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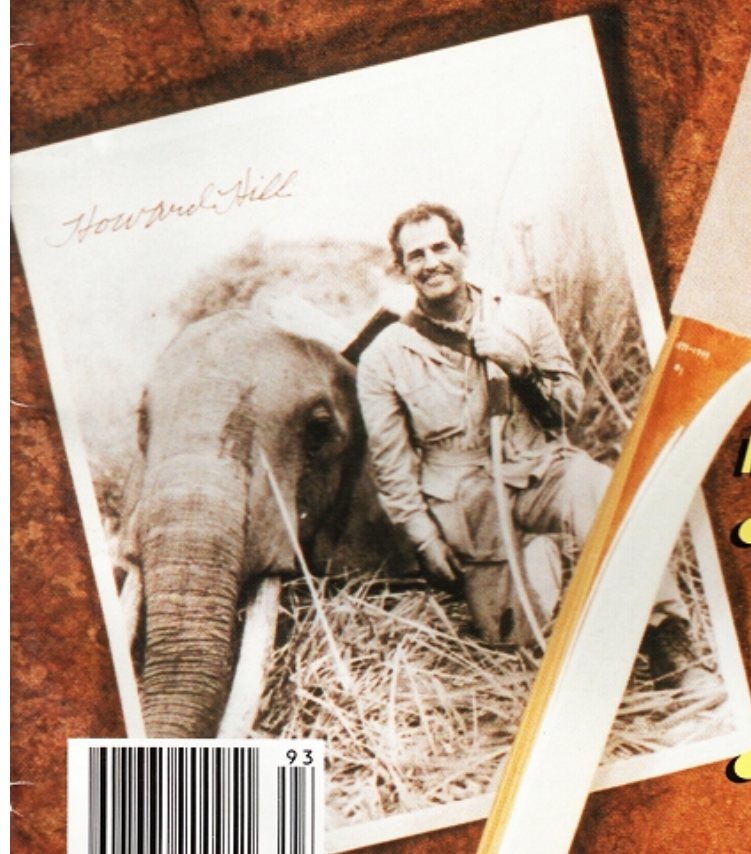
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Fall 1999

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COVER PHOTO: In memory of Howard Hill, whose 100th birthday will be in November, we asked Howard Hill Archery in Montana to send us an interesting photo of some of Howard's equipment. Shown is one of his heavy hunting arrows, the tusk of a bull elephant felled by a mighty longbow, a photo of Howard in Africa, and a Prototype of the Commemorative Howard Hill Centennial Longbow (see page 61).

INSTINCTIVE ARCHER® MAGAZINE

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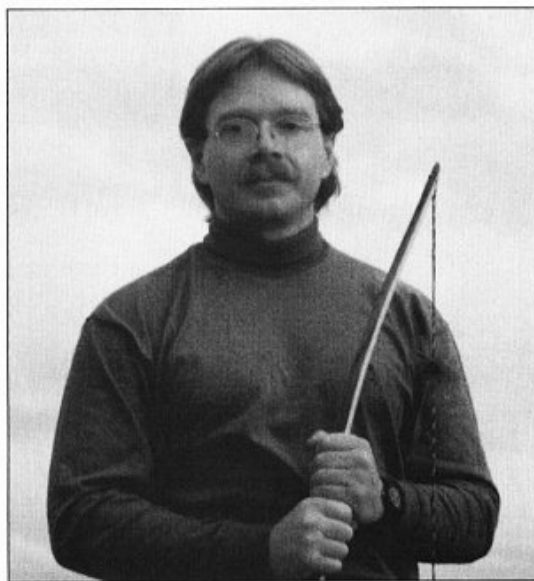
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From the old oak desk of the Editor



Rik Hinton, Editor

The signs are subtle, but if you look closely, they are unmistakable. Small pools of water in the high country are beginning to freeze solid under the black, star-filled skies. Pine needles fallen over time along the trails, now carry a heavy blanket of frost each morning until the warm rays of sunlight reach deep into the shadows to melt their frozen burden.

Pika scurry from rockpile to grassy area and back again, building up a soft, tasty supply of nutritious grasses in their burrows upon which to sleep and feed. Gosh hawk

chicks that only weeks ago were being fed succulent meat by their parents, are now screaming through the timber, dodging left and right between the lodgepoles at breakneck speed, only inches behind the grouse whose explosive burst of speed has bettered many a hunter, but none so fast as this.

The pine marten and the fisher, once sleek and glossy in the summer sun, now seek out the cool forest shadows, and carry a thick coat of fur. Lodgepole and aspen trees display broken branches and fresh, vertical scars on their trunks. Some of the smaller trees have even been killed, savagely twisted and broken by an unseen adversary. The deep, sharp-edged tracks of an ungulate in the mud of a nearby spring betray who the antagonist was.

Black bear, once lean and hungry for spring grasses, now stalk silently into the wind, fat and powerful, searching for the telltale scent of unsuspecting prey. Black afternoon clouds move slowly over craggy granite peaks. Where once they brought warm rains, they now carry cold drizzle and early snow. With increasing frequency, cool, penetrating winds are beginning to blow out of the northwest. The few geese already traveling with the wind are only the beginning of a massive feathered tide yet to come. The northern lakes from which they fly will soon be strangely silent. Ptarmigan on the slopes above those lakes feed eagerly, preparing for what is to come. So too does the lynx that will hungrily search out their white forms, and stalk them in the snow.

A well-hidden mountain lion lays in the shadows, nursing a deep gash on his shoulder as he guards the freshly killed buck nearby. Bucks had been easy for him to kill a few weeks ago, but he must begin to hunt them with more care, as they are now more likely to turn and fight. Soft velvet no longer covers their sharp antlers.

And high in the Rocky Mountains, a strange, high-pitched scream has been heard echoing through the canyons. Yes, the signs are all here, and they are as unmistakable as dawn's beginning glow in the eastern sky—it is fall, and it is time to hunt.





Letters to The Editor:

Dear Sirs,

I purchased this summer's copy at a local bookstore. It is the first one I have seen, what a great magazine. I wish it came out monthly! I've hunted with recurves nearing 14 years now. I have owned a couple of longbows and occasionally shot them, noticing I wasn't getting the dart-like arrow flight common with my recurves. I thought the problem could be solved with the proper-spined arrow. Last year I decided to take up the longbow to hunt with. So came the task of getting good arrow flight. Let me just say I ended up hunting with my recurve. I am fairly new to shooting a longbow, but I haven't seen anyone else with such a problem. At one time I had 7 different sized shafts. Most of them fish-tailed up and left horribly. The best of these was a 29-1/2" 2315 with 5-1/2" feathers, but kicks up and down. The bow is a 62" 21st Century New Moon Nova, 60 pounds at 29". I have moved my nock point, brace height, and even changed rest materials. My wife videoed me hoping it would show me something. I have a solid anchor, straight elbow, clean release, good bow-arm follow through and no downward torque on my arrow. I am at a loss. Any suggestions would be appreciated. Also, where can I get the Legends of the Longbow Books? Once again, thank you for a great publication. Keep your nose in the wind and your eyes on the skyline,

David Pringle, Lawrenceburg, TN

Dear David, You can get "Legends of the Longbow" from Northwest Archery at (206) 878-3329. To help you with your arrow flight, I highly recommend "The Ultimate Traditional Bow Setup" from RJ Archery at (406) 777-2977. It is very in-depth and instructive.

