town and had to get on our way. After the appointment we decided to venture back to Bass Pro to see Roger again. We found him speaking with three or four other men at the archery counter discussing bear hunting. Roger introduced me to David Westmoreland who is a booking agent, and stated that I needed to go with him. David then went on to show me pictures of bears and the longer we spoke the more interested I became. During Judy's and my trip back home, we discussed bear hunting and my sweet loving wife told me to book a trip.

I proceeded to call David the next day, however, he told me in Saskatchewan, he only hunts two weeks in the spring and only takes six hunters per week. As luck would have it, he had an opening during the second week, May 20-24th. I was flying high! Now I only had nine months to figure out how I was going to get there and get the details all figured out. Success happened with two flights and a four hour drive to bear camp. We rented a truck and began our journey. We set our cruise on 120 kph, which was really funny to see. We finally arrived at our three bedroom

apartment, which we shared with a couple from Alabama. Other hunters were from Louisiana and Piedmont, Missouri. There were two gentlemen that were also hunting that we nicknamed Frank and Berry after a cereal. One of the guides, Blair, made arrangements for the meals at the lodge on the lake across the road from us. We had a big breakfast, a big lunch and soup and sandwiches in the evening when hunting was over. The food was delicious and plenty of it.

This particular camp had two bear guides (Blair and Danny), each responsible for three hunters. The day finally came when we were able to go hunt! We were transported to our hunting spot on our first day. Which took us another 25 miles from camp. The guide took the UTV right up to the "Bait Barrel". Much to our surprise there was a 100-pound boar waiting for us when we arrived. The boar ran off about twenty yards and stood and watched, patiently waiting for the bait. I then got in the tree stand while Blair baited. When he finished I gave him a thumbs up; I was ready to rock and roll. Several

bears came in that day but nothing that I wanted to shoot. I had one playing with my pull-up rope which I ended up having to take away from him.

Night number two we were greeted with the same boar again. This night brought more bears but nothing that I was interested in. There was a cinnamon bear that came to the bait but I decided to take pictures of it instead. Later, one of the bears put his paws on my tree and I had to spit on him. When I got back to camp I showed the photos of the cinnamon bear, to which they all commented that I should have shot it.

Day three rolled around and I had told myself that if the cinnamon bear came in then I was going to shoot him, but he was a no-show that day. I did have a sow and two newborn cubs, she put them up a tree about twenty yards behind me. She then came and fed for twenty minutes and left. The cubs never moved from the tree until she returned about hour and half later. I thought about this situation and my children when they were younger; my daughter Shelby might have stayed but my

son Scott was a definite NO. Scott would have been gone before I was out of sight.

Day four, my guide, Blair, decided to move me to a different bait since no big bears were coming in. This put me another ten miles further from camp. When we pulled up to the



bait I looked up at the tree stand and got really excited fast; it was a Millennium stand - my favorite! Blair was very disappointed that there was a beaver carcass still in the bait barrel. I climbed up in the tree stand and Blair whistled and pointed behind me to my right. I looked behind the tree and there was a beautiful cinnamon bear and Blair whistled again and pointed to my left and there was a black bear. I still had my pack on, so I hurriedly took it off and hung it up. My most important piece of equipment was still on the ground and I had to pull it up, I took my quiver off, nocked an arrow, turned around and looked at the barrel. The black bear was lying on its belly broadside trying to get the beaver carcass out of a small hole. I thought to myself, broadside, leg forward, great shot. So I did! Meanwhile, Blair had moved the UTV about twenty five yards away from the barrel. The bear ran out of sight and I did not hear the moan but did hear the labored breathing. I looked at the bait barrel and the cinnamon bear was lying in the same position as the black bear. I thought to myself, "Damn, why didn't you wait!" I have only seen three color-phase bears while I have been bear hunting; a color phase bear is a real trophy. Blair had trouble running the cinnamon bear off so we could track the bear I shot. After about 50 yards we found it. When I walked up to it; I said it's bigger than what I thought. I was excited to see it on the ground and it was bigger than anything I had taken before. Ron, one of the guys hunting had killed a 400 pound bear the second night. I thought his was bigger than mine. We had a heck of a time getting it in the bed of the UTV. Blair had to shoot the barrel with his shot gun to run

