



# THE UNITED Spring 2022 BOWHUNTER



Official Publication of The United Bowhunters of Missouri



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Spring 2022

## Calendar of Events

### April

4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>: Kansas archery turkey season  
9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>: Missouri youth turkey season  
13<sup>th</sup>: Opening of Kansas regular turkey season  
18<sup>th</sup>: Opening of Missouri regular turkey season

### May

8<sup>th</sup>: Missouri regular turkey season closes  
28<sup>th</sup>: Missouri squirrel season opens  
31<sup>st</sup>: Kansas regular turkey season closes

### June

16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>: Compton Traditional Bowhunters Rendezvous, Berrien Springs, MI  
25-27<sup>th</sup>: United Bowhunters of Missouri Rendezvous, Marshall, MO

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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 —

What do you know?  
Deer can read.  
Photo by Bill Stewart.

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



**H**ELLO ALL,  
I do believe that it is safe to say now that this year's Festival was fantastic! Our board members, seminar speakers, and

vendors all worked hard to make it quite the engaging affair. Of course, our keynote banquet speaker, Ken Beck, topped it all off with a great retelling of Black Widow history and larger than life tales of fun had by his crew and him. It was a great time. I've been shopping for Billy Bob teeth ever since!

I cannot thank everyone who worked the registration and silent or live auctions enough either. Without their hard work, the Festival simply wouldn't be the Festival.

As a quick reminder, the Rendezvous will be held in Marshall, MO again this summer, June 24-26. I'll be praying we don't get rained in this time, but either way I'll be thrilled to fling some arrows with you all.

On another note: We are once again looking for candidates to run for our board of directors election this summer. It would be great to have some new perspective added to the club's decision-making process, and I do know that two officers will likely not be running for re-election, so, in other words, there's literally going

to have to be new blood willing to run for the board. So, if you love this organization and would like to be more involved, here is your chance! Please feel free to contact any of the current board members to ask questions and submit your candidacy.

Anyhow, my life of three jobs, a 2-year-old, and an overachieving wife just keeps ticking forward as usual. I am beginning to feel quite the itch to chase wary turkeys in another month or so, and a Montana bear hunt might be in the works, pending current gas prices.

As always, I hope you are taking the time to shoot your bows and enjoy the outdoors every chance you get. Have a great spring!

Ethan



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**A RAZOR SHARP BROADHEAD** is very important to a bowhunter. Arrows in a bow quiver are kept separated and stay sharp. Arrows in a back, side, or other style quiver can come in contact with one another. As the bowhunter moves, the broadheads can rub together and get dull. A way to keep them separated and sharp is needed. Golfers use what they call "golf tubes" to keep their golf club handles separated when the clubs

are in the golf bag. This idea works well for broadheads too.

Golf tubes measure 1 3/16" in diameter and are 36" long. Many different broadhead models will fit inside the tubes. Cut the tubes to the length of your quiver and plug the bottoms with foam so the broadheads can seat and not move around. Judo points will also fit in a golf tube.

Tape or glue several of the tubes together in a configuration that will

fit in your quiver. Target arrows and metal blunts will fit in the gaps around the tubes. Moleskin, or thin foam, can be glued inside the top of the tube to cushion and silence the arrows.

Golf tubes will vary in price so check around before buying some. If you are lucky, you might find some in a thrift store. ■

Keep 'em sharp and good hunting!

Harry Mauchenheimer

## Bombastic Big Buck Bad Bias Never Pays Off –

### When Will They Learn?

Dick Wood

**M**Y GRANDSON, BRET ERVIN, never met me until he was just short of two years of age. The international adoption from India went smoothly enough, but why he picked me for his PaPa, I'll never know. He was not familiar with whitetails in his birth country, and Genesis bows were still somewhat unknown in the USA.

Fast Forward to November 6, 2021

Bret took to the bow early and has several state champion barebow medals, mixed with NFAA Midwestern and MBH Indoor Champ titles to his credit. He placed 3rd in a local, but big, 3D Outdoor tournament at age 12.... competing against me and all adult men shooting from the traditional adult stakes. These accolades really spiced up his resume! I was always glad that most deer can't read resumes, as their ability to read hunting seasons is bad enough!

