



THE UNITED Fall 2026 BOWHUNTER



Official Publication of The United Bowhunters of Missouri



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Fall 2026

Calendar of Events

October

1st-31st: Missouri fall turkey season
9th-11th: Missouri early firearms antlerless deer season
15th: Missouri rabbit season opens
24th-25th: Missouri early youth deer firearms season

November

14th-24th: Missouri general deer firearms season
27th-29th: Missouri late youth deer firearms season

December

5th-13th: Missouri late antlerless deer firearms season
26th: Missouri alternative methods deer season opens

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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 —

A beautiful albino fawn near
Augusta, MO.

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



I T'S AN HONOR TO BE WRITING my first President's Report for the United Bowhunters of Missouri.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve this organization and look forward to working alongside our Board, our members, and everyone who continues to support traditional bowhunting and the outdoor heritage we all value.

In August, our Board gathered in Mountain View, Missouri, at the home of Board Member, Ron Crouch. I want to thank Ron for opening his home to us and hosting the meeting. We had a productive day discussing UBM business, upcoming events, and ways we can continue moving the organization forward. I won't repeat the meeting minutes here, but I appreciate everyone who gave up part of their weekend to be there and contribute.

During the meeting, the Board selected officers for the coming year. I'll be serving as President, Ryan Plummer as Vice President, Darren Haverstick as Treasurer, and my son Cole Davis as Secretary.

A lot of our conversation centered on where UBM goes from here.

One area I believe will be especially important is introducing more young people, families, and new bowhunters to traditional archery. UBM has a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience within its membership, and we need to continue finding ways to pass that along to the next generation.

We also began looking ahead toward two of our biggest events of 2027 — the UBM Festival, February 12–14, and the Rendezvous, June 24–27. There will be plenty more information about both as planning moves forward, but I hope everyone will get those dates on their calendars.

One of the things I've always enjoyed about UBM is that it's about much more than sitting around a table talking about bowhunting. It's the friendships, the stories, the places we visit, and the experiences we share along the way.

My son, Cole, and I decided to make a weekend out of the trip. After the meeting, we stayed in

Eminence and enjoyed smash burgers overlooking the Jacks Fork River. We made our way over to Alley Spring Mill and spent some time hiking and taking in one of the most beautiful areas of our state.



Early Sunday morning, while heading out for our next adventure, we were greeted by some of the wild horses that roam the Eminence area. Seeing them along the road in the early morning was an unexpected start to an already memorable day.

From there, Cole and I climbed into our kayaks and spent the day on a 12-mile journey down the Current River.

Floating through the Ozarks, surrounded by clear water, bluffs, timber, and miles of wild country, gives you plenty of time to think about why organizations like UBM matter. Most of us joined because of bowhunting, but underneath that is something bigger — a love for wild places, wildlife, conservation, and spending time outdoors with family and friends.

As we move forward, I hope we continue building on what generations of UBM members have created before us while also finding ways to bring new people into the organization and keep our bowhunting traditions strong.

I appreciate the confidence you've placed in me as President, and I'm looking forward to what's ahead.

Until next time, shoot straight, enjoy the outdoors, and take somebody with you. ©



WITH OUR ARCHERY SEASON BEING OPEN BY THE TIME you read this, it's also time for me to remind you to participate in Missouri's Share the Harvest program. Starting in 1992, this program has been an important part in the fight against food insecurity suffered by residents of our state. Hunters can donate a whole deer to a participating meat processor, and this year it will cost them nothing! And since the deer you donate stays in your local area, you're possibly helping a friend or neighbor.

I was the chairperson of the Conservation Federation of Missouri Share the Harvest committee for several years and I learned a lot about how the program works and what it takes to make it work successfully. The CFM takes care of the financial side of things. It makes sure that the processors get paid for their work and that all the other costs that the program incurs are covered. Missouri Department of Conservation agents do all the legwork. They recruit new meat processors for the program and work with existing ones to retain their services. They also help transport the ground meat and snack sticks from the processors to the food banks around the state.



When the program first started, the key component of the program was the hunters. Back then, the harvest limits weren't as liberal as they are now, and convincing hunters to donate something they worked hard to get took some doing. Now the key component is the meat processors. With a statewide deer herd estimated to be around 2,000,000 strong, and an open deer season of some kind running from September 15th to January 15th, getting the raw material is no longer an issue. But someone has to turn that raw material into ground meat and snack sticks and that someone expects to be financially compensated for their work.

When I first started as committee chairperson, I had one year where things ran like they always had before I took over the reins. Then CWD was added to the equation and things got complicated quickly. They also got more expensive. Meat processors dropped from the program because they didn't want to deal with the extra precautions put into place due to CWD. CFM had to pay for reefer trucks for deer carcass storage outside the processing facilities so they could be tested. Meat from CWD areas had to be kept separate from other meat and it had to be stored until the testing came back. It was a logistical nightmare that first year that we learned some very costly and painful lessons from.

By the next season, MDC and CFM had a better handle on things, but retaining processors was still an issue. For those of you who don't know, a processor doing deer pretty much shuts down their operation from doing anything else but deer until the seasons are over. This is



primarily due to several federal and state health and safety regulations. Processing costs were starting to climb, and CFM was scratching its metaphorical head trying to figure out how to pay for it all.

Then Covid hit and things were upended once again. Costs skyrocketed and processors could no longer afford to do venison processing for the program while simultaneously losing out on the profitable beef and pork market. The vast majority of the money that CFM had to work with came from the state's six food banks and MDC. The rest came from an amalgamation of donors, private and corporate. All of these financial sources were tapped out, and I sat in several meetings where the outlook for the program looked bleak. We couldn't pay more to the processors because we couldn't afford it. That meant we couldn't increase the number of deer we wanted to run through the program. Meanwhile, more and more people in our state were suffering from food insecurity. After a few years of this stagnation, I decided to pass the torch to someone else. I was burned out and I knew I wasn't doing the good

work I needed to do. The solution was simple enough – bring in more money! Hopefully, new leadership would figure out how to do that.

I am happy to report that new leadership did find a way to bring in more money, and they have set an ambitious goal of increasing the number of deer that go through the program from 5,000 to 10,000 annually. They found new corporate sponsors and came up with new ways to get donations from individuals. One of these you might have noticed if you bought your tags and licenses online. There is now a button where you can make a monetary donation to Share the Harvest before you check out. There were some legal roadblocks that prevented us from doing this beforehand, but I guess they got those cleared out of the way.



Please don't think that the money issues for Share the Harvest have been fixed; the pain has merely been alleviated somewhat. They are still looking for corporate sponsors and will happily accept all donations from regular folks like you and me. And, of course, they will also take any venison you wish to part with.

We are fortunate to live in a state with abundant natural resources and people with abundant kindness in their hearts. I know the feeling I get when I donate a deer to this program is just about as good as it gets. Because of my donation, someone who lives close to me, someone I might even know, will get to eat tonight. How could you not want to be a part of that? ©

For more information about Share the Harvest, visit the following web pages, or contact Micaela Haymaker (CFM) mhaymaker@confedmo.org, 573-634-2322.

CFM: <https://confedmo.org/share-the-harvest/#STHSponsors>

MDC: <https://mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/deer/share-harvest>

Shriners Hand Camp

Dan Novotny



SEVERAL ILLUSTRIOUS MEMBERS of the UBM once again did the archery workshop for the Shriners camp, ShrineABILITY. There are lots of kids with hands missing or malformed and we have them shooting bows and arrows.