the cinnamon bear off so we could leave. When we got back at camp and put the bear on the scales I just backed up and got out of the way. Then Blair announced that it was over 500 pounds, I didn't believe him. So being from the Show-Me-State, I had to see it for myself. By that time everyone was crowded around to see the scales. I still couldn't believe it and I kept asking Judy if this was really happening. I usually have a cold one after hunting but this was a several cold one night. I always tell first-time bear hunters that whitetail have ground shrinkage but wait till you shoot a bear.

I talked to a guy on the plane going up to camp and then coming home. He proceeded to tell me that he thought he shot a bear that weighed 300 pounds and it only weighed 150. Sometimes you get lucky and they don't shrink....they grow.

Brad Harriman beetled it out for me and scored it for Pope and Young. Much to my surprise, it scored 20 3/16". I have been bear hunting several times; this hunt

with the quality and quantity is the best one I have been on so far. If I would have made a bucket list, that Pope and Young black bear would have been at the very top. ■



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THREE OF LARRY'S GANG

(Larry, Derek & Jeff), went to Wyoming in search of mule deer. I was looking forward to spending time visiting friends as much as pursuing mule deer. Having experienced the excitement of stalking deer, videoing moose and glassing elk, Derek and Jeff were pumped.

We spent the first night on Cabela's parking lot just off Interstate 90 at Michelle, South Dakota. Cabela's welcomes overnight campers. We were one of 19 campers enjoying their hospitality.

After stopping in Sheridan for Archery Tags, Conservation Stamps, fresh bread etc. we headed to the home of my longtime friends, Mike and Susan Barrett. As usual, Susan goes all out. Grilled elk burgers and everything fresh from her garden, plus pineapple upside down cake and ice cream. See why I am so chunky? Most people lose weight on a hunting trip. Dinner was followed with sharing pictures and stories. We anxiously listened to changes and activities taking place in our hunting area.

The next morning, we headed for the mountains. We established camp next to a maintained gravel road, below the higher elevations. The steep rough roads, partial rock and dirt get ugly and almost impossible when snow or rain

create mud and ice conditions. It snowed two different days on this trip. It was quick to melt each following day. The weather didn't trouble the logging trucks. They stopped below the switchbacks, chained down their semis, and roared up the mountain. I was more concerned for their safety when coming off the mountain, pulling double trailers loaded with logs. These guys didn't hesitate or creep. Their downshifting made those diesels cackle, holding back the load, which was heard far ahead of spotting them. They treated this as just another day in the life of a logging operation.

After establishing camp, we headed to the higher elevations to begin spotting. That is one of the benefits of this area. The logging roads allow driving above tree line where you can spot or locate animals without taking those unproductive long walks in the timber. Why walk if you don't have a reasonable idea there is something worth chasing? We were told that the deer population

was down and it didn't take long to verify that. We were in a bucks-only area where there were plenty of does. Bucks were hard to come by. My only opportunity came on our second morning. After moving ahead of two deer feeding, I sit in between downed timber on the edge of a clearing. The curious one was a two-point in velvet. The second was barely a four-by-three with a polished rack which I would have liked a shot at. When they reached 30 yards, the younger brother in velvet, couldn't stop trying to figure out what I was while his older brother continued to eat. At 20 yards, junior would move to my left and then to my right peeking through the pines. He reminded me of a kid trying to see what he was missing. He couldn't determine what I was or get me to move. When he couldn't stand it any longer, he made his exit. Springing away as mule deer do, his older brother joined him. I was then able to take pictures as they resumed feeding at 50 yards.