This previous year, I finally stopped giving Bret trash about hunting out of his "BASEMENT" tree stand (which was low and on the lee side of the pasture ridge) I just knew that he would never bow-kill a deer out of that stand with its



poor position. Of course, in his first four "sits", he arrowed two deer!!!! When will they learn? We sages try to teach 'em!

A new 18-foot ladder stand was set up in August, unbeknownst to me, at a strategic location on the edge of a field tree line. Although I haven't seen it to this day, I still approved! Of course, his first six hunts there, he had no opportunity for a shot. Oh, well. Then came the 11/6 phone call!

A hot, sizzling doe had revealed herself well over 150 yards away from the opposite side of the hayfield. Unfortunately, she was heading to another crossing area at least 90 yards to the north of Bret. A buck was with her and the



ramped-up antlered lover was not letting the doe out of his sight. To Bret's dismay, this was all taking place well out of his range.

So Bret, (pay attention now, all of my fellow sage whitetailers)..... did the unthinkable. He jerked his grunt call out and bellared out a bellar!

I just finished my 66th year of bowhunting and ever since Missouri's, Brad Harris, invented the grunt call, I've never been without one on stand. But, of course, I've never made the mistake of trying to pull a rutting buck from ten yards behind a hotter than a bulldog-firecracker doe. What a waste of effort!

All that loud grunt did was to magnetize that Love-Sick/Daddy-Gonnabe/Incredibly Horny buck..... OVER TO BRET!

At this point, I am thinking that Romeo's thought was, "Heck, I would rather fight than PROCREATE!" Einstein Frazzle-Brain stopped broadside to Bret at my favorite shot distance, eight steps. That 18-year-old young bowhunter did not have to atone for the "error of his ways" and "Why Not?" attitude. Instead,

he sent his arrow on its way and Casanova expired a mere five steps from point of impact!

Bret will have to live the rest of his life with his ludicrous decision to attempt to grunt a bloodshot-eyed buck from a ready-to-breed doe. All of us sage bowhunters would never try something that impossible! This redefines the category of: Bombastic Big Buck Bad Bias

Bret also took two firearms deer last season and donated them to

Share the Harvest. That makes 20 Missouri deer that Bret has killed, most of which by using the Grandkids' shared deer rifle.

A 30-year-plus veteran P&Y measurer, Jim Holdenried, works with Bret a couple days each week. Jim is one of Missouri's prolific P&Y and B&C whitetail/muley bowhunters. Jim taped Bret's "Casanova" Old Lick Buck at 135 0/8 inches! I wonder how it feels to be in the Record Book at age 18???



## Christmas 1960

Bill Brown

**I WAS 10 YEARS OLD WHEN** I received a 15-pound-pull fiberglass bow and six wooden arrows for Christmas. Wow! It doesn't get any better than this!

It was a white Christmas at our house. We lived just a few miles south of Grain Valley, Missouri, just east of Kansas City.

After gift exchanges with family, which included Grandma and Grandpa Brown, Mom and Dad, sister Kathie (11), sister Sandie (7), brother Ed (4), and newborn sister Martha (2 weeks old), I headed out on my first bow and arrow hunt. I had shot squirrels and rabbits with my .410 shotgun, but this felt different.

My sister, Kathie, had a dog named Rusty (half German Shepherd, half Collie), and of course, Rusty wanted to go with me.

We lived on 160 acres of farmland. Rusty and I headed off to a patch of timber about a quarter mile away. On the way, we passed by a hedgerow in the middle of a cow pasture. This hedgerow was about 50 yards long. Rusty sprang off to the other side of the hedgerow and started barking at something up in the tree.

A squirrel, which had been hidden from us on the other side of the tree, came scurrying around to the side of the tree where I was. Then he went out on a limb a few feet and started scolding at Rusty. The squirrel was about ten yards from me. Wow! I drew my bow with full anticipation of harvesting this squirrel! Of course, my arrow went sailing right by him!

Now I was only allowed to take one arrow on this hunt. I am sure it had something to do with Mom and Dad not wanting me to lose all six of my new arrows on my first hunt!

With the fresh snow on the ground, I soon realized how easy my arrow was to find with its bright feathers sticking up above the snow, some 50 to 75 yards away. So I hurried to retrieve my arrow and headed back for another crack at that squirrel that Rusty was still holding at bay.