It's a fun day, but tiring. We had Mike Callahan as our leader with Mike McDonald, Harry Mauchenheimer and me working with the kids. ©



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WHENEVER WE NEED MATERIAL FOR THIS NEWSLETTER, I KNOW I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON MY GOOD FRIEND, FERD WEBER, to provide me with something to fill at least a page or two. His sage advice and quick wit have kept me entertained for decades, and since you haven't heard from him in a while, I thought I'd share with you the conversation I had with him recently concerning his thoughts on the early part of our archery season. Besides being an avid hunter, Mr. Weber is a celebrity where I grew up with a reputation for making an assortment of fine "adult beverages" that involve a healthy corn crop and knowledge of distillation. He is also a self-taught expert on various science and engineering topics, and this combination of skills can lead to some very interesting dialogue. I caught up with Ferd while he was doing some target practice in his backyard.

DH: (Walking into a yard half filled with old whiskey making apparatus) "Hello, Mr. Weber! How are you doing today, sir?"

FW: (Taking an arrow off his bowstring and lowering a bow) "Weell, look who it is! Darren Haverstick! I ain't seen you in a bit! Come over here and let me hug yer neck!" (I walk over to me, give him a hug, then he holds me at arm's length) "And what's with all this "Mister" business? Boy, I've knowed you since you furst fell out of yer momma at the sale barn." (He points behind me) "Grab a couple of them chares over there and let's find us some shade. It's hotter than two big rats makin'

little rats in a wool sock!" (I grab a couple of cane-bottom chairs sitting in the yard and bring them over to a mature maple tree by the house. We sit down and Ferd immediately starts looking around for something.)

DH: "What are you looking for, Ferd?"

FW: "I thought I had a jug around someweres close. (He grins widely at me) We cain't have a proper visit without refreshments! (He turns to the house and yells loudly) "Flossy! Bring me out a jar of Bug Juice, please! And a couple of glasses!" (He turns back to me) "We'll visit like civilized folks in just a smidge." (In a few minutes, his wife, Flossy, comes out the back door with a clear jar of amber liquid and two small jelly jars. She walks over to us, hands the jars to Ferd and smiles at me.)



Sketch of the real Jess Thompson by L.L. Broadfoot, circa 1939 "Pioneers of the Ozarks"

Flossy: "Well, if you ain't a sight fer sore eyes! How is yer wife and them precious pups? I shore git tickled watchin' their videos on the internets."

DH: "They're all doing fine, ma'am. Hazel and Harper just turned six months old and are growing like weeds!"

Flossy: "It makes my heart swell to bustin' seein' you with that pair! I knowed how much yer old Jake meant to you. You done the right thang gittin' them girls. There ain't nuthin' like puppy love to take a feller's mind off his troubles."

DH: "Ain't that the truth! I feel blessed to have those pups in my life now, even though they act like a couple of toddlers most of the time."

Flossy: "That's how pups are! Well, I'll leave you boys to it. My beans ain't gonna can themselves!" (She turns around and walks back to the house. I turn back to Ferd and see he already has the jelly jars half full of his "refreshment". He hands me one and winks.)

DH: (I examine the drink in my hand.) "So, what is this stuff, Ferd? Bug Juice?"

FW: (Holds his own glass up) "Yessir! I came up with this here recipe fer two reasons. One wuz a marketing gimmick to boost sales fer the summer and the other wuz to keep the damn insect critters frum eatin' me alive! Flossy helped out, with her learnin' of herbs and such, and we cum up with this elixir

that can be rubbed on fer repellin' purposes, daubed on fer itch relief, or drunk down so's you don't really care that the skeeters have left you a pint low." (He smiles at me.) "It beads up 'bout 150, so it don't take much fer that last part to happen!"

DH: (I sniff the glass.) "Whew! It does have a medicinal smell to it! And it's safe to drink this?"

FW: (Takes a big gulp from his glass.) "Ahh! Yessir, I suppose so, unless you happen to be a horsefly or seedtick. It's kinda hard on them! And I'll tell you another thang, it'll keep the dang gnats out of yer eyes too. It's as effective as cuttin' the seat out of yer britches, and you don't have to worry 'bout them buzzin' bastards gittin' too inquisitive and ticklin' yer backside. (He chuckles) It keeps the missus happy too. Flossy used to git so mad at me went I went down to the pond to fish 'cause she knowed she'd have to mend my overalls when I cum back."

DH: "Well, I'm always down with killing horseflies." (I take a big swig of Bug Juice and shake my head.) "Now that is stout!" (I wipe the water from my eyes.) "Okay, so the reason for my visit is I need some material for an article I'm writing, and I'd like to hear your thoughts on hunting during the early archery season."

FW: "Well, you cum at the right time." (He holds up what appears to be a thin tree limb strung like a bow.) "I wuz just out here shootin' my new Hickry Stik that I got frum Claude Wilkerson. He and I don't agree on much, but he does make a fine bow." (He hands the bow to me for my appraisal.) "I decided to go with the full-bark finish to save

a couple dollars, but I did spring fer the deluxe calico cathide handle wrap. I hate gittin' splinters in my bow hand!"

DH: (Looking over the bow and handing it back.) "Claude does make a good product. His food isn't bad either. I'm fixing to stop over at his restaurant for some takeout before I head back home. Leah loves his squirrel fried rice and the fortunes he puts in his cookies are worth the trip alone."

FW: "Yessir, I agree that he does make some fine oriental vittles! And if his place wuzn't way over there in Turtle, I'd problee stop by more. But you didn't cum here to talk about food. (He sets the bow down) What's on yer mind, son?"

DH: "Well, with the season opening up in just a couple of weeks, I was curious if you had any advice for those hunting that first month or so?"

FW: (Runs his hand through his hair and scratches his head) "Welp, as you know, during that time of year, them deer are still runnin' their reglar routes for the most part, so's a feller can pattern 'em purty easy. The only thang that messes that up is if there's lots of akerns or no akerns at all. If there's a bunch, then yer best bet is to find you a big ole white oak that's loaded down and camp out purty close to it. I swear, an ole doe can hear an akern fall from a quarter mile away and can tell whether it's ripe or not jus by the sound it makes when it hits the ground!"

DH: "That ain't no lie! I've watched deer under one of those trees vacuum up acorns like a sounder of hogs."

FW: "Yessir! And they ain't the only critter that a feller can find lookin' fer akerns. I have kilt a passel of squirrels while I wuz waitin' fer a deer to show up. Sometimes it's almost self defense to shoot 'em!"

DH: "I know what you mean there. But I gave up shooting them with a bow. I got tired of breaking arrows on the rocky hillsides I hunt on."

FW: "Yeah, this Ozarks ground is hard on arrows, that's fer shore! And I hate wasting a high-dollar knapped head on a teacup full of meat. That's why I switched to usin' a Jess Thompson Special."

DH: "What's that? A new kind of small game head?"

FW: "Oh, no." (Reaches in his front pocket, feels around, and extracts something. "Look here." (He opens his hand and shows me a smooth, round rock) "This here is one that Jess give me. It's a match-grade throwin' rock. He walks the banks of the creeks around here and gathers up what he considers to be premium caliber throwin' rocks. No sandstone or limestone. His are all hard, igneous or metamorphic style rocks." (He grins at me) "Those are fancy terms fer how the rocks were formed. Anyway... Jess groups 'em up by weight a size an' sells 'em by the dozen. Claude also carries 'em in his archery shop. (He throws the rock up in the air and catches it.) I kilt many a bushytail with one of these!"

DH: "Wow! That's quite an accomplishment to kill a squirrel with a rock!"

FW: "I'll admit that I'm a purty gud shot, but I cain't hold a candle to

Jess. He makes them major league pitchers look like they're still playin' T-ball! When he was young, he got into some kinda mischief one evenin' and held a whole posse of sheriff's deputies at bay with nuthin' but a sack full of rocks. Ever time one of them wud raze ther head, ole Jess wud put a knot on it! The only reason they got 'im wuz 'cause he wuz drunk and eventually passed out."