Dear Rik,

Thanks to you and your staff for the great job you're doing with Instinctive Archer, and thanks, also, for the prompt and friendly response to my phone call. Ricardo Longoria's article, "King of the Arctic," that appeared in the Summer 1999, issue is problematic for several reasons. First, taking long range shots that were obviously beyond the shooter's ability and second, the fact that so much coverage is given to wounding. The situation almost certainly could have been avoided if Mr. Longoria had followed his guide's advice to let the bear go because it was not making a stand. One of the most important lessons I've learned from hunting dangerous game with the bow and arrow over the past fifteen years is that the advice of dangerous game guides is usually best heeded.

I believe this article, as published, damages the Instinctive Archer's image at a time when all hunters are under the microscope of game and fish departments, anti-hunters and most importantly, the non-hunting public. Non-hunters constitute 80% of the public and we

desperately need their support if hunting is to survive. Unfortunately, a non-hunter reading this article would most probably be left with a negative impression that could readily be converted to a "no" vote on future hunting issues.

Like Mr. Longoria, I hunt dangerous game with traditional and primitive archery equipment but take only controlled shots at reasonable ranges out of concern for my personal safety, respect for the animal and regard for the safety of my guides.

Thanks for the opportunity to voice my concerns. Wish me luck on my upcoming polar bear hunt with composite primitive bow and stone points of my own manufacture. Sincerely and Best Wishes

Ron Sanders M.D., Helena, MT

Dear Ron, Thank you for your letter. I agree with you that 60 yards is too far to shoot at deer, elk, etc. However, this was an animal three to four times the size of a BIG black bear, of a species that is famous for its fondness of human flesh. On a flat ice flow, with nothing but flat ice for miles, I personally would not like to get much closer than 60 yards from a big male polar bear. Even at that distance, he would have watched you coming, and would be able to cover the distance in the blink of an eye. Let's not be too hasty to judge other's actions in dangerous situations, especially when all they have in their hands for protection is a longbow.

I wish you great luck on your own upcoming quest for a polar bear, and hope that you will share the adventure with our readers, but don't try to sneak too close (remember Fred Bear's harrowing polar bear attacks).

Dear Editor,

As one of the SCA members and honorary YAHOO'S in Ken Engles mail in shoot I was happy to see the turn out he got. I was surprised pleasantly to see that I had won a door prize. Thank you for supporting the shoot. I have previously bought your magazine at the "local" range and once I found it on a magazine stand while on vacation. I really enjoy your articles on the history of different forms of archery. I look forward to getting copies in the mail box.

Rick Buzzard, Godfrey IL

Dear Editor

I want you to know how sick I was from the "King of the Arctic II" story by Ricardo Longoria.

First of all, where do you as an editor come off printing a guy with a rifle over a dead polar bear in a traditional-only archery magazine? . . . I put the Summer 1999 issue of Instinctive Archer in the outhouse. Guess what pages got torn out first?

Sincerely, John Janelli

Dear Mr. Janelli, We shortened your letter for brevity, but we get your point that you have missed the point. Thank goodness we haven't printed a photo of such detestable rifle toter/conservationists as Merriweather Lewis or Theodore Roosevelt, I don't think we could have withstood your wrath.

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CORRECTION

In our Summer issue, we mistyped the title to David Gray's article. The correct title should have read "The Magyar Bow and its People," not "The Mongol Bow and its People." Please accept our apologies for the confusion.

SHOOT-OUT IN WILSONVILLE

by Bob Wesley

Yahoo!!!! Where else can you shoot at a full-size charging elephant target with the bow? A full size angry rhino? A 15-foot running crocodile? This is just part of the excitement at the annual late-June **HOWARD HILL WORLD LONGBOW CHAMPIONSHIP** sponsored by Jerry and Jan Hill at Wilsonville, Alabama.

For the past nineteen years the Hill family has sponsored this wholesome and exciting event in memory of the great Howard Hill. Here you can enjoy good shooting at moving African animals, live entertainment, good food and fellowship with solid down to earth traditional bowmen.

The Men's longbow division was won by Mark Warren to be followed by Randy Hardin, and Bob Wesley who were only one point behind. The Ladies event was won by Judy Marston. Gail Sparks and Sue Bigham were second and third. Chad McDonald, John Baxter, and Cody Robinson won in the Youth Division while Cary Messer, Chad Underhill, and Holice Jenkins placed in this order in the boys Cub division.

Brittany Bush was first in the girl's division to be followed by Haley Skinner. Danny Patterson, Brad Keasler, and Darrel Raxter placed first, second, and third in the men's recurve division. For the Ladies, Linda Hutchinson won first, Maja Totty second, following by only one point. Daniel Horne won in the youth recurve division. Other division winners were Jim Taylor followed by Mike Sentell and Pete Watson. The scores were very close in all divisions and several ties had to be decided with shoot-offs.

On Sunday, a timely spiritual message was delivered by Rev. Walley Renner, who also, by the way, draws a "mean" longbow. The entire Hill family are to be commended for their sponsorship of this exciting traditional archery event. Since next year may be the last year under their sponsorship, I highly recommend that you place this on your "must attend" calender at this time.