We spent two weeks hunting



without seeing a decent buck. Talking to other hunters, they too weren't seeing mature bucks. We did see elk, which has made this area popular. It currently takes nine years of preference points to draw an elk tag. Merriam turkeys seem easy to approach. I took pictures of Derek stalking a turkey. The bird let him walk up within ten yards, with me behind him taking pictures. We followed it down the logging road several hundred yards and decided we had better things to do. Think Missouri birds would let you do that?

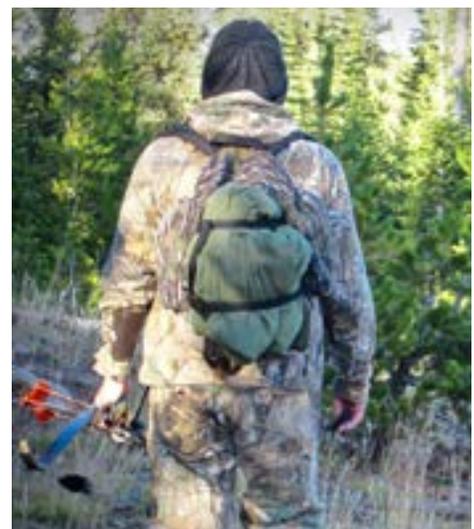
Kenny Holwell and Jim Young came to camp for a midday visit. Derek heated our Missouri barbecued ribs. I was proud that they were tender and the bones easily pulled out. Messy, but tasty. Jim brought beer from a local micro-brewery which the boys quickly took claim of. Kenny brought me a solid silver arrow point that he made. I cherish such personal gifts. We sat visiting in the warmth of the afternoon sun not realizing we were getting sunburned.

Later that week, we visited Kenny at his house in Sheridan. He has many talents, but his primary focus is on flint knapping and silver work. Ken makes molds of arrow heads from those he has knapped. He is then able to create silver arrow heads. He gave Derek and Jeff each a silver arrowhead, similar to the one he gave me. Because of his ability and experience, he can produce a beautiful stone arrowhead in approximately 35 to 40 minutes. He told us we could dig through

his coffee can of arrowheads and take what we wanted. Wow! What an opportunity. All three of us took advantage of the offer. After returning home, I mounted my silver head and six stone heads in a shadow box. It is displayed among my archery treasures.

While in Sheridan, Jim Young took us to Jerry Smiley's home. Jerry is a talented artist and outdoorsman. He is a taxidermist and sheep guide with a 107 sheep kills to his credit. Jerry also excels in trout fishing and tying flies. He is a famed sculpture artist, who specializes in bronze. Jerry has his own foundry and is commissioned for special bronze pieces. He has a life size bronze statue on main street in Sheridan. My favorite is the life size bronze of a mule deer

in his front yard. I previously met Jerry by phone when asking him to paint a picture of a trophy mule deer on turkey feathers like those he had painted for Jim and Kenny. The pictures painted on my eastern turkey feathers are of a trophy mule deer buck, doe and fawn. They are mounted in a shadow box that



Jerry built from reclaimed barn wood. Adding to the beauty and uniqueness, the moss was left on the barn wood providing a special, one of a kind decoration.

After a morning hunt, I met two of four bowhunters from Michigan. One told me he liked my Great Northern bow quiver. He said his father designed it. His dad and partner previously owned Great Northern Bow Co. The son's name is Adam Brumm. I believe his dad attended our UBM Festival in previous years. Adam's brother now owns Great Northern. They were camping with end to end wall tents. I have never seen so much stuff being hauled in a box trailer. Wall tents, aluminum poles, pot belly iron stove, full size folding picnic table, cook tables, cook stoves, coolers, chairs, cots, water jugs, food containers, full size refrigerator/freezer, generator, two individual quad runners, one side by side quad runner, plus four men and all their hunting clothes and gear. Maybe I should add, "and a partridge in a pear tree"? They said it takes them six hours to set up and six hours to tear down. We enjoyed many of the same stories and knew many of the same people. They had to contact the Wyoming Game and Fish concerning a black bear. Like Goldie Locks, it was enjoying itself in their beds. Game and Fish brought out a steel cage trap and was successful in trapping it. It

turned into somewhat of a rodeo with the bear squealing and the agents trying to move it.