DH: "Wow, that's quite a story! Okay, now back to the subject. Uh, what's your advice for hunting in hot weather?"

FW: "Besides 'Don't?" (He chuckles) "Well, if you have to be out, try to do yer huntin' in the mornin'. That way you have more time fer trailin' and butcherin' before it gits too hot. You may see more deer in the evenin', but unless you watch yer shot deer fall over, you might not recover it before the meat spoils."

DH: "That's true. And what do you do about sweating and keeping your scent down?"

FW: "Other than stayin' in the house, there ain't much you can do about sweatin'." (He holds up his jar of Bug Juice.) "Fortunately, this here stuff also kinda works as a cover scent. I slather it all over

me before I go out to keep the bugs off, and its odor wrassles my odor to the ground to keep it at bay. And since it's made from roots and leaves and natural stuff, the critters don't seem to mind the smell. I do cawshun you about huntin' in thick vegetashun, though. The vapors comin' off you will start to wilt yer cover in an hour or so."

DH: (I shake my head and smile.) "That's good to know. So, is there anything else you'd like to share?"

FW: "Just that, no matter what time of year it is, puttin' yer arrow in the goodie box is the most important thang you can do. Only take shots you know you can make. As that feller what did all them cowboy movies said, Clint Eastwood. He wuz in a police movie wunce and he said, 'A man's got to know his limitashuns.' Them are words evry hunter shud live by! Some fellers are only consistunt out to ten yards while others are gud past forty. You jus' have to know where yer limit is and stick to it."

DH: "That is good advice, for sure! Do you have any tips on how someone could increase their effective range?"

FW: "Darren, that's a whole other topic that we ain't got enough Bug Juice to jaw about. All I will say is that a feller needs to practice in real life huntin' situashuns. That trick shooter that died here a couple years ago. The one that cud shoot asperns out of the air? Byron Ferguson. Yeah, he wuz famous fer sayin' that the center of an aspern wuz the same size as the center of a grizzly bear. Now I ain't takin' nuthin' away from his shootin' ability 'cause that man was gud! However, I will add that when the center yer aimin' at is surrounded by long claws, sharp teeth, and an ill-tempered dispozhun, concentratin' on that center to hit it becomes a lot harder to do. Hell, you cud shoot a bottle full of asperns out of the air, and you still wudn't be prepared fer the other scenario. I ain't never heard of a man bein' mauled to death by an Advil!"

DH: "As always, Ferd, your unique perspective will give my readers something to think about. And I think I'll close the interview with that. Thank you for your time."

FW: "It's always a pleasure." ©

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THE LATTER HALF OF SEPTEMBER IN NORTHERN MISSOURI CAN BE EITHER HOT or near perfect conditions, but tomorrow morning looks to be favorable. Low forties and virtually no wind means my thermals will certainly be pulled to the river, the opposite direction of expected deer movement. Perfect. Sunday morning means I do not have long to hunt so I slip into my predetermined setup under gray light. Our tree line between the fields is the location of this morning's ground setup, and with soybeans this year, the deer are likely to be in the field under the cover of darkness. Going in with a headlamp will only clear the valley. I am into my spot clean and use my breath against the cool morning air for a final thermals check. As anticipated, perfect conditions for an early season sit. In no time the sun is quickly approaching the horizon, and I do not have long this morning before I must leave for church. "Where are these deer at?" I silently ponder. Suddenly, a glimpse of subtle movement down the tree line to my left has my upmost attention and a quick stare through my binoculars confirms my suspicions, a deer yes, but also a fat, fork-horned buck. Before going to bed last night, I knew that I would take the opportunity presented to me. I have a buck tag in my pocket and this young fellow will be a very tasty morsel for my family this winter. "Get ready... this will be a walking shot, and close." In only seconds the buck has walked the edge of the beans to my position and is passing before me at five steps, too close to stop him. The small opening in the weeds will be my only window, so I get my bow

up and draw just before he passes by. I've locked eyes on his ribcage, "I must swing with him." Arrow away! My freshly sharpened Zwickey broadhead found its mark on the stout young buck, and upon being struck, he spins to run back down the tree line from whence he came. I know my shot will quickly become fatal, so I spring from the tree line to watch him go down. He made it 100 yards before expiring on his feet. Buck down.

You may already be asking yourself why on earth I would shoot a forked horn buck, on a northern Missouri river bottom, at only the end of September? Furthermore, you may be curious if I regretted letting that arrow fly. My desire in this brief essay is to not only explain why I shot that buck, but why I ultimately enjoyed the best season I have had in a long time, and how you can, too.

The recipe for my successful season began in the summer. I had practiced faithfully and scouted adequately, however that was not the guarantee to my success, nor can it be for anyone. What secured my successful season before it even started was a resolve to not put pressure on myself but rather hunt on my terms. If all tags are filled by the first day of October, wonderful! If I never arrow a deer at all, it



would not be from lack of giving my best in the field. This is the mindset that I desire to encourage you with, dear reader. If you are as I once was, then YouTube, TV, social media, technology and other hunters' success, place so much pressure on you to succeed that it drains the joy from a pastime that ought to be enjoyable. If you have been hunting long enough, I am sure it was once that way for you. Do you recall your earlier years in the woods? When you lacked what most today would call acceptable equipment and spooked more deer than you ever saw from a tree-stand? In those days, you and I partook in the very thing that drew us in as avid outdoorsmen, the pursuit of the majestic whitetail deer. Notice I did not say, 'big buck' or 'target buck'. In those joyful, and bygone days, you and I were simply overjoyed to go afield, and harvest any deer that gave us an ethical opportunity to do so with a bow and arrow.

I am not naive about the fact that there can be a natural 'evolution' that takes place amongst avid deer

hunters, to the end that a certain caliber of animal becomes the target of each fall. My goal is not to discourage you from chasing said monarch of the woods, rather I desire you to only examine why you hunt and what would define success for you apart from outside influence. If you had not seen your favorite hunting personalities pass hundreds of deer that you would have previously called “a shooter” would you have loosed an arrow at that one buck last season? You know, that one buck that had you excited for the moment when you saw him through your binoculars or he trotted in behind a hot doe, but you left the bow on the hanger. That buck. Or even that one old, horse-faced doe that you really wanted to shoot and chose not to in hopes of seeing your target buck. I know that it seems like I am shaming, but do not hear what I am not saying. I think self-examination is very important to daily life and certainly in the world of hunting, but sadly we have more distractions and busier lives than has been seen in world history. What is worse, we carry those same habits into the

woods, the very place we hope to escape from the demands of life.

I enjoyed my most successful season afield last fall because I hunted entirely on my terms. Every whitetail I was so blessed to harvest would not have been on nearly any hunter’s radar for several reasons; one was on the second morning of season in the heat, one was a fork-horn buck, one was a knot head at six steps in early October, leaving me with a full freezer before the whitetail rut was in sight. Answering the question I posed at the beginning; do I regret it? Absolutely not! The success I had was measured by more things than inches of antler could ever equal. For instance, three shots on three deer, all under seven steps. I have spent over 15 years bowhunting to reach that kind of success rate and albeit not on a giant buck, but more importantly to feed my family who loves venison. I have targeted specific bucks and been successful, yet not one of them provided the level of satisfaction that was experienced in tagging that little fork-horn from the story above.