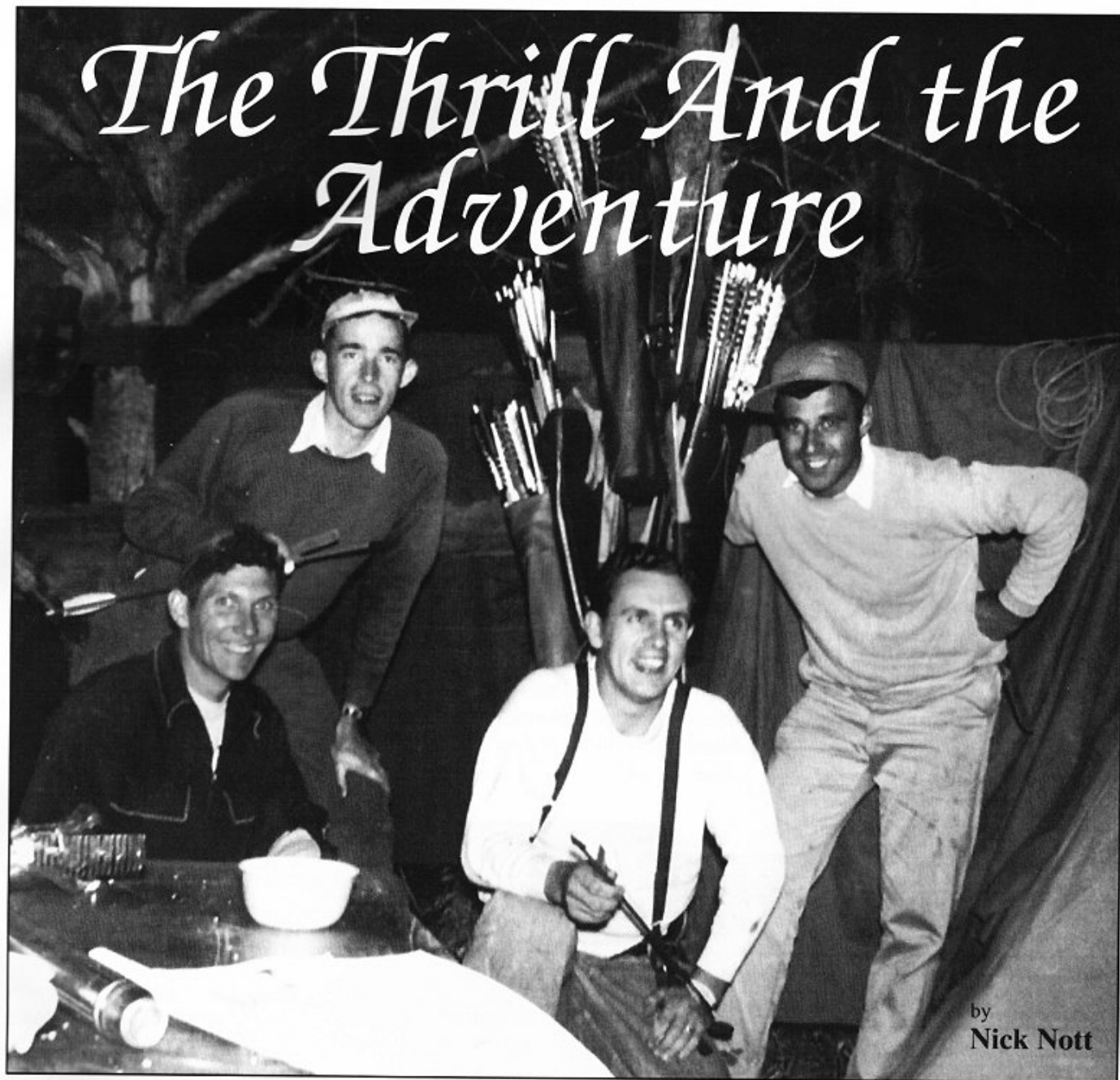
Archery Events

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*W*hy do you bowhunt? More specifically, why do you hunt with traditional archery gear? I suspect, if you are like me—and if you are like most of the authors of archery books over the last century—you are in it for the fun, adventure, mystique, romance (in the classic sense of the word), and rich experience of being outdoors with nature and with friends.

If our main goal in pursuing game with archery gear is to kill something, we may as well all be shooting rifles with scopes or the latest in high-tech bows. No, the purpose is not just to kill game. Sure, we are thrilled when we finally down a deer or an elk, but that really is secondary.

Most of the writers of the well-known archery books were adventurers who consciously chose archery as their preferred sport, because of its inherent balance of challenge, ethics, equipment-building opportunities, solitude, and skill. Fun, fulfillment, and adventure are common themes in their writing.

The following quotes are from various archery books which I have enjoyed reading. Some of these books are long out of print. Others are fairly recent publications. Common among them is the spirit of adventure and fascination with the sport. Fred Bear wrote, in *Fred Bear's Field Notes*,

"Hardships are quickly forgotten. Intense heat, bitter cold, rain and snow, fatigue and luckless hunting fade quickly in memories of great fellowship, thought, and beautiful country, pleasant camps, and happy campfires. I like to think that an expedition be looked upon, whether it be an evening hunt nearby or a prolonged trip to some far-off place, as a venture into an unspoiled area. With time to commune with your inner soul as you share the outdoors with the birds, animals, and fish that live there."

(Ah, yes, hardships quickly forgotten. Like the battery that ran down back at the old jeep while we were out elk hunting all day. And it was starting to snow. And it was 23 miles to the highway.... A true adventure, now that I look back.)

In *The Witchery Of Archery*, Maurice Thompson writes, *"So long as the new moon returns in heaven a bent, beautiful bow, so long will the fascination of archery keep hold of the heart of men."* (I don't know about you, but the moon has never reminded me of a rifle. Or a compound bow.)

Howard Hill writes, in *Hunting The Hard Way*, about the thrill and adventure of close encounters with game:

"In dealing with wild animals, one is bound sooner or later to run into some interesting, as well as dangerous, experiences. There have been many times when I thought my earthly career was about to be terminated. Very few hunts ever materialized just exactly as planned."

(So true. Hunts rarely go as planned. Adventures pop up out of nowhere. Like the time a bear came running to our elk call, bellowing as

loud as possible as he came in. Was he rabid? Did he think he could kill a bull elk? Did he hope to have a hunter for dinner? Our hearts pounded as we hid, motionless in the bushes. A friend later had the audacity to suggest it was a two-year-old bear crying out and looking for its mother who had, as momma bears do, abandoned the poor cub. I like to imagine he was trying to kill us. Anyway, we escaped.)

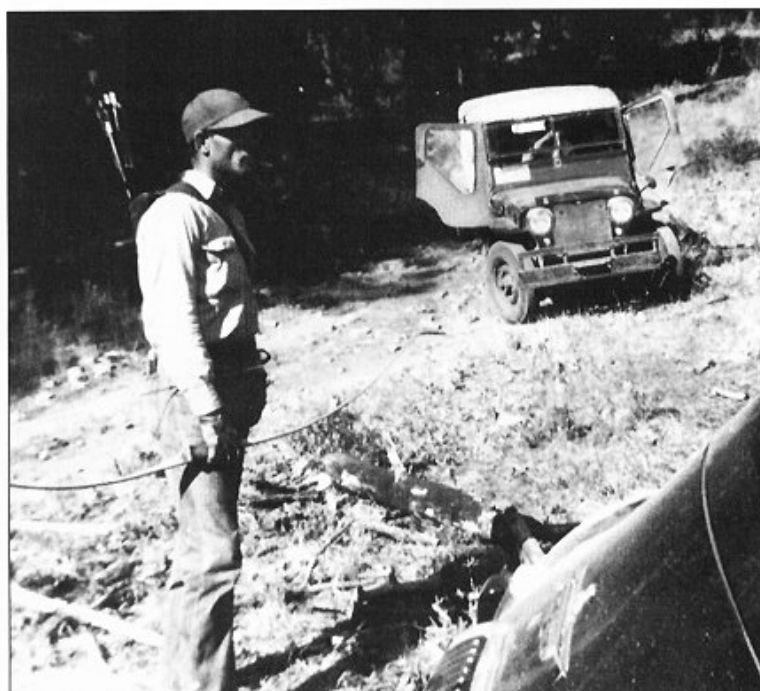
On the subject of elk hunting, Keith C. Schuyler says, in *Bow Hunting For Big Game*, *"You are investing in the possibility of blood-pounding thrills or peaceful periods that are reserved mostly for the gods. Until at last, you may find yourself once above the grandeur upon a high rock, and for that moment, you own it all."*