After the Michigan fellows pulled out, Derek was hunting in close proximity of their camp. He was watching his footing while quietly tiptoeing through the timber, when he looked up and realized he was 15 yards, face to face with a black bear. They stood staring at each other for only a few seconds. Not having experienced such a situation, he couldn't believe how quickly he started shouting at the bear and waving his bow in an effort to make it leave. The bear turned and started to leave. Then it stopped, looking like it was changing its mind. It turned to face him. I believe he said, "Oh Sh - t!". Wisely nocking an arrow, he started his Michael Jackson Moon Walk, quickly turning it into a backward pedal. With the bear watching him, he was soon clear of the area. Derek was more than willing to hunt a different area. We believe this was the same bear that the Game & Fish had trapped and relocated. The bear had found its way back and wasn't afraid of people.

We watched ranchers driving cattle off the mountain. It was a picture of yesteryear. Cowboys on



horseback whistling and shouting along with their working dogs herding the cattle to a nearby ranch.

We also saw sheep being relocated to a different section or pasture. This operation was much quieter and was primarily with dogs and only one man on a horse. The sheep dogs must pay attention at the round up meetings. They seem to know where they are going and what to do. The lone horseman follows behind as if he is an observer. There are also signs on the highway not to pet the big white dog (Great Pyrenees). They live among the sheep, protecting and acting as their guardian.

Having spent hours of spotting and searching, we were not able to locate any decent bucks. In two weeks, three hunters should have seen more than we did. It might be time to start looking for a new location to hunt mule deer. It is difficult to give up on an area you are familiar with, especially when you have so many great friends there. I have been able to combine a vacation, visit and a hunt for many years. But life brings change. Either accept the change or adjust by making different choices. It is time to adjust and explore other possibilities. ■



THIS IS A STORY OF EXCITEMENT, sadness, triumph and failure, an adventure in time and travel and of dedication. It all started last February at the Oasis Inn and Convention Center in Springfield Missouri. Our UBM Festival was in full swing. It was Saturday night, our bellies and thirsts had been sated and we were in the midst of the club's main fund raiser, the live auction! Included in the many items we auction annually is a traveling bow. I had decided to bid on it. The bow is a 60 inch, 49# @ 28", custom-made Rick Lanham recurve. It was originally built in 2012 and donated to the club by Mr. Lanham. It is a fine bow and I have enjoyed shooting it this past year. Rick is out of Columbia, Missouri. If you would like to find out more about Rick's bows just visit his web-page; lanhamtraditional.com.

The last week of March I was headed to Valentine, Texas with fellow UBM member Don Vaughn. We were meeting a host of other UBMers [Dave Miller, Ken Webb, Ethan Grotheer, Beau Johnston, Brian Peterson, Gerald Shields and future UBM'er Rich Stanze] for a javelina hunt. Texas allows two javelinas per hunter and if you have never hunted them, I highly recommend it. I hesitate calling this the "official" UBM javelina hunt since this was our first time on this ranch. Dave Miller had set this hunt up for us. The rancher just happens to be Dave's cousin so it made for a very comfortable experience. The history of this ranch is most interesting, as many ranches are that border Mexico. The geography and scenery are spectacular. If memory serves me correctly [and sometimes it doesn't anymore] we killed 8 javelinas. I took my "piggy" on the second evening of the hunt. It was a rodeo to say the least. It involved three grown [kid-like] men, Ethan Grotheer, Beau Johnston and me, a dry creek bed with a cave cut up and into the bank from erosion and four javelinas! Earlier that afternoon, Ethan and Beau had made less than desirable shots on two of the animals and were able to watch them, plus two more,