My desire is that each of you reading this essay could experience the upmost level of fulfillment each fall, for as many years as God the Almighty allows you to go afield. It begins with you asking yourself a lot of questions and being true to that man or woman that first donned camo and took bow and arrow into the woods all those years ago. If you enjoy chasing the old rocking chair boys of the forest, outsmarting those masters of their environments at their own game, I commend you! If you like taking your bow for a walk, with greater concern for taking memorable photos of creation, superb! If you are as I, and simply love all aspects of chasing whitetail deer, from scouting to standing at the meat grinding station for hours or pulling a tasty roast off the smoker to feed your loved ones, bravo. If you head to the woods this season with no pressure and not allowing others to define your personal version of success, I guarantee that you will have the most memorable and unforgettable fall you have enjoyed in some time. ©

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GROWING UP, MY PARENTS HAD A LINE AT THE DINNER TABLE THAT WENT LIKE THIS:

“Try it, you don't have to finish it, but just try it”. I've carried this mentality with me ever since, it has exposed me to some great foods and the others make for funny stories. I have been a traditional bowhunter for about 20 years at this point and an instinctive archer for the entire time. I picked my spot, worked through a shot sequence, and released. I was not “Gapstinctive”, point on, or sighting down the shaft, but pure “look at a spot and let 'er fly”. This worked well for me in my youth, as I have been lucky enough to take a bear, deer, javelina, squirrels and even some geese.

I shot this way because it worked and we all know if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Well, last summer I was challenged by a friend in Northern Michigan to an ATA single spot shoot off. I would shoot my 25 arrows from 20 yards at my home range and send the photos to him and he to me (he is also a true instinctive archer). It was very fun and a great way to stay in touch with a trad friend in a faraway place. As the summer faded into hunting season, and the competition concluded, I reviewed my submitted photos and noticed that I did improve - my groups got tighter. I got more Xs and had less flyers, but I was not satisfied with my accuracy. The best I shot was 19 of 25 on a 3-inch white spot, not bad at all, but I wanted to be better. Twenty-five shots on a paper spot target does not lie and you will learn more about yourself and your bow than you would ever think possible from a piece of paper.

So the search began. How can I be more accurate? I started my journey by reading Byron Ferguson's book “Becoming the Arrow”. I bought a solid grip trigger from the Push archery shop, read about gap shooting and sighting down the arrow shaft method. Then in my trying quest, I came across a method that struck me like a stocker trout to a mop fly- it was called string walking and the old line “try it” crept back into my head.

Now, I discovered this dark mythical art late into my unsuccessful 2025 season. I had managed to shoot high right over a doe's back in the early season and was on the struggle bus for the rest of my bow season. I did manage to take a nice buck with a rifle and a few does, but I was not satisfied. I read all I could about string walking and watched an absolute ton of videos on YouTube.

I tried it and then I committed. I found my point on distance, which for me and my set up is point on at 20 yards, which means I am literally anchoring the same as I did instinctively, but now putting the tip of my arrow on target. I then moved closer to the target to get a point on at 10 yards and I tied on anock point. I now have three nocking points on my string, one above the arrow, one below, and a 10-yard point on.

From 10 to 25 yards, I put the tip of my arrow on target and execute my shot. As I get closer to the target I “walk” down the string by moving my tab ¼-inch at a time, moving lower the closer I get. This, in theory and practice for me, is far more accurate than my tried-and-true instinctive method. We all know how important confidence is

when shooting at live animals and this method has given me more confidence than I have had in a few years and that's what matters most to me, accuracy and confidence. I was worried that if I misjudged the yardage I would shoot low or high but I find there is some overlap. My 10-yard point on is good to 13 and my 15 point is good to 18 and my 20 is good to 25. So, there is some forgiveness in the setup. A little forgiveness is always good in the bowhunting world.

Just like anything new, there is always a first time and this 2026 season will be my first in 20 years of traditional bow hunting using a different method of aiming. I have two blood tracking hounds, “ZED” who is certified with the United Blood Trackers level 2 and “Maeve”, a new pup and she needs some action from Dad! So, I'm going into the season excited, confident and full of drive to try this “string walking” out on some critters.

This method may end up to not work out for me, and I may revert back to instinctual shooting, but I sure am glad I tried it because I am having a great time shooting again. I know my parents weren't the only folks to say the old line “Try it, you don't have to eat it all, just try it!”. I know this because I heard it at this year's banquet feast and it made me smile. So, if you're thinking of trying something new, go ahead, take the leap, and try it. It just may be good for ya and if not, it will be a good story! ☺

HAPPY TRAILS!

HERE IN AUGUSTA, MISSOURI, we have deer visiting and enjoying the wildlife salad bar in our yards. Yes, they do eat the flowers, shrubbery, and any new grass. When they spend extended time adjusting the height of the turf, they generally assist in fertilizing. Throughout the spring and summer, it's generally groups of does or families with fawns. Fawns usually wander off from Mom sampling everything they pass by and then have to run like heck to catch up with her.

Most neighbors look forward to seeing the first fawns in the spring. It's common to compare what you have seen and whether there are twins or triplets or not. This year we experienced an unusual



situation. One of our large does had twins but there is a major difference between them. The larger one is reddish brown with the typical white spots. The second fawn is totally white with pink eyes. A true albino!

This is a totally new experience for most everyone in the neighborhood. Getting to see and take photos of an albino doesn't happen often. This is my first live encounter with a true albino. People have been exchanging photos, plus posting on Facebook. Needless to say, it has become the entertainment for the area. The mom and fawns were first seen just a few yards off our county road. Later on, only the twins were seen, often too close to the road. Everyone worries about a car hitting them.

It's going to be interesting if the little guy grows up and stays in our area. With the hunting season starting soon, he/she will be at a disadvantage. We can only hope someone won't consider the albino deer a trophy. ©



DON VAUGHN IS ALWAYS UP FOR AN ADVENTURE, and a year and a half ago, he started putting together a group to do a maritime bear hunt out of Homer, Alaska. Six of us did a spring hunt in 2023 with Homer Ocean Charters. The spring bears typically cruise the open coast or tidal flats, making a bow hunt really tough. During that hunt four bears were taken, all with a rifle. I really wanted to get back there and do a tradbow hunt, and this year's group was like minded. After hearing stories of the fall hunts where bears are chasing salmon in small creeks, we booked for the fall of 2026. Over a year is a long wait!

This trip served as a target of mine to get through some health challenges and by early August I felt terrific. My favorite recurve was dialed in, and my broadheads were honed to razor sharpness. Departure date was August 20. So – here's a what not to do – play pickleball. My wife and I have played with a group in a casual, not too competitive way for over a year. Then suddenly ten days before hunt departure, 18-year-old me showed up and went for a ball he shouldn't have and took a fall, breaking my left collarbone. Anger pretty well overrode the pain.

X-rays confirmed that no surgery was necessary. I asked the doc if there was any reason that I couldn't go on a trip to Alaska. I'm sure his first thought was that I was going on a cruise with a bunch of geriatrics. You never know the persuasions of the stranger you're conversing with, so I told him it was a "pretty active trip". He needed more detail. Again, playing it safe, I said we were going fishing. He asked, "Big fish"? My response, "Hopefully". "Not a good idea", he

said. Even though I already knew the answer I just had to ask, "What about bow hunting"? He laughingly responded, "Absolutely not"! The disappointment was nearly overwhelming.

Initiate backup plan. I had been shooting a 7 ½ inch-barreled 44 magnum as my backup. With my left arm in a sling, one hand operation cut my effective range in half, but at least I could go, with what would now be my primary weapon.