Second shot! Same as the first, sailing right by the squirrel! This process went on and on and on for a couple hours, I'm sure! The squirrel was running from one end of the hedgerow to the other not being able to get down and escape



The author with his sisters and faithful dog, Rusty.

because of Rusty's watchful eye!

Now I am telling you, we were all three worn out! Rusty...me... and the squirrel! The tracks in the snow clearly told the story of the persistent and determined battle! Dozens, maybe a hundred arrows, had been shot and retrieved!

Being the brilliant hunter that I was developing into, I realized a couple of important strategies:

Get as close to the target as possible. Don't pull the arrow all the way back. (Therefore, you don't have to run as far in your rubber boots to retrieve it.)

With this profound knowledge in

hand, there I stood five feet away from a totally exhausted squirrel (who was no longer scared of me or my errant arrows), looking down the shaft of a half-drawn arrow. I released the arrow...and to my amazement, I hit the squirrel! Even though the half-drawn arrow with a dull field point couldn't penetrate, it did knock the squirrel out of the tree and Rusty took care of things from there!

We headed back to the house for a much-needed rest and to show off our trophy! Everybody came running out of the house as I heard Grandpa yell, "Here comes Billy... and with a squirrel!"

The adults all seemed truly amazed! My sisters were like "Really? He got a new bow and arrow. Isn't he supposed to go shoot something with it? What's is the big deal?"

I can only guess my dad and grandpa followed my tracks out into the pasture and had quite the chuckle looking over the barrage of foot paths retrieving arrows, and all of Rusty and my tracks going up and down the hedgerow.

Well that was quite an exciting first bow and arrow hunt. Admittedly, it was several years before another bow and arrow



The author and his granddaughter, Hana, who now uses the same bow.



Looks like that 62-year-old bow still shoots well!

harvest.

But since then, I have been blessed to use traditional bow equipment to harvest 52 deer, several rabbits and squirrels, along with groundhogs, raccoons, and five coyotes. ■

Happy Hunting!

May persistence and determination bless you with successful hunts!


Bill Brown



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**A**N ARTICLE IN THE FEB/MAR 2019 issue of Traditional Bowhunter magazine entitled “The Case for Straight Fletching” by Stephen Graf concludes straight fletching has several advantages. This made me curious regarding the relative rotation of helical versus straight fletched arrows. As a result, several types of arrows were shot and the location of the cock feather in the target was observed. The following observation cannot be considered the results of a strictly scientific endeavor as equal emphasis was not given to each arrow type. Also, the shooter has to be considered a variable due to slight variations in draw length and less than consistent releases. The arrows were divided into 15 groups depending upon shaft type, fletching orientation and fletching length. All fletching was left wing, TruFlite and all attached to the shaft with the same 1960’s era Bitzenburger fletcher. All nocks were Bohning Classic. Carbin shafts were GT3555, GT500, and Blood Hunter 500. The aluminum shafts were 1918.

Spine values for all cedar arrows varied from 51 to 68 pounds as determined on a homemade spine tester. A 38-pound left-hand longbow was used for all shots which were made at a bag target at 15 yards. All arrows were shot split fingered with the cock feather out. The bow was canted at approximately 11:00 o’clock. There was neither fishtailing nor porpoising of any of the shots in spite of the variation of spines (see chart 1).

The following tabulation is for the cock feather location of all arrows in the target, referenced to clock-face orientation (See charts 2&3).

**Chart 3**

Clock Feather Groups – All Arrows		
5" Helical	50%	Between 12-2
5" Helical	81%	12-6
5" Straight	66%	3-6
5" Straight	92%	3-9
4" Helical	40%	3-6
4" Helical	36%	9-11
4" Straight	42%	8-11
4" Straight	50%	3-6

**Chart 1**

Diameter/Type	Fletch	Point Weight	Total Weight
5/16" cedar	5" helical	145 grains	466-458 grains
5/16" cedar	5" straight	160 grains	450-458 grains
11/32" cedar	5" helical	160 grains	504-540 grains
11/32" cedar	5" straight	160 grains	478-490 grains
Carbon	4" helical	145 grains	384-454 grains
Carbon	4" helical	160 grains	514-524 grains
Carbon	4" straight	145 grains	384 grains
Aluminum	5" helical	160 grains	564-566 grains
Aluminum	4" helical	145 grains	520 grains
Aluminum	4" helical	160 grains	570-578 grains