take refuge in the cave in the creek bed. Several hours had passed and it was getting dark. I volunteered to assist them in the recovery. We descended into the creek bed only to find all four javelinas quite alive and just a bit testy! I will spare you the details, and as Beau suggested "church it up a bit", but suffice it to say a battle ensued! Lying on the ground and shooting up into the cave is as awkward as it sounds. Men hollering, pigs growling, teeth snapping and arrows flying we finally managed to come out the victors! I told Beau and Ethan that I was pulling my seniority card and that my time of crawling into confined spaces after wounded animals had expired. So after a round of rock, paper, scissors between them, Beau began the belly crawl to recover our most coveted prizes. The traveling bow and I had completed the first leg of our adventure.

April in Missouri means turkey season. So Saturday, April 20th found me and the "Traveler" in Pleasant Hope, Missouri. Two decoys, a hen and jake, strategically set in a power line cut. I was in my leafy suit standing waist deep in buck brush between two large red oaks. The early morning sun would be in the gobbler's face and I was in the shadows. I had made it my goal to take a mature tom without a blind this year. Just standing in the open and trusting my camo. Nine o'clock in the morning and he was coming! Right down the middle of the cut, full strut, spittin' & drummin'. It was text book! He sidled up to my new \$125, life-like, jake decoy. [I know I can't believe I spent that much either]. Turning to chest up to the rubbery intruder

he presented the shot I had hoped for. Fanned to me, I raised the Traveler and drew. The arrow was gone. A puff of feathers told me I had shot high. The big bird jumped off to the right and folded down. I was flabbergasted that I had missed such a chip shot. Automatically my mouth call went to work, a few soft purrs and he was fanned out again and headed back to the decoys. I swear he walked in the same



Dirty, happy, hunters!

footprints as he chested up to the jake. As Yogi Berra once said; it was “Déjà vu all over again”, the string at my cheek, the sun glistening off the tom and another puff of feathers. But this time I heard a solid thump! The gobbler jumped to the right again and started walking away. I watched in hopes of seeing him start to crumple from my shot, but instead he just kept walking. I know I heard a “thump” and saw the arrow disappear into him yet his body language was normal. I looked back at the decoys and my heart sank, for there, on its side, was my \$125 Jake decoy my arrow high through the back of it, complete penetration! Turkeys normally gobble but I believe I heard this one snickering as he walked out of sight.Side note: Since he wouldn't hold air I tried to repair that decoy. My idea was to expand it with foam insulation, the insulation expanded and expanded! It was a little like something from a Stephan King movie [see photo]. That handsome decoy now lives



The UBM “Traveler” bow

somewhere in the Springfield land-fill. It was like carrying a 10 pound, black beach-ball around. I couldn't find a stake strong enough to hold him up. Hey, I never said I was a mechanical engineer, that's my son.

The sixth day of September, the Traveler and I arrived just outside of Judith Gap, Montana to hunt wapiti. I booked this hunt through Hidden Valley Outfitters. It is what you might call an older man's elk hunt, private ranch land that holds a few hundred elk year around. This is a beautiful place. Picture pristine Montana mountains and green lush hay/alfalfa fields and you got the picture. The elk bed in the mountains during the daylight hours and move down to the fields to feed at night. Sometimes if the weather and wind are right they may stay in the fields all day. It is not unusual to see 100-200 elk in the fields in broad daylight. This rancher only takes a few archery hunters annually and even less gun hunters. He doesn't want to put too much pressure on the animals and drive them off his land. The accepted means of hunting is tree-stands and ground blinds. Sometimes during the peak of the rut, and if circumstances are right, calling is used, but rarely. Basically it is whitetail hunting for elk. I wish I had an excited story to tell here [trust me, I really do] but I don't. I have hunted many places and been successful on many animals but



A decoy repair failure



What the coyotes left for me.

elk is my Kryptonite! I saw animals daily but never close enough for an ethical shot. There were only four of us in camp and the other three hunters all shot bulls. They were compound shooters so their range was more extended than mine. The closest of their shots was 40 some yards and the longest was 72 yards. That is a different game than I can play. The Traveler and I scared a couple of pine squirrels but that was it. Adventure # 3 not too adventurous, back home we came.