Our group of eight met in Anchorage two days before the hunt. There we rented pickups and made the four-hour drive to Homer, arriving the day before boat departure. Homer Ocean Charters is now HOC Marine. New name, same gig. They provide accommodations and guide services for fishing. Relative to bear hunting, they are a transport service. In other words, they only take you there. They can accommodate subgroups that want to hunt and others that may want to spend an afternoon fishing. Hunting, fishing, and just seeing the Alaskan shoreline from the water is a wonderful way to spend precious vacation days. One must never forget that this is a vacation, right? I am the poster boy for often overlooking that fact for the desires of a successful hunt. But then



*Our group from left to right:
Don Vaughn - UBM tradbow hunter
Ken Webb - UBM tradbow and firearm hunter
Ethan Ziegemeier (kneeling) – UBM tradbow and rifle hunter
Brian Peterson - UBM tradbow hunter
Jim McKinley – rifle hunter
Dennis Wilson - UBM tradbow hunter
Jeff Nahlik – compound hunter
Beau Johnston - UBM tradbow hunter*

again, the hunt is the reason for the trip in the first place.

The boat left the dock at about 8:00 am, and after a relatively rough eight-hour cruise, we had enough time for a Saturday evening hunt. We had a mix of stereotypical Alaskan rainy weather mixed with bluebird skies. Temperatures ranged from mid-40's to high 50's. Hunters were dropped off in groups of two or three with radios provided to contact the boat for pickup. Sandwiches were also provided for those who wanted to stay out all day. The last hunt was Thursday night, and we really caught a perfect weather window for our week as it took a turn for the worse as soon as we started back for Homer.

In a nutshell, pretty much every party saw bears on every hunt. All the typical challenges occurred. Bears out of range, or bears that would not hold still long enough for a shot, or a bear that seemed to fall out of the sky without making a sound and surprising the hunter momentarily looking the wrong way. Perhaps the most common frustration was the sighting of sows with cubs. Always entertaining, occasionally frustrating.

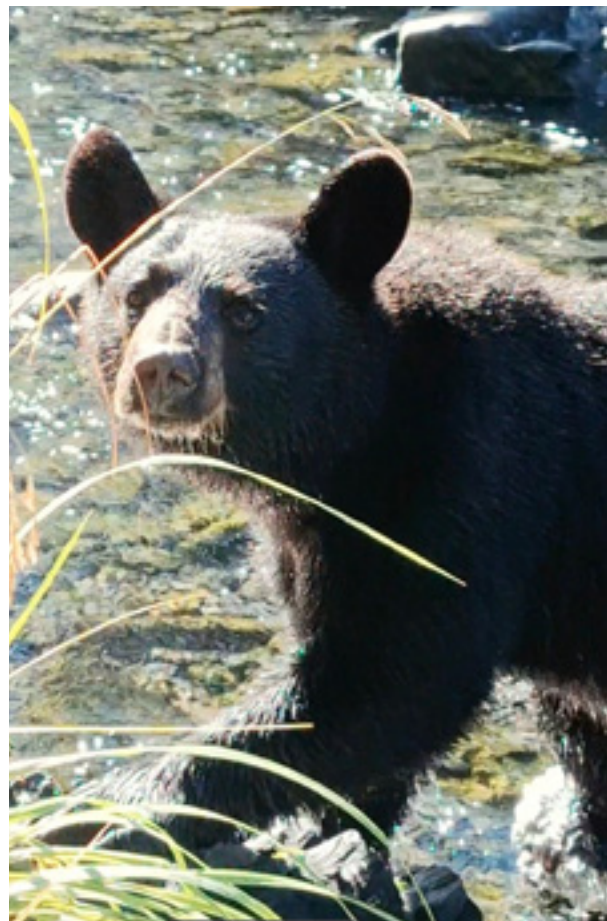
Everyone that was on this hunt has many stories to tell, and I'll leave it to them to do so. In my case, each hunt included a mile hike into the headwaters of a creek over snot slick rocks and a wade out at high tide. As a sidebar, the tide in this part of Alaska can fluctuate up to 20 feet. During our hunt, the range was probably around four-six feet (wild guess). But just for the sake of example, the walk in could include some bare ground while the walk out might be thigh deep. Not a whole lot of fun in the dark, but a walking stick proved invaluable.

I was fortunate to hunt alongside

my son-in-law, Ethan. Since this is a bowhunting publication, the harvest story will be brief as it involved gun powder. On Monday morning on the exact hike described above, Ethan dropped a very nice bear with his rifle. A shot was likely going to be too long for my pistol, and my left arm became more flexible every day. So when a bear presented a great opportunity that evening and I had a perfect rest, I borrowed his rifle to take my bear near the same location. Given my bad shoulder, Ethan graciously did the heaviest part of pack out.

Our group spent an afternoon in deeper water and caught limits of rockfish and halibut. The captain and crew of the Valiant Maid were tremendous. Two other tagged-out hunters and I spent another afternoon fishing for king salmon and rockfish, catching limits of both while the balance of the party hunted.

A few notes for anyone considering this, or a similar trip. Pre-arrange everything! Some say I'm a little OCD, but I like to think I'm just "detail oriented". Talk to the fish processor. Confirm and reconfirm hotels, rental cars, everything. Despite all that, we showed up at the game and fish department well before closing time (4:30) only to find that due to vacation and a family emergency, no one was there to seal (aka check-in)



our bears. A long story short is that the supervisor from another office 90 minutes away happened to be in Homer and was able to accommodate.

No bears were taken with archery equipment; however, Brian did count coup on one with his bow tip. Yes, maybe next time there will be more bowhunting success, but life is full of choices. This hunt is considered by most to be one of those bucket list trips of a lifetime. Some would rather eat the tag than resort to a firearm. Others wanted a bear and taking one with a gun still fulfilled a lifelong dream. We had some of both. I could be either, but mostly I was just grateful to God for allowing me to be there, and to share the adventure with good friends. Let us not take such opportunities for granted. ©



FORTY SOME YEARS OF CHASING ELK WITH A BOW in Wyoming has seen many changes. The elk are still there, but the mountains have become much steeper and the air much thinner. The days of packing all your camp and supplies in on your back are long gone, but a comfortable tent camp at the truck is still doable. Hunting strategies change from “hunt wherever the elk are”, to hunt within a couple miles of the truck. And lastly, always hunt uphill from camp, as packing meat out is much easier going downhill.

That is, of course, if you are lucky enough to draw a nonresident elk tag. When I began hunting Wyoming, there was no drawing, preference points, or the like. Upon arrival, a quick stop at a convenience store for a tag that allowed statewide hunting, was all a guy needed to do to begin his hunting adventure.

Last year’s (2025) elk hunt was awesome! I ended up hunting most



of the month of September, with several close encounters that never quite worked out. I ended up filling my tag on October 15th with a rifle. Not the way I had intended, but great eating, nevertheless.

Since the last two Wyoming tags had taken six years of preference points to acquire, I was thinking I might have taken my last Wyoming bowhunt at age 70. Those lucky enough to chase elk through the mountains know how physically demanding it can be. My hunting buddy decided not to apply this year, but buy the preference point when available. I, on the other hand, decided to apply on the very last day at the last hour.

How lucky can a guy get? Back-to-back tags in Wyoming! That’s not just lucky, that’s like “Power Ball” lucky! For several weeks, I walked around the house excited as a little

kid and repeating, “I can’t believe I drew another elk tag”. Having been there only a year ago, I felt I had a good idea of where to go and how to hunt it. In particular, I had located a flat bench that was easy to walk through. Above and below the bench, the downed timber was extremely difficult to climb through. (You know what it’s like). From the abundance of tracks, it was a great pinch point favored by the elk.

I actually had a nice six-point bull with cows wind me last year at this spot, saw several cows when scouting, and ended up shooting the rifle bull there last year. This area gets tons of hunting pressure during the bow season. I figured for the first week of the 2026 season, I would construct a ground blind and “camp out”, hoping the pressure would work to my advantage.