**Chart 2**

Number of Shots				
Clock Location	5" Helical	5" Straight	4" Helical	4" Straight
12 o'clock	7	0	2	0
1	2	0	2	0
2	3	2	3	1
3	2	8	5	3
4	1	4	3	4
5	1	5	4	2
6	6	8	5	3
7	0	4	0	1
8	2	2	3	2
9	1	4	6	1
10	2	1	4	4
11	0	0	5	3
<i>totals</i>	27	38	42	24

For all straight fletch arrows weighing from 384-484 grains, results showed 59% of the cock feathers between 3 and 6 o’clock. For the same weight arrows with helical fletching, 33% were found at 6 o’clock with the remaining scattered. For all arrows heavier than 484 grains, and for all FOC’s, data was scattered.

Are these results earth shaking? Hardly! I shoot my bow for fun and I’m not a “technical” archer. I have satisfied my curiosity regarding helical and straight fletching. Again, these results are for my shooting and my arrows. I have seen arrows that have a greater amount of helical than my clamp produces. These arrows would likely produce different results, as would greater shot distances. Presumably, there would be consistency among shot groups. Personally, I will be using straight fletching as I find it easier to fletch than helical and I find no difference in my arrow flight. I must admit, however, helical sure is cool looking. ■

**O**N SUNDAY JANUARY 30TH, sixteen of the Buffalo Tongue Club, sometimes referred to as the Stump Bunch, met for the annual kickoff of the Stump Season. For several years this group has met at the local Cracker Barrel for breakfast as a way to get reacquainted following the deer season. Everyone was happy to see each other, and we nearly monopolized the center section of the restaurant. The waitresses pushed tables together to accommodate the group and hustled with water and coffee. It was a hassle for this waitress to get everyone's order in between visiting and general indecisive ordering. She deserves an A+ for patience. And again, her system of who-ordered-what as she directed the delivery of orders was amazing. You wouldn't believe the trays of food that were brought to the tables. I didn't think it would all fit. I didn't notice any leftovers either. Nothing like a country breakfast for a group of country folks!

I moved around the tables trying to visit and still didn't get to hear everyone's stories or see their photos. Remember when people brought printed pictures to show their hunting adventures and trophies? They often got passed around. Now everyone is carrying a cell phone with a thousand pictures they scroll through before arriving at the photo they want to show. Don't you love it when the phones are handed back and forth, and the picture is lost and has to be handed back and forth a couple more times?



Stories that remember previous archery events lead to plans for 2022. The UBM's Festival and Rendezvous are a given. Many of the 2020/21 activities were cancelled because of Covid and everyone was anxious to get back together.

The 30th of January also happens to be my longtime hunting partner, Joe Marshall's birthday. I didn't put it on a billboard, have planes write it in the sky, or have it announced on radio, but I did make sure everyone there knew it, including the waitress who brought him a chocolate cake. Joe turned 82 and can out walk all of us. I shouldn't tell this, but he even put up some of my tree stands in 2021. Thanks, buddy!

As everyone was leaving for the 2nd half of their day, you could sense the satisfaction felt by getting together.

■

Larry Bauman

## ➤➤➤ **Bowhunting Pioneers**

Larry Bauman ➤

**I**CAME ACROSS SOME PHOTOS that I thought should be shared. In a previous 2021 UBM article, I mentioned that the Missouri Archery Season was established 75 years ago. Earl Hoyt and Paul Jeffries worked closely with the Conservation Department establishing the Archery Deer Season. Both have been inducted into the MDC Hall of Fame. They have also been recognized by UBM when attending UBM Festivals. They enjoyed hunting together

but were also proficient archers competing in local and national tournaments. The included photos



are of (1) two best friends during a competition, (2) Earl and Paul at full draw around the time of Missouri's first Archery Season and (3) Earl with his best deer.

The bows in the pictures represent and describe what Missouri's Archery Deer Season was founded on. Technology, along with difficult wildlife management issues, have made major change to the original concept of hunting with a bow and arrow. Although we don't all agree with the

equipment differences within our hunting season, we need to move forward. These changes are in place and there is little benefit in continuing to debate them.