Schuyler, whose book is written for the expressed purpose of trying to convert rifle hunters to the more challenging and adventuresome sport of bowhunting, wrote the following poem. He claims that "some of his inner thoughts stand naked in these verses:"

*What drives me drives the shaft
That seeks a life expendable
For those who study at their craft.
I seek the thrill and not the kill
That crowns a shot commendable,
That joined by thought with my own skill.
My practiced hand and studied eye
Are yet not proof dependable,
But less than this the gods decry.
For me there is no compromise,
Less than my best deserves no prize;
And if my best brings but a miss,
I thank God just for all of this.*

Chester Stevenson obviously sought and found adventure as he chased deer with the bow and arrow. In *From The Den Of The Old Bowhunter*, he writes, *"Distance meant nothing to us, we were on our own and in no hurry. We camped and loafed where the urge prompted us. We sat by the fire that night with full stomachs and not a care in the world."*

In a lengthy poem at the back of the book, covering the highlights of Stevenson's adventures, comes this sample:



A dead battery. . . and 23 miles to the highway. . .



Hunting rigs aren't what they used to be!

*I was just a boy when the thrilling joy
Of the wilderness beasts and trees—
Intrigued me so that I vowed to know
Their secrets and mysteries.
It was from the start that a bow seemed part
Of my life, both days and nights—
'Til the hunting moods and the solitudes
Had got me dead to rights!*

*Even then I knew that the bow of yew
And the darting arrow's zip—
Was a classic use as the best excuse
For planning a hunting trip!
But I also knew: Mother Nature too,
And the trails from peak to coast—
'The inspiring sights and the camp at nights
Were the things I loved the most!*

Glenn St. Charles, in his book, ***Billets To Bow***, tells a great little story of his friend, Roy Case, which captures the thrill and adventure of the hunt:

"I've only met one chap who is a more enthusiastic hunter than I. That's Roy Case. When he tells about how he stalked a deer, he gets up and moves on tiptoe from chair to chair. When he tells you how the deer got his scent, he throws up his head and snorts

like a deer, and then when he comes to the part where the deer starts to run, he bounds over a chair, skids off a rug, caroms from the door into the dining room, and then vaults the dining room table. I claim that's the spirit. If we get the hunt-

ing, what the heck do we care who does the killing?"

(Speaking of animated storytellers, twice I saw my dad knock over a cup of coffee with his wild gestures as he told a hunting story to a bunch of friends in a coffee shop. Enthusiasm from an adventure relived!)

Jay Massey, a modern adventurer for sure, reflected on his philosophy of bowhunting in his book, ***The Bowyer's Craft***:

"The methods of the early-day bowhunters contrast rather sharply with those of today. This leads me to believe that there exists a basic difference in philosophy between the two groups. That is, the early bowhunting philosophy seemed to center around the concept of adventure, a celebration of the great outdoors. The modern-day approach, for the most part, centers around a celebration of the self, with its narcissistic philosophy of self-aggrandizement.

"These are serious matters for contemplation, so let us not dwell too heavily upon them as we venture into the great outdoors. To do so causes only

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conflict within ourselves, and interferes with what we seek through hunting with the bow and arrow; inner peace, contentment and a closer relationship with nature."

After discussing all of the unique aspects of hunting with the long bow, the writer Adrian Eliot Hodgkin

ends on this happy note:

"So there I will leave you. The experiences and triumphs of Dr. Pope and his friends are not yet ours. But already I have found that to have come sufficiently close to game to be able to use the bow, and to have drawn and actually loosed the arrow, has given me ten

times as much care and thought and infinitely greater satisfaction, hit or miss, than ever was to be got out of firearms. The wild thing is matched against the primitive weapon; and that seems fair and right.

Someday you and I will take the Great Hart by our own skill alone, and with an arrow. And then the Little Gods of the Woods will chuckle, and rub their hands, and say: Look, Brothers, an archer! The Old Times are not altogether gone! Wish him Good Hunting!"

Interestingly, Hodgkin was not the only writer, by any means, to describe his

bowhunting escapades as a sort of spiritual experience having to do with "the gods." Saxton Pope, in *Hunting With The Bow And Arrow*, pronounces a benediction or blessing on his readers who would go out seeking an adventure in the hunting woods:

"May the gods grant us all space to carry a sturdy bow and wander through the forest glades to seek the bounding deer; to lie in the deep meadow grasses; to watch the flight of birds; to smell the fragrance of burning leaves; to cast an upward glance at the unobserved beauty of the moon. May they give us strength to draw the string to the cheek, the arrow to the barb and loose the flying shaft, so long as life may last! "



Editor's Note:

Nick Nott has recently edited and published, *From The Den Of The Old Bowhunter, The Stories and Photographs of Chester Stevenson*. It is available from Trailhead Publishing, 30811 Izaak Walton Rd., Eugene, OR 97405, or from various traditional archery dealers.)*

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Bob is a former president of the Mississippi Archery Association and was inducted into the Mississippi Bowhunters Hall of Fame in 1989.



Bears and Bows: A Perfect Match

by Paul E. Moore

The allure of traditional archery is one of a self-limiting hunting style which does not lend itself to the magnitude of options enjoyed by more modern methods of hunting. The traditional archer cannot do everything the modern hunter can, and it is by design and not by deficiency which procures these limitations. The great association with the inner values and rewards imposed by these limitations is what fuels the fire of passion for traditional hunting.

Although the traditional archer cannot do everything, there are several things to which the traditionalist is custom suited. One of these is black bear hunting. Bear hunting over bait in the vast untamed wilderness of Canada may be the ultimate experience for the traditional shooter.

Black bear hunting can un-surface the hidden emotions within the bowhunter, an insightful return to the days of old, and a connection to our archery ancestors. The intimate relationship between hunter and beast, knowing either can be the predator, is a special kinship known to the bear hunter.

Rick Elder of Bowling Green, Kentucky, found this out in a big way while hunting with Bud Dickson and Canoe Canada Outfitters in Atikokan, Ontario. This was Elder's third trip to hunt with Dickson and he had no idea what surprises lay ahead for him. The events which would unfold over the course of the week would spawn memories of a dream hunt.