I arrived in Wyoming the last week of August to shoot stumps, scout and get acclimated to the altitude. When I went in to scout the thirty-yard wide “bench” that



had been in my dreams for the last year, I bumped a bull with cows. The bull bugled and raked a tree about 150 yards from “my spot”. If that wasn’t enough to get a guy excited, I found a decent 4x4 mule deer rack and one very large horseshoe. The horseshoe still had all eight bent nails intact from where it hung up and pulled off. Just how much luck does a guy really need?

I built a couple makeshift blinds across from each other on the bench, to accommodate whatever the thermals might be doing at any given time. If nothing else, I would use a blind as a starting point, should I decide to go chase a bugle.

Opening day found me at “the bench” well before daylight. I vowed to sit all day if I didn’t see or hear anything and sit all day I did. I finally heard a bugle way above me with 30 minutes of daylight. He bugled three more times as he walked north, but it was too late go after him.

The next morning proved hard for me to roll out of the sack early.



I finally convinced myself I didn’t need more sleep and made it to my blind about thirty minutes before light. Within minutes, a bull bugled about two hundred yards from me. The wind was good and I gave him my best sequence of distressed calf calls. The bull did not bugle back, but in about fifteen minutes I saw him headed my way. He stopped at about forty yards and stared in my direction. Finally, he started my way again and walked right through my “pinch point” as planned. When I drew the bow, the bull stopped almost broadside at thirteen yards. He was quartered to me ever so slightly, but I was able to hug the shoulder and catch both lungs. It looked like that horseshoe thing was really kicking in! My green nock was all that was visible behind the shoulder, and I was confident my hunt was over and the work was about ready to begin.

I watched the bull run downhill through the same blowdowns we would have to crawl through. He never broke stride, as if the obstacles never even existed. After a 100-yard sprint, he made a ninety degree turn to the left. I mentally marked the last spot I saw him. I kept listening for the crash, but it never came. I normally give a deer or elk about an hour before taking up the trail, but I was confident in the shot placement. I was about to begin a race for time, as the September



morning would be warming up soon. After thirty minutes, I tried walking to the last place I could see the bull. Downed timber is horrible to see through. It all looks the same and blocks your view.

For a few seconds, I felt that panic you sometimes feel when you don’t see an animal go down. I started to question everything that just happened. Again, if you have bowhunted for some time, you probably know that feeling. I was still confident I could go back to the shot site and trail the bull from there, but at that point I did what I’ve done all my life when I needed a little direction. I asked the man upstairs for a little help in finding something I go on to recover this bull. When I looked down, I immediately saw two crimson spots on the very rock I was standing on. Now you can call it luck or whatever you like, but it certainly wasn’t the first time prayers had been answered for me.

I tracked the bull about 75 yards from that point, to where the bull had piled up running. He was a beautiful 4x4 bull. Not the monster 6x6 that everyone dreams about, but I was more than pleased! I

snapped a couple pictures, but quickly got to the work at hand. As quickly as I safety could, I got the bull skinned and broken down. The meat was placed in bags sewn for me by my mother probably forty some years ago. I ended up with four large bags and two smaller bags. My problem now was the complete lack of shade in any direction. The burned area had a good deal of regeneration going on, but no trees big enough to supply shade. The little blue tarp I wrestled the elk on to keep it clean while working on it was a real lifesaver. I strung it up on the burnt remains of pines and made some very welcome shade. With shade and a good breeze, I felt pretty good about the meat, but knew I was going to have to hurry.

I had previously arranged to call for horses if needed, but with camp less than a mile away, I figured I could probably have two loads packed out before the guy could load horses and drive up the mountain. I pushed pretty hard for a 71-year-old bowhunter but got the meat to the processor in good shape. Once the meat was in the cooler, I returned to camp and went back for the head and antlers.

I am currently writing this while sitting in my friend's sunroom, overlooking the mountains to the west. I am anxious to get my "good luck" horseshoe home and displayed, but plan to use the good luck to catch some trout on the Miracle Mile. When I do make it home, my friend tells me to hang the horseshoe with the points sticking up. That way the luck never runs out! ☺

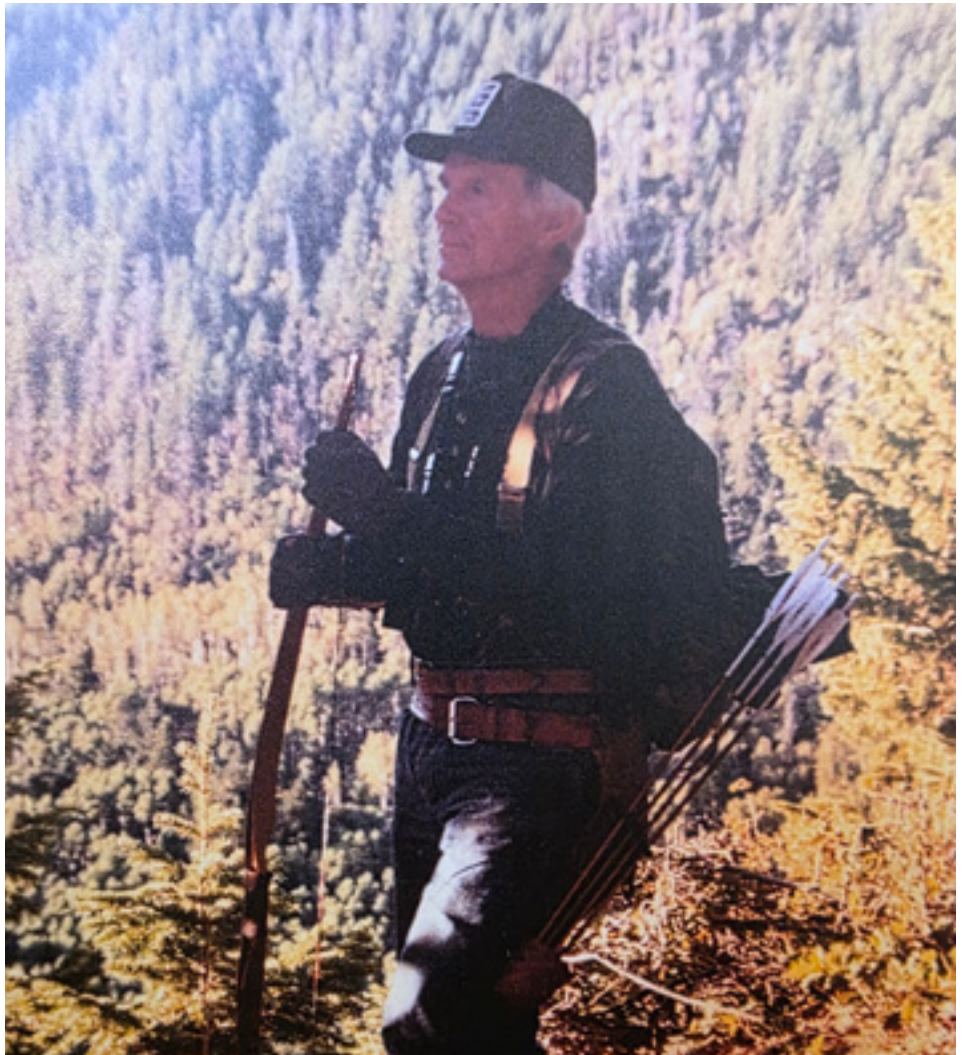
Have a great season!

➤➤➤ **PIONEER, LEADER, BOWHUNTER, FRIEND!** Tim Donnelly ➤

HARVARD F. "HARV" EBERS PASSED AWAY

in his Sedalia, Missouri home on August 26, 2026, from heart issues. He was 91 years old. Harv was a modern-day pioneer in our bowhunting world. He was a natural leader, evidenced by his selection as Valedictorian of his Senior high school class. He attended the University of Missouri where he received a degree in Civil Engineering, while there he also achieved the rank of General in the ROTC program which allowed him to enter the U.S. Army at the rank of Second Lieutenant.