Our attention should be on what is becoming a major problem for all hunting. Currently less than 6% of our national population hunt. This is based on population compared to purchased hunting licenses. Hunting numbers are declining while the population continues to grow. The non-hunting public significantly outweighs hunters today and this imbalance is expected to continue. The decline in hunting is attributed to demographics, increased urbanization, access, gun laws etc. Nationally, the decline in hunting threatens conservation



funding, causing budget shortfalls. Agencies are wondering how this funding will be replaced or will our wildlife systems suffer? Most of our population approves of hunting but has a dim view of trophy hunting. The continuing imbalance of non-hunters vs. hunters opens opportunity for antihunters.

Voters have a major influence on our future. It has never been more



important to improve hunting's image and educate the non-hunting public. What is the future of hunting and conservation? Is there a solution? No one seems to know. I can only suggest that we continue to maintain the high ethical standard we are known for and face the future with a positive attitude. ■

Larry Bauman



## The Best Laid Plans of Turkeys and Men

Darren Haverstick

**H**AVE YOU EVER HAD A HUNT GO exactly the way you planned it? Where your intended supper comes from the direction you need him to come from, walks down the precise path you have imagined him walking down, and then stops at the exact place you desire for that perfect shot? A million things can go wrong between the instant you initiate the hunting process and the moment you find yourself coming to full draw. But that one time, the planets are in alignment, the spirits have been appeased, and all that's left to do is pick a spot and send that arrow home. The Perfect Hunt; a rare event indeed but one that does actually happen as I found out during Missouri's spring turkey season in late April of 2004.

Besides everything going as scripted, there was another characteristic of this little safari that made it unique. Most hunting stories you read about take place on vast tracks of land where a

person can wander around for days scouting and stalking the local fauna. This one happened in my backyard; a dinky 5-acre plot of ground located in, what is best described as, a rural subdivision.

Timber Ridge Estates is located outside a small country town in southwest Missouri and is basically a hunk of hardwood forest divided up into small acreage lots.



I love my Hidden Hunter blind with the low vertical windows!

As a buffer zone against further development, it is bound on its northeastern side by a big cattle farm. The woods have generally been left alone and are filled with all the sorts of critters you would expect in a forest of that type. Hunting is legal to do but is uncommon in practice. Most of the residents just don't think about doing such a thing that close to their homes.

However, I am a true Ozark hillbilly and I was brought up to act on every hunting opportunity that presents itself. Therefore, turkey and deer living right behind the house, in good conscience, cannot be ignored. Faced with a severe limitation of hunting ground, though, I had to change my tactics and use meticulous planning as my primary weapon. Animals using my property are only passing through so I have to figure out ways to take full advantage of the brief time they spend on it. In preparation

for battle with Ole Tom, I spent a lot of time down in my wee patch of woods going through "what-if" scenarios. What if he roosted there? What would you do? What if he approached from that direction? How would you set up? Since I am an engineer by trade, every conceivable situation was viewed as just another problem to solve; calculators and computers being optional of course.

I didn't hunt on the opening day of the 2004 season, but when I came home from work that afternoon I had a good feeling about the next morning. Rain was moving into the area and the air was still and heavy with both moisture and promise. You could hear a gnat sneeze from a mile away so I tried to find things to keep me busy outdoors while I listened for the telltale signs of turkeys in the vicinity. Around six o'clock, my prayers were answered when a gobbler fired off about 200 yards down the hill behind the house. I could tell he was in the upper field of the neighboring cattle farm and I knew from past experience that he would go to roost in a cluster of white oaks on the ridge my house sits on. He would be across my property line but less than 100 yards away, due north. He was gobbling pretty regularly and by the

sound of things there were at least two other males with him.

Of all the scenarios I had envisioned, the one shaping up was the most promising. At the bottom of the hill on my lot there is a large, flat, open area where the turkeys come to scratch for acorns and such. In the morning, I would put my decoys out in this clearing and place my blind up the incline about 15 yards from them. The longbeards would be above me and would come down the hill to get into the adjoining fields after they flew off the roost. Along the way, I would entice them over to my place with some sweet, sexy calling and beautiful hand-painted hens.