Dickson has little trouble putting hunters in a position to take a bear. Canoe Canada outfitters manages a very

large bear management area (BMA) which is in close proximity to the Quetico Provincial Park. Not only does Dickson have a large population of bears in his BMA, he also enjoys many color-phase bears ranging from all black to blonde, cinnamon, chocolate, and even a few rare all-white bears.

Elder had been fortunate on his previous trips for bear. He had action and saw plenty of bear on each trip. Unfortunately, it was just not in the cards that he should be successful in harvesting a bear. This trip found Elder again in the thick of the action. However, his success was about to change.

After spending several days in stand, Elder, sitting motionless in his stand, was contemplating the vastness of the surrounding wilderness. His solitude was suddenly shattered by the sound of breaking twigs. Elder knew it could only be one thing. It was a big mature bear coming in to the bait and purposely snapping twigs to warn off other bears.

The big boar came straight in to the bait with a display of arrogance and dominance. Reaching the bait, he picked up on some human scent and bolted out, disappearing into the bush. Elder sat quietly hoping for the bear's return.

Photo: Rick Elder with a fine black bear taken in Ontario, Canada

Soon the bear reappeared easing cautiously back in toward the bait. As he reached the ground bait, Elder was in a ready position. The bear reached in with its front paw to pull away the logs. The vitals were still covered by the front leg nearest to Elder's position so the shot had to wait.

The large bear pulled out a chunk of meat and bone and headed for the bush with its prize. Nervousness was playing heavily on Elder as he listen to the bear crunching the bones and eating in the bush. He wondered if this would be the last he would see of the big bear or would he get another chance.

Elder fought to control the anxiety as the crunching stopped and all became quiet. The large shadow made its way down the trail gaining the appearance of a bear as it became closer. The big boar made its way again to the bait station and this time reached in with the nearest front paw thus exposing the vitals.

Elder wasted no time taking advantage of the small window of opportunity. He picked a spot behind the front shoulders, drew his Kentuckian longbow and released with one fluid motion. The arrow, guided by a one hundred fifty grain two-blade broadhead, found its mark and disappeared into the black form.

The bear crashed out of the area and destroyed everything in its path. Elder heard the bear crashing through small trees and bush for about seventy-five yards and then pile up. The big bear

Elder fought to control the anxiety as the crunching stopped and all became quiet.

exhaled a couple deep guttural breaths and then all was silent. Rick Elder felt a rush he had not experienced on the previous trips.

The big bear was magnificent. He weighed over 350 pounds and the hide was in perfect condition with no rubs, and was all Elder could hope for and more.

Taking a bear with traditional gear is very rewarding. It involves much patience, a lot of skill, and a little bit of luck. Elder found the recipe to put all these factors together and bring home a once-in-a-lifetime trophy.

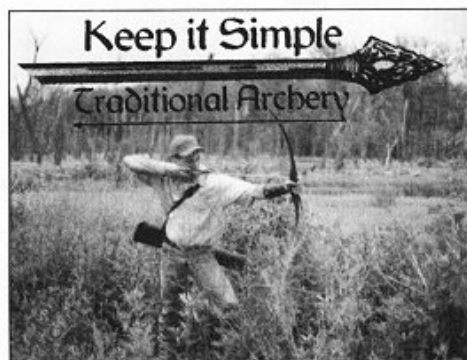
Elder has a new passion for archery since converting to traditional five years ago. He says, *"I just enjoy shooting the bow more. It limits the hunter to very close shots and it brings more enjoyment out of the sport of archery."*

When asked how he would rate black bear hunting for the traditional archer, Elder replied, *"Oh, I think it's*

ideal. It's a setup where you know basically where your target is going to be. It's a close shot. It's one which is well within the effective range of most traditional shooters."

Elder remarks about his bear hunt, *"I was very lucky. It's just one of those situations where everything went right. He came in, was a very nice bear, and I made a good shot. Everything went right. I feel very fortunate."*

Black bear hunting is a tremendous experience for anyone. The traditional archer has even more rewards to reap from pursuing bears. Harvesting a bear is only a large bonus and not a necessity when hunting with traditional equipment. Each hunter experiences the solitude of primitive Canada, the unavoidable anxiety involved with hunting bears, and the intimate experience associated with predator prey relationships and the possibility of role reversal in this equation.



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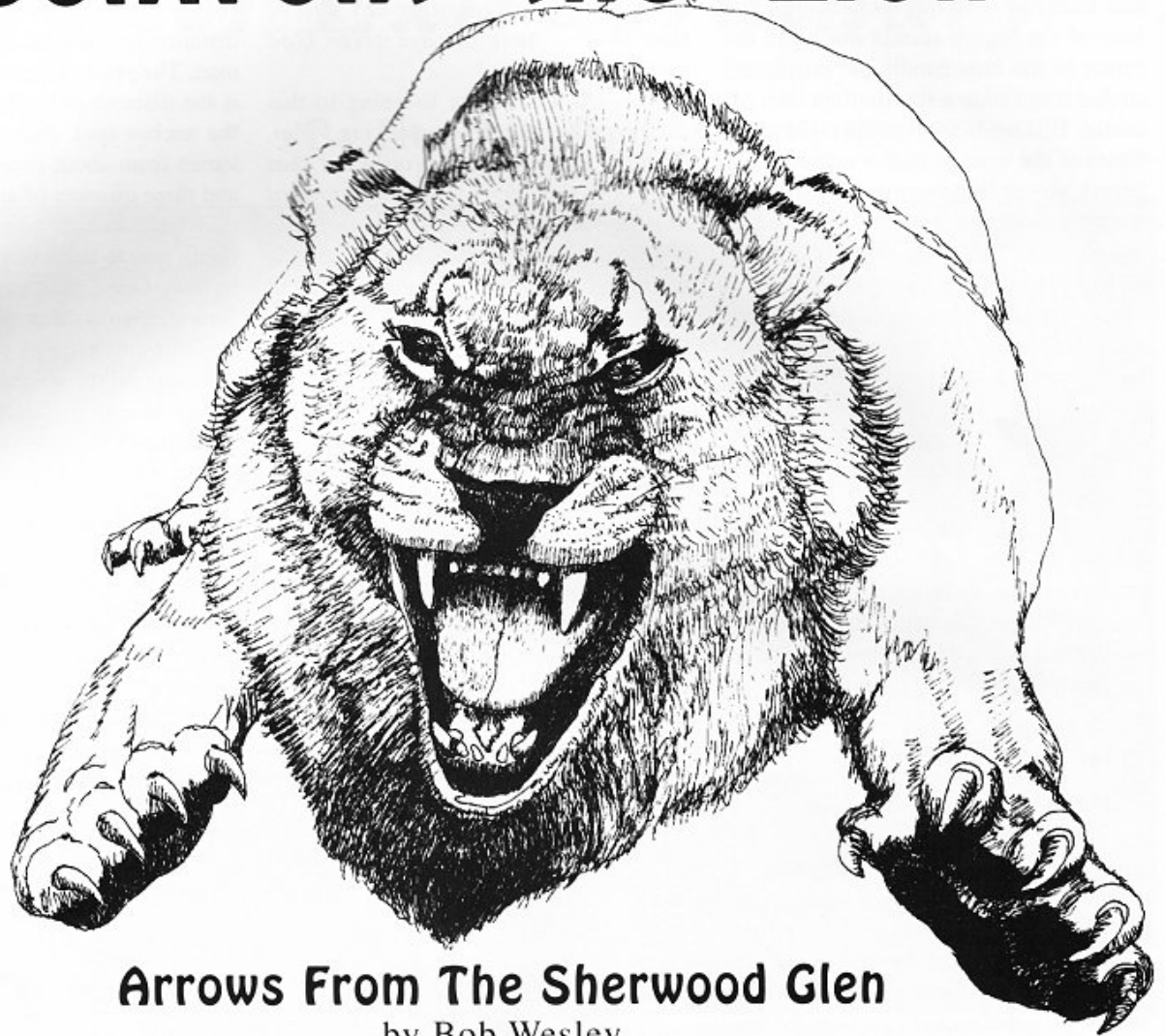
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Confront the Lion