I met Harv through the Pope & Young Club. After attending several conventions and having many conversations with other members I began to learn more about Harv. Harv never blew his own horn, in fact it was quite the opposite; you had to pry information from him. I came to find out that he was a founding member of the Club, he was present in Seattle, Washington in 1961 as the groundwork and guidelines were laid out for the Pope & Young Club that we now have today! Whether or not you support national clubs such as Pope & Young, Boone & Crockett, and others, you must realize that without them we, as bowhunters, would not have the long seasons, the public lands, and the many opportunities that we do. They fight for our rights on a national level all year around. It took,



Harv Ebers in his prime!

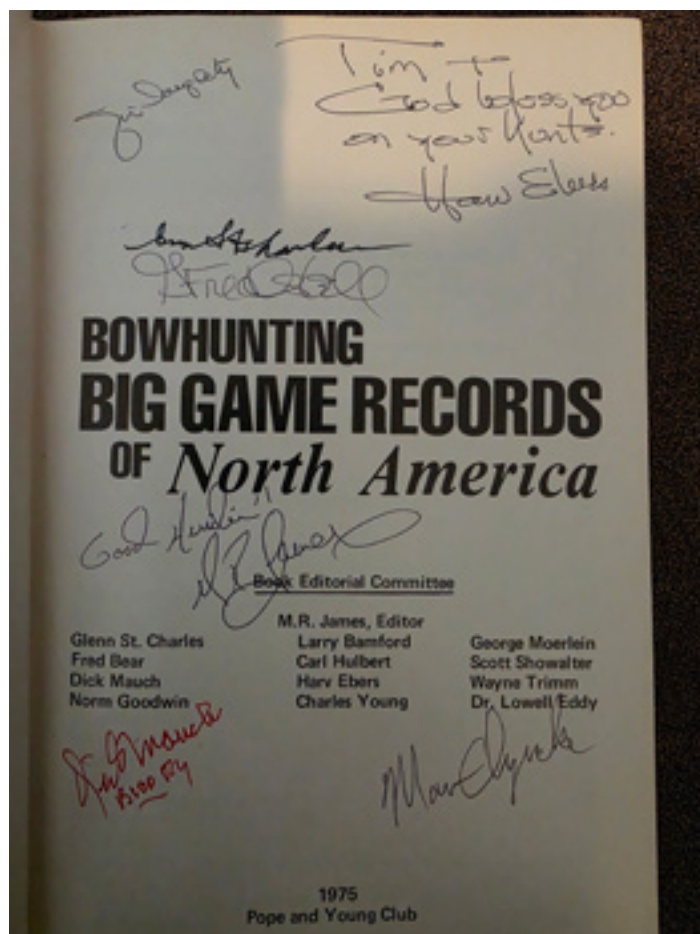
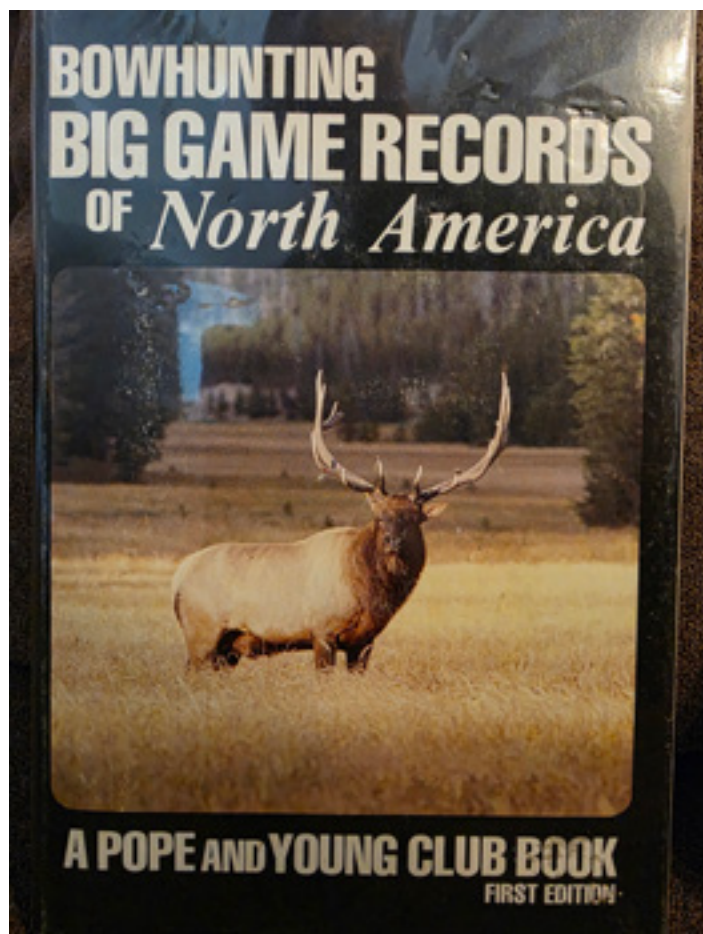
and continues to take, the foresight and commitment that people like Harv Ebers have given, to get us where we are today.

I will step down off my soap box now and tell you more about Harv. In 1959 he set the P&Y world record for Barren Ground Caribou, and he did it with his own hand-crafted bow! His record was broken a couple years later by a fella named Fred Bear. He served on the first Board of Directors of the P&Y Club and was Records Chairman for 30 years! Harv knew and hunted with many of the legends of our sport. Glen St. Charles (who is credited with founding P&Y), Fred Bear, M.R. James, G. Fred Asbell, Jim Dougherty, Gene & Barry Wensel, Larry Jones, Marvin Clyncke, Dick Mauch, Judd Cooney, George Moerlein, Larry Bamford, Scott Showalter, and many more. If you don't know some of these names,

I would urge you to Google them and you will be amazed at their history and accomplishments. Harv was on the editorial staff of the first Pope & Young record book which was published in 1975. I am fortunate to have one of these books (they are getting hard to come by and are very collectable) and I have attached a couple of pictures of the front cover and the inside leaf with the list of Editorial Staff. There you will see Harv's name. On that leaf I have some autographs that you might find interesting, the one that means the most to me is from Harv, he signed it one morning as we enjoyed a cup of coffee at a P&Y Convention. He often called me his fellow Missouri bowhunter though we never hunted together. Just one of many regrets as I grow older.

There are some of you reading this that are old enough to know of Harv and the names and circumstances that I have mentioned. But just by natural attrition, there will probably be more of you that don't. I urge you to search for and explore the history of our sport/way of life. Sometimes things just happen because you are in the right place at the right time but other times you must grab the bull by the horns and make it happen. Harv was one of the latter.

The best we can hope for on this earth is that we leave a mark, that we will be remembered by somebody. Well, not to worry, Harv, what you accomplished will carry on . ☺



I HAVE PROUDLY WRITTEN about my grandkids learning to process turkey feathers and build arrows. We have now taken on leather work. I am happy they show an interest and are willing to share their time with me.

My grandson, Devin Best, and nephew, Josh Bauman, continue to improve their longbow skills. It feels as though they are reversing the training process by critiquing my form and shooting ability. They have recently become focused on leather work, and I quickly welcomed them to the use of my shop. Getting started required one day trip to Springfield Leather to purchase materials for different projects. Devin, having previous experience making his girlfriend a purse and himself a belt bag, is interested in making a small backpack to carry his laptop. Josh is getting back into traditional bowhunting and has plans to build

a broadhead side quiver for the 2026 deer season. Rummaging through the sidewalk sales and deciding the proper size required was their first introduction to understanding their designs. Thickness, color, and cost ended the buying process. After a barbeque lunch, we headed home enjoying three hours of music and conversation. It was a great way for Grandpa to spend the day with younger guys.