As I write this, it is the third week of November here in Missouri and my deer season has not gone as well as I had hoped. The Traveler and I have spent many hours in the tree-stand. This season has been a little difficult as far as time goes. Even though I am retired now it seems I have less time. I'm guessing I have something to do with that. Most of my deer hunting is done in the Osceola area. The farmer that I hunt on is a long-time family friend. He allows me to park our camper by his barn and leave it till season ends. I can plug in at the barn so we have heat and lights. Very nice set up, very fortunate to have friends like these.

The last week of October, Cheryl [my wife] and I were hunting. On the same morning we both missed 8-point bucks! Cheryl shot under hers and I shot over mine. After my miss I knew exactly what I had done. He was so close [12-14 yards] I couldn't miss, right? Just point and shoot. No matter how close you still have to pick a spot. Why is that so hard to remember? You will have to ask Cheryl about her miss, I believe it had something to do with yardage estimation. On Halloween evening I shot a nice doe. The hit was right at the back of the rib-cage but angling slightly forward. She ran hard, never slowing down till out of my sight. I felt like maybe I did get both lungs by the way she ran, but being unsure I left her and went to the camper. I told Cheryl the story, we ate supper and killed some time. Four hours after the shot I went back and started trailing her. It was 9 o'clock at night. After a 30 minute slow track I heard something in the brush ahead of me. My flashlight showed two green eyes staring at me. I felt sure it was her but she didn't bolt. In fact in the dim light I thought I could see her breathing was labored.



We needed a lot of ammo for those javelinis!

So I kept the light in her eyes and slowly backed out leaving her till morning. Cheryl and I were both back on the track at first light. In short order we found the doe right where I had left her the night before. Sadly, though, the coyotes had also found her. This was more than one coyote for she was mostly gone from the rib-cage back. This is only the second deer that I can remember losing to coyotes. It is depressing and seems wasteful but it is the circle of life. I did everything as I should have [except to make a better shot] yet I lost the deer. But yet she provided sustenance to other animals and I'm sure her carcass still is. With that said I'm sure there are plenty of coyotes! I try to "manage" them every time I see one, I urge you to do likewise, but it is tough with Traditional equipment.

This is not the way I wanted my story of our "Traveling Bow" to end but these are the facts and this is hunting. All in all, it has been a fun and adventurous year. The bow is a good one and the stories behind it continue to grow. I now am a small piece of history and I encourage you to add your story as well. I hope to see you at the Festival in February and when the "Traveler" comes up for auction start your adventure. The money you spend is in support of our club and the adventures you make with the bow are all yours. So as Auctioneer's likes to say "Bid it up"! ■



Beau Johnston on the recovery

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Festival Contests

Don't forget to participate in the two contests that will be taking place at the Festival; both of which are being headed up by UBM Board member, Ethan Grotheer. The first one is the long-running photo contest. Enter your favorite 8x10 photos in any of the five different categories: 1) Bowhunter With Game 2) Wildlife 3) Trail Camera 4) Bowhunting Related and 5) Outdoor Theory. The second contest is the resurrected "Best Arrow" contest. Create a one-of-a-kind critter sticker and turn it in to the folks at the registration desk. One arrow per person and, please, no professional arrow makers! The winners for both contests will be announced at the banquet.