RVM 99

Arrows From The Sherwood Glen

by Bob Wesley

Correct Traditional Shooting Form, Part II

***I** had two arrows in the lion when it turned and charged me head on. I had no choice but to confront the lion since it refused to let me back off. Casumway had remained in camp and I had ventured down to a small stream when, by accident I had happened upon a spoor. As I had carefully backed away, I saw the lion with eyes fixed upon me."*

It was a rare privilege for me to sit on Howard Hill's front porch in Vincent Alabama and listen to the bowhunting adventures of this great bowman. Howard pointed out to me time and again that most any fair traditional archer can produce a good second shot. However, generally, it is the first shot that counts for the hunter. This is especially the case if one is facing dangerous game.

I mentioned in an earlier article that three essential factors for good traditional shooting are correctly aligned form, a consistent method of instinctive aiming and a "grooved in" rhythm to put it all together. If the shot is to be carried out with minimum of effort in a timely manner, this

aligned form must become second nature to the bowman.

Howard Hill stated that the bowhand should be positioned on the bow similar to the position of the hand when picking up a suitcase. The wrist is not absolutely flat but is surely not broken inwards. The large knuckle at the base of the thumb should not be in the center of the bow handle but positioned so that it is within a fourth of an inch off center. This tends to align the eight small bones of the wrist in such a manner as to permit power transfer more evenly into the large radius bone of the lower arm.

The bow arm elbow should be slightly bent with the inside surface rotated about 45 degrees. The bow shoulder should be in a low and down position. If the archer has the correct bowarm and shoulder the arm guard should not be necessary as there will be ample bow string clearance upon release.

The anchor hand should make contact in at least three places on the face. The "V" formed by the thumb-pointer finger should fit under and around the jaw with the first knuckle of the thumb touching the bend in the jaw bone. The middle finger of the anchor hand should touch the corner of the mouth and the pointer finger should be in contact with the cheek bone. The arrow nock should be directly under the dominant eye of the archer. When at full draw the muscles of the back should be doing at least ninety percent of the holding of the drawn bow. This permits the string holding arm and most important of all—the anchor hand—to be tension free.

Prior to release the knuckles across the back of the anchor hand should be flat and relaxed. A stretched out feeling occurs in the anchor hand when it is relaxed. Upon release the anchor hand should remain in contact with the face. If this seems difficult then most probably the string arm and hand are doing the holding rather than the muscles of the back.

As release occurs the hand is allowed to "die" and the string moves forward with minimum oscillation. Most horizontal misses occur due to a lateral drag release of the anchor hand which

tends to pull the bow over before the arrow can clear the shelf.

Howard Hill looked me straight in the eyes and said, *"Bob, that lion was in the air coming straight for me when that last arrow left my bow. It hit the lion in the left eye and exited at the rear of the skull. I can't remember any part of that shot—I have always given God credit for making it."*

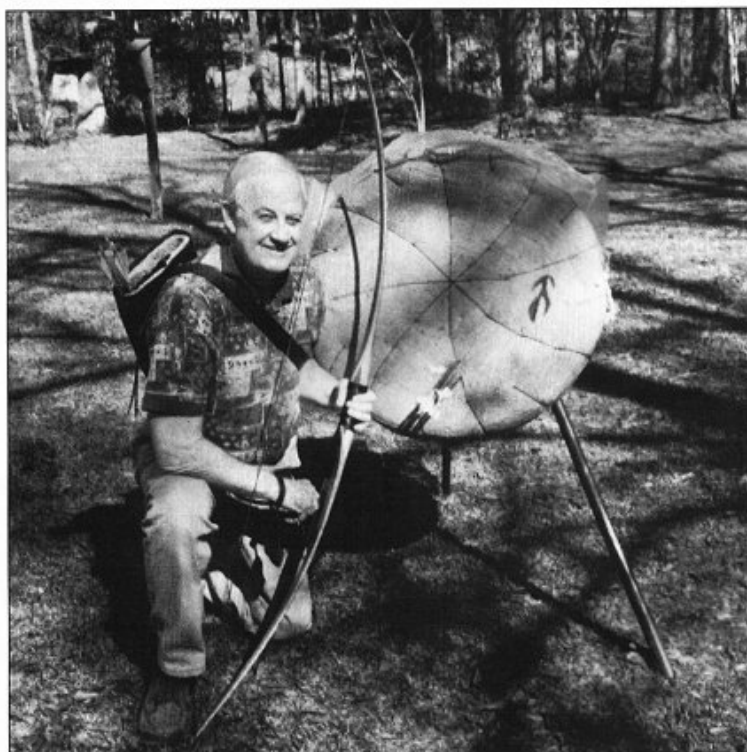
As I sat there listening to this exciting adventure I was thinking, *"Yup, perhaps so, however I would bet that your bow shoulder was pointed toward that lion and bow hand was perfectly positioned, your anchor was exactly in place and your release was as clean and perfect as it could possibly be."* That lion died behind him.

Traditional shooting becomes special when the bowman can simply look at the target and shoot his arrow in with a minimum of conscious thought and effort. This can be obtained by regular practice with conscious awareness of correct form alignment which, through repetition, "grooves it" into the muscle memory of the bowman.