A couple of days before, I had done a dry run on this setup just to make sure that everything under my control would go as planned. And, it was lucky for me that I had done this. Between my ambush spot and the turkey motel was an old three-strand barbed wire fence that separated my property from the cattle farmer's. I had completely forgotten about this potential disaster! Noah had put this fence up shortly after the floodwaters receded and to the human eye it looked like no big deal. But to a lovesick turkey, it might as well have been the Great Wall of China. Toms hang up on the strangest

things and I was not about to take a chance on this obstacle being one of them. I started looking for places where the wires had come loose from their posts and found a

spot only five yards from where my blind would be. Knowing my neighbor's cows couldn't get into these woods, I cut myself a sapling and propped up the bottom two wires with it to give those gobblers the passageway they would be looking for. It was a little closer to my blind location than I wanted, but the whole setup was built around a lot of "ifs". What was one more added to the pile?

It was not yet daylight when I stepped out on the porch the morning of the hunt and made the last minute adjustments to gear. My vest was stuffed with various calls and other essentials and my broadheads were seated tightly in my bow quiver. Spraying my pants with Permanone, I noticed that a light rain was falling and the wind was starting to pick up a little. The toms weren't gonna sing much in this kind of weather but that was okay. I already knew where my targets were so I didn't have to worry about locating anybody. All I had to do now was bring one in and put an arrow through him. How hard could it be? With a handful of bow and a head full of confidence, I traipsed off down to my blind and the events yet to unfold.

I had been in my setup only 20 minutes when the first gobble of the morning blasted through the air. In a situation like this I always let the turkey make the first move. I was pretty close to the roosting spot so I didn't want to spook the toms with aggressive calling. I let the boys rattle off a couple more times before I answered their trumpeting with a few soft yelps. Boy, if that didn't get 'em going! Before long we were volleying back and forth; I'd yelp and they'd gobble. I was sounding so good that I found myself with the sudden urge to drop a wing and start scratching



My ambush setup.

in the dirt. The longbeards were fired up but still in their trees so I decided to quit calling until they flew down. I wanted to send them the message that I wasn't just some easy pushover. They were going to have to come to me if they wanted any action.

After waiting 15 minutes (that seemed like an eternity) a bird gobbled again and he sounded further away. They had finally gotten out of bed but were heading the wrong direction! I quickly gave them the ole one-two punch, using my mouth call and box call simultaneously, and an answer erupted not more than 50 yards from my location. The toms had split up and one was coming my way! I quietly putted a couple of times and then went silent. Carefully looking out the side window of my blind, I strained to see any movement in the undergrowth of the forest. The way I had it figured, the turkey would come straight at me, see the gap in the fence, and stroll right on through it. The key was him seeing the gap. As if on cue, I spotted the blue head of my adversary about 30 feet away, looking around trying to find his lady. He seemed to notice my decoys but for some reason he didn't see the path I had made for him. I sat rigid as I watched him turn around and go back the way he had come. I couldn't believe it! So far the hunt had went exactly as I had planned and now, at the crucial moment, it was all falling apart. In desperation, I started cutting and yelping just to see if I could get him to change his mind. He answered every sound I made but kept widening the distance between us. For an instant, I thought all was lost. But then I noticed that he wasn't really going away, he was circling me. Tom was coming back

towards the fence but he was now below my position. The old, sly devil was going to walk the fence line until he found a break in it to cross under! I switched my view to gaze out the blind's front window and, sure enough, I see not one, but two longbeards walking next to the fence looking for love. They quickly spotted my hand-made opening and, like I was reeling them in, came right towards me and stepped through it.

Now was the moment of truth. It was all up to me and I was not the least bit nervous. I had run this exact movie in my head so many times that the whole thing seemed like play-acting. The turkeys had just finished their part, now it was time for me to do mine. Then the director would yell "Cut" and we would all go home happy. I waited patiently for both toms to clear the fence before I started to draw my recurve. They were not more than five yards away and completely oblivious to my presence! Both of the boys paused after coming under and then ambled past me heading towards the decoys. When they stopped again I was looking at a shot of about 25 feet. I quickly came to full draw, found my anchor, and sent the arrow on its way.