The next couple days were spent



Devin hole punching straps

finishing their designs and making templates. After tracing their designs on the leather, they learned how to cut leather and scribe the edges for stamping the holes prior to sewing. I was kept busy overseeing their work while trying not to interfere with their ownership. Their projects are approximately 75% complete and were interrupted by school for Devin and work for Josh. I am looking forward to their return and completing the leather work.

I am not the only proud grandpa, but I am one of the lucky ones that have grandkids and family that are willing to spend time with me and share my interests. We are able to enjoy each other's company and build memories that will be long lasting. ©



Devin's belt bag



Josh sewing side quiver



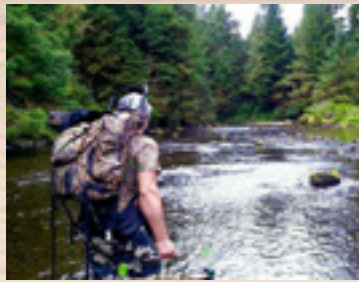
Compton Traditional Bowhunters 2027 Big Game Classic March 12th & 13th



Oasis Hotel and Convention Center - Springfield, Missouri

Friday—March 12th

- 8:00am - 11:00am — Tour of Black Widow Bow Facility
- 11:00am - 5:00pm — Vendors Open for Business
- 11:00am - 5:00pm — Big Game Trophy Display
- 11:00am - 5:00pm — Archives Measuring (Bring Your Trophies)
- 11:00am - 5:00pm — Photo Contest Entries Accepted
- 11:30am - 12:30pm — Seminar: Ron Rohrbaugh of Living Wild Media—"Saving the World Through Bowhunting: Why passing the torch is more important than ever!"
- 1:30pm - 2:30pm — Seminar: Jim Eeckout—"D.I.Y. Black bear hunting on Prince of Wales Island"
- 3:30pm - 4:30pm — Seminar: Mike Mitten—"Solo Moose Hunting in Alaska"
- 6:00pm - 7:00pm — Dinner
- 7:00pm - 8:30pm — Traditional Bowhunter Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
- 8:30pm - 10:00pm — Live Auction



Saturday—March 13th

- 8:00am - 5:00pm — Vendors Open for Business
- 9:00am - 3:00pm — Ladies Tour "Askosie Chocolate Factory Tour and Lunch at LeRoux Bistro (Lobby, Tickets Required)"
- 11:00am - 5:00pm — Big Game Trophy Display
- 11:00am - 5:00pm — Archives Measuring (Bring Your Trophies)
- 11:00am - 3:00pm — Photo Contest Entries Accepted
- 11:30am - 12:30pm — Seminar: Nathan Andersohn—"Tips on Mountain Hunting and Survival"
- 1:30pm - 2:30pm — Seminar: Ben Pinney—"Hunting with the Family"
- 3:30pm - 4:30pm — Seminar: Brian and Scott Koelzer—"Scott and Brian Koelzer: A couple of lifetimes of bowhunting and now passing along what we've learned on that bumpy and winding road...."
- 6:00pm - 7:00pm — Dinner
- 7:00pm - 7:30pm — Archives Awards and Photo Contest Awards
- 7:30pm - 8:30pm — Keynote Speaker—Nathan Andersohn—"Hunting the New Zealand Tahr and Adventure Hunting around the Globe."
- 8:30pm - 10:00pm — Live Auction



BECOME A UBM MEMBER TODAY!



UBM Membership Application



Send to: Brenda Hudson/UBM Executive Secretary
24933 Helium Road
Newtown, MO 64667

Name: _____ Phone: () _____

Address: _____ County: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Email Address: _____

Age: _____ Years Bowhunted: _____ Hunting Bow Weight: ____ # @ ____"

of Family Members who bowhunt _____ Names: _____

Species Hunted in MO: _____

Other States: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a game law/code violation in any state? Yes: ____ No: ____
If yes, please explain on a separate sheet.

Date: _____ Applicants Signature: _____

Choose Membership

Individual: Benefits include: One vote per paid member, bi-monthly newsletter, seminars, annual banquet and rendezvous, big and small game awards, and voice in bowhunting. All memberships include family participation and eligibility for recognition.

____ One year \$30.00 Decal

____ Three year \$75.00 Patch, Decal

____ Lifetime \$300.00 Patch, Hat, Decal

Business Benefits include: Same as above plus business card ad in each newsletter issue and one free table at Festival.

____ One year \$50.00 Decal

UBM Logo Items Available

____ Patch @ \$3.00 each; ____ Decal (\$1.50) each; ____ Lapel Pin @ \$5.00 each

Total Enclosed \$ _____ (Check or Money Order)

Membership: Accepted _____ Denied _____ Date: _____

Note: Application must be filled out completely. Please allow 2 weeks for processing

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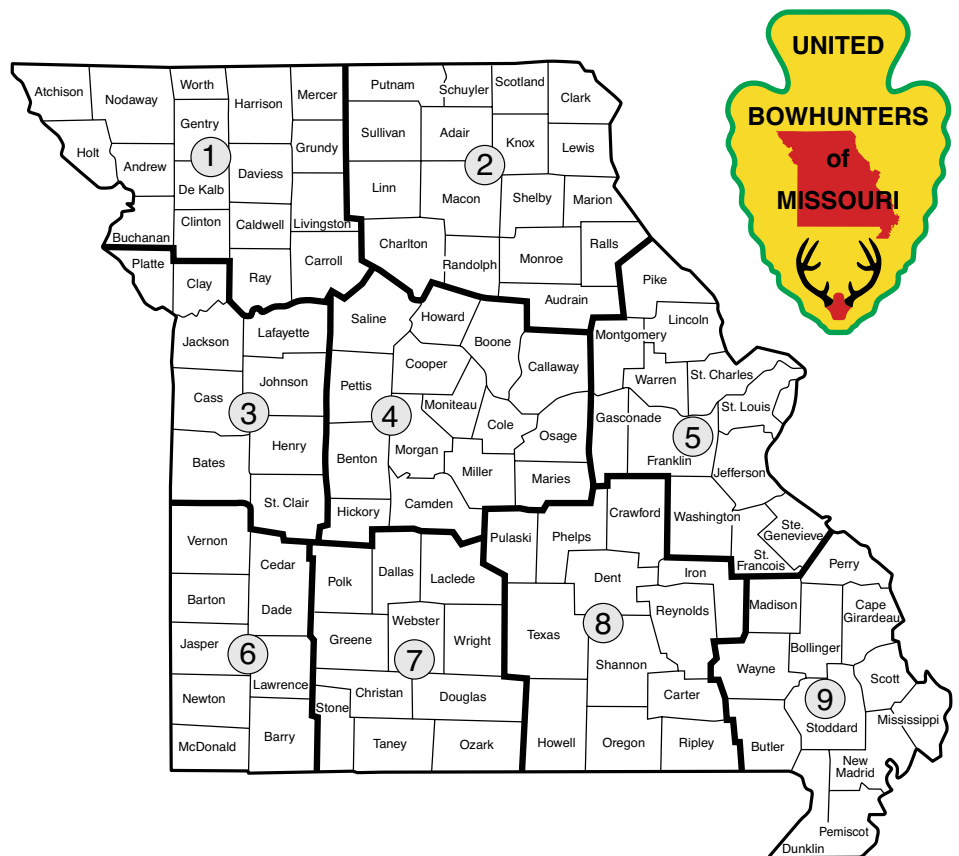
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Info packets will be mailed out soon!

QUESTIONS?

Contact UBM officers Joel Davis, Darren Haverstick,
Cole Davis, and Ryan Plumber
(contact info on page 22)