When we meet again we will concentrate on "indirect instinctive aiming." This is a fluid, yet structured

method of aiming which combines the best features of your innate instinct with conscious judgement. The bowman learns to place the point of his arrow below his target with his peripheral or indirect vision while keeping his primary focus on the exact spot he wishes to hit. How far one holds below at a specific distance varies with the individual bowman. The primary factor determining this is the distance from the dominant eye to the anchor spot. For most bowmen this varies from about two and a half to two and three quarters of an inch. One archer may have to hold two feet below at 20 yards where the other holds three feet below. Once this is determined and "grooved in" so that you can carry it out without consciously thinking about it, then you will be able to extend your consistent shooting back to your point on. "Point on" is that distance when the bowman holds the point of his arrow on an exact spot and the arrow goes there (everything else being executed correctly).

How to build indirect instinctive aiming into your traditional shooting will be the subject of our next article. Until then, I send you my best shot arrow from the shady glens of Sherwood.



Tight groups like this are just one of the advantages of "grooving in" a consistent shooting form.



—JACK CHURCHILL— *Archer Extraordinary*

By Hugh D. Soar



Captain "Jack" Churchill leading the British Team into the arena at the 1939 International Meeting held in Oslo, Norway.
(Team members, from left to right) Mole, Smith, Sparrow, Schofield, and Burr (the tall chap in the back)

To call Jack Churchill "just an archer" is like describing "Tiger" Woods or Jack Nicklaus as just golfers! There are sometimes circumstances which merit superlatives when one mentions the "greats;" few enough perhaps, but if ever there were case for reverent hyperbole then Lieutenant Colonel "Mad Jack" Churchill must be a first amongst equals.

Possibly the most dramatically impressive of all charismatic commando leaders during the Second World War, his exploits are legion. Charging up the beaches at the head of his men in a nighttime raid on German positions, clad in kilt and to the skirl of Scottish warpipe, or stalking his enemy with longbow and hunting shafts, he inspired both awe and admiration amongst the hard-fighting men whom he commanded.

Churchill believed implicitly that an assault commander should lead by reputation, both demoralizing an enemy and convincing his own men that nothing was impossible—a precept which, history records he observed to the full. He was awarded DSO (Distinguished Service Order) and Bar,

and the MC Military Cross for his activities; and although wounded in an action against German troops during the 1940 retreat, at the Battle of L'Epinette (he carried a bullet in his shoulder for the rest of his life) and once again during a covert operation in Norway, which for a time forced convalescence, he remained a potent and respected leader of men.

Although he was distinguished in other fields, both sporting and sedentary (he was a sensitive poet) Colonel Jack's forte was archery. He first came to prominence at the Ranelagh Public Meeting of April, 1939 with a creditable score of 600 for a Double York Round; whilst as a member of the Royal Toxophilite Society he shot with other members regularly during that year.

Never willingly left out of the action, Jack entered for the 1939 International Meeting, held that year in Oslo, Norway and, his flair for publicity fully extended, he led the British Team into the arena dressed in full Scottish regalia, to the skirl of the pipes. It would be nice to record that he subsequently achieved archery fame at this event, but sadly that was not so; a veil is best drawn over his performance—although on the whole, the rest of the British Team did rather well, two being placed within the top ten.

Whilst he possessed and certainly used steel bows at times, (the writer has two of his SEEFAB weapons) Jack was a longbowman at heart. He owned a number, of which the writer has several, and Aldred's predominate. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that the bows with which he startled the Germans, and dispatched one to his Maker, were by Aldred. It would be nice to think that the weapon resting against my study wall was that used by a true English longbowman in anger.

Jack had an ambivalence where hunting was concerned; romantic and sensitive by nature, (characteristics with

which his enemies might find it hard to agree) he was compassionate to animals. Nevertheless he possessed hunting shafts, for the writer has them, and lethal weapons they are.

Whether these are the residue of a stock taken by him to one of the Theaters of War in which he served there is no way of knowing. Although unmarked, in comparison with Ayre's "Saxton Pope" hunting arrows of the

"... he became the first Englishman in France to have killed an enemy with the longbow for 400 years. Whilst defending the village of L'Epinette..."

1930s, their appearance and other similarities suggests manufacture by that firm, possibly to special order. At 32" to the tip of the broadhead, they are longer by an inch than the "Saxton Pope," although the broadhead is identical, and fletching lengths and profiles are the same. If not for hunting, then at their intended purpose we can only guess.

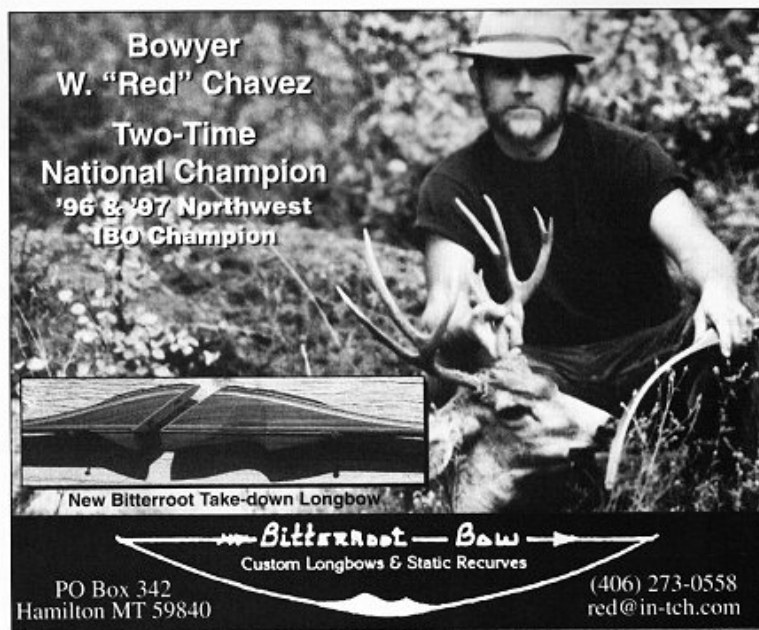
Colonel Jack served in Palestine during the "troubles," as I myself did in fact, and since we were both in Jerusalem

I can vouch for the traumas he went through at that time. His wartime spell in India also coincided with my own, although our respective feelings when victory over the Japanese was secured were rather different I have to say. His was disappointment since he had wanted to be killed in action and buried under the Union flag. My aspirations, in common with those of other mightily relieved "Dulally Chindits" at Deolali

Transit Camp were diametrically opposite. We were happy enough to see the flag where it was, flapping on the flag-pole, not wrapped around one of us or anyone else!

Following his pre-war return from India, Churchill

retired from the army in 1936, bored with an unexciting Depot life. For three years he toured Europe taking minor parts as an archer in films, and also entertaining with his skill on the bagpipes. Although he entered as plain Mr Churchill at the June 1939 Leamington & Midland Counties Meeting, by the 16th of that month he had been recalled to the colours, and it was as Captain Churchill that we see him shooting at the Royal Tox from June until September.