Admission

Adult (includes meal) - \$40, **Youth** (under 15 and includes meal) - \$15

Festival ticket (no meal) - \$20

Day pass for Saturday - \$5 (kids 10 and under free with paid adult)

**** Prices go up \$5 at the door ****

Contact Jim Pyles (636-346-6023, jpetraditional@gmail.com) for more information

A COOL, STILL MORNING; the freezing fog rolling in through the chilled woods like huge breaths from an unseen deity. The hoar frost floats from the treetops like icy down feathers; spider webs thick with the frosty dew hang motionless from the branches like abandoned kite strings. Do I hear a rustling in the leaves at a distance? A squirrel perhaps...? Possibly a deer...? Whatever it is, it keeps its distance from my stand nestled high against the trunk of a black oak. I am in a small woodlot between a well-groomed hay field and an abandoned logging road. I have seen deer here before. I have killed deer here before. I am waiting...

The stillness is deafening... The cold permeates my fingers and toes. I feel the need to create an opportunity so I begin ticking together the shed antlers I found on my property so many seasons ago. These "rattling horns" have brought in many a curious deer over the seasons; some to their demise, some only to be admired. The woods remains still. A squirrel barks off in the distance... Perhaps an intruder? Nothing. I settle back to catch a few paragraphs from my paperback between hopeful glances.

A sound catches my ear. I slip my paperback back

into my pocket and slowly rise. Yes, it's a doe, slowly working her way towards my stand. She stops, attentive to her surroundings. She looks back towards the fog-shrouded field. A swirl of wind? Does she sense my presence? Can she hear my teeth chattering? No, it's a young buck, full of himself and feeling the urges of the season. Off they go, back into the pea soup. I relax, the shivers take hold and wrack my body for a minute. I am alone again in my woods, hoping the amorous pair will decide to grace me again with their presence... ■

Brian Peterson, UBM



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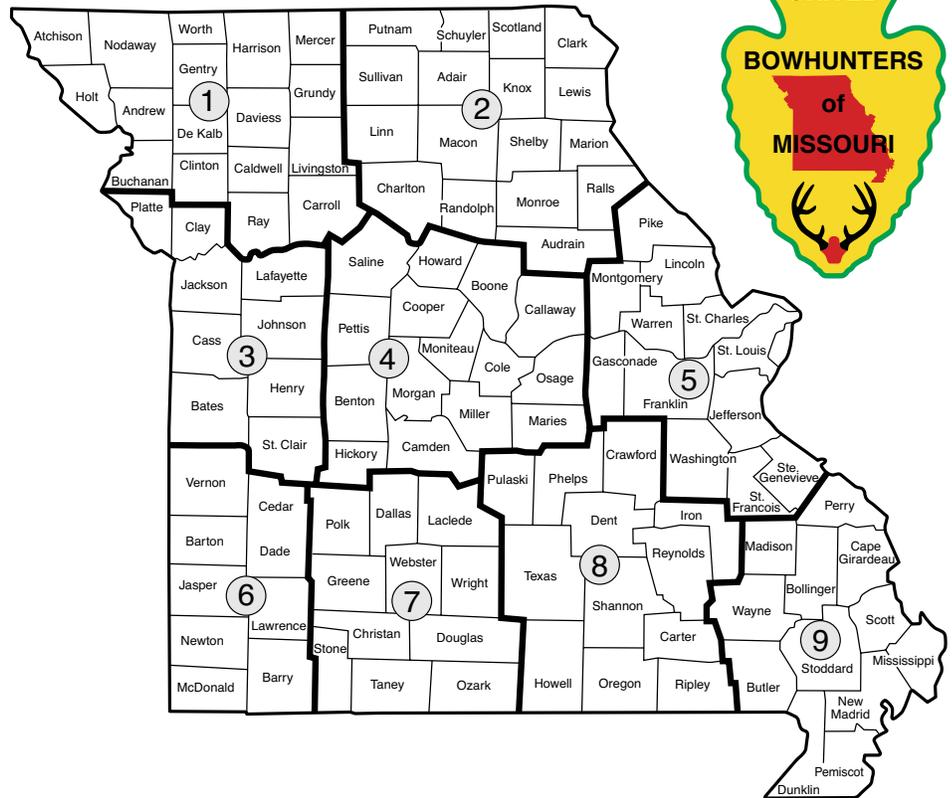
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