To this day, I have no idea what I aimed at when I let go of that bowstring. All I know is that after I shot, my target flew five feet straight up in the air and then came back down like nothing had ever happened. I had missed



I like my decoys close!

that turkey completely! My first reaction was, "I'll be able to get a second shot", but by the time I had nocked another arrow those toms had decided that their rubber playmates weren't the best dates they'd ever had and were now out of my shooting range. With some sultry clucks and purrs, I tried to persuade them to come back but they just gobbled their fool heads off and went merrily on their way.

After it was all over, I came out of the blind and started tearing down my setup. The blood was still ringing in my ears as I replayed the events just passed. A golden opportunity and I had blown it! I couldn't believe it was possible for me to miss a turkey that close! Somehow, though, it didn't seem to bother me as much as I thought it would. Man, what a rush! Even though I didn't get a bird, I definitely got a great story to tell and a little wisdom to pass on to the next hunter: All your wonderful gear, careful planning, and attention to detail mean nothing if I can't hit what you're shooting at. And, even though you come home empty handed, you can still have yourself The Perfect Hunt. ■



Everyone loved our keynote speaker, Ken Beck!



An MDC rep talks about the Missouri bear population.



Larry Hudson lying about something!



UBM Board members getting ready to talk about hunting public land.



Darren Haverstick talking about Mexican turkeys.



Top left:  
Dennis Harper discussing antler measuring with Richard Dewey.

Top right:  
Mike Clark makes people enjoy spending their money.

Bottom left: Barb Hilgedick and Joel Davis working hard on auction paperwork.

Right middle:  
Tom Clum giving us all much-needed advice on shooting.

Bottom right:  
A well-attended seminar!

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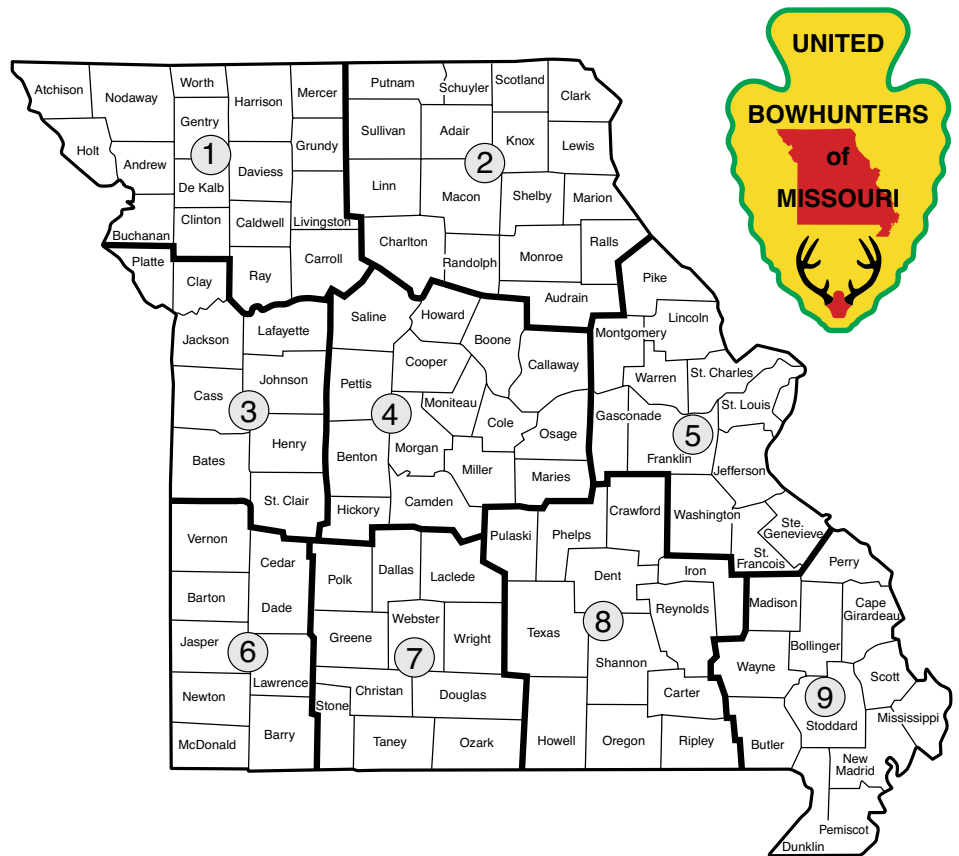
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