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On the outbreak of war in September he went to France with the machine gunners of the Manchester Regiment, taking his bows and arrows with him. He used these to effect during December whilst on the Maginot line. Documents record that on the 31st of that month whilst on patrol in no-mans land he loosed off two shafts, one landing within the German trenches, "causing some consternation."

He regretted not recovering the arrows since, as he said later, they had cost him 10s 6d each, and the War Office didn't recognize that sort of ammunition. The contemporary Ayres catalogue shows the "Saxton Pope" hunting shaft at 7s 6d, suggesting that Captain Jack had prepared something rather special for the enemy.

During the 1940 retreat, he became the first Englishman in France to have killed an enemy with the longbow for 400 years. Whilst defending the village of L'EpINETTE, near Bethune, Captain Churchill, with two infantrymen, was on watch in a granary loft. Noticing a group of five Germans sheltering behind a wall some 30 yards away, Churchill instructed his men to open fire only after he had loosed an arrow at the centre man. This he did to effect, striking him on the left of his chest and dropping him. A burst of rifle fire dealt with the remainder. "Mad Jack" as he was by now fast becoming known, ran swiftly to the body to try to draw the shaft, but unfortunately in his haste it broke, leaving the head embedded.

Sheet 21 of the War Diary of the 4th Infantry Brigade, dated the 30th May 1940, reads as follows:

"... One of the most reassuring sights of the embarkation was the sight of Captain Churchill passing down the beach with his bows and arrows! His actions on the Saar with his arrows are known to many and his disappointment at not having had the chance to keep in practice had tried him sorely. His high example and his great work with his machine-guns were a great help to the 4th Infantry Brigade..."

Returning to England after Dunkirk, Churchill joined the Commandos. As Second in Command



Jack Churchill shooting at the 1939 International Meeting in Oslo. Note the "back sight" on the bowstring. Jack joined the Army shortly afterwards.

of a mixed force of men from No's 2 and 3 Commando he raided Vaagso in Norway. On this occasion, determined to look the part, he wore silver buttons acquired from somewhere in France on his jacket, carried his bow, and armed with a two-handed Highland broadsword led the raiding force ashore to the skirl of the pipes. Although again wounded, he forced the Germans to concentrate a large force in the area.

After recovering from his wounds, and now Colonel in charge of

No 2 Commando, he landed at Messina in Sicily, and then at Salerno (as an aside, British Squaddies who served there may remember two lines of a song sung at that time to the tune of "Lilli Marlene." It reflected the media's lack of interest in the Italian landings)

*We landed at Salerno,
a holiday with pay.
Jerry turned the band out
to play us on our way!*

Churchill's next assignment was in the Adriatic, where during a daring night attack which, predictably he led playing the warpipe, he was captured and incarcerated in the top-security Stalag at Sachsenhausen, near Berlin.

By now his exploits were widely known in Germany, and for a time he was restrained by being chained to the floor. Once unchained however, he tunneled out of the camp, but was recaptured and sent to a POW camp in Austria. There, during an electricity cut, he escaped, and living on stolen vegetables made his way to safety by walking across the Alps through the Brenner Pass.

If ever a career were ripe for filming, it is that of Colonel "Mad Jack" Churchill. My admiration for him is without bounds; I cannot say how proud I am to be entrusted with this man's longbows and arrows.

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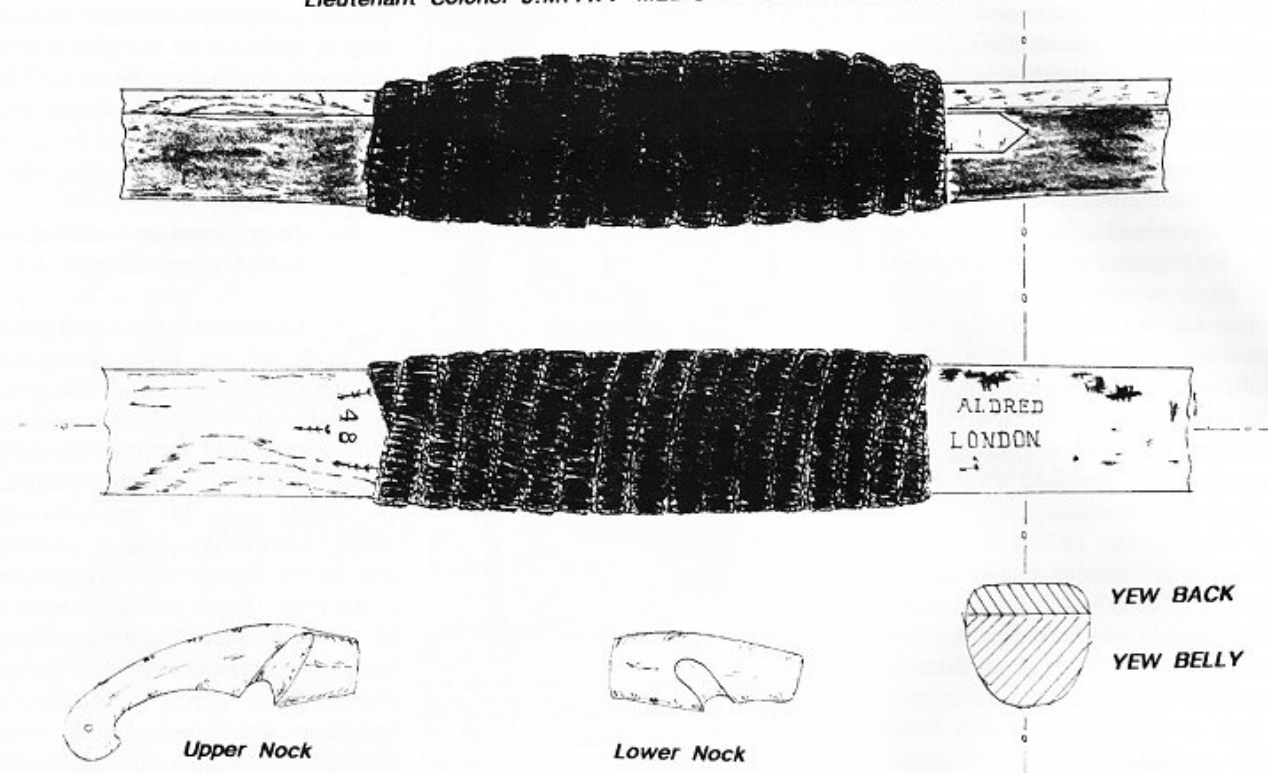
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place goes to a fine yew-backed yew longbow in *taxus baccata*; its draw-weight marked at 48 pounds. It is a full 72" long and has the conventional Aldred green braid handle binding. A "steeple" arrow pass in mother of pearl

sets it off to perfection. Difficult to date, but likely to be late Victorian, or Early Edwardian—say between 1890 to 1905.

A second of similar age, in self-yew; again *baccata*, has a marked draw-weight of 47 pounds. Of equal length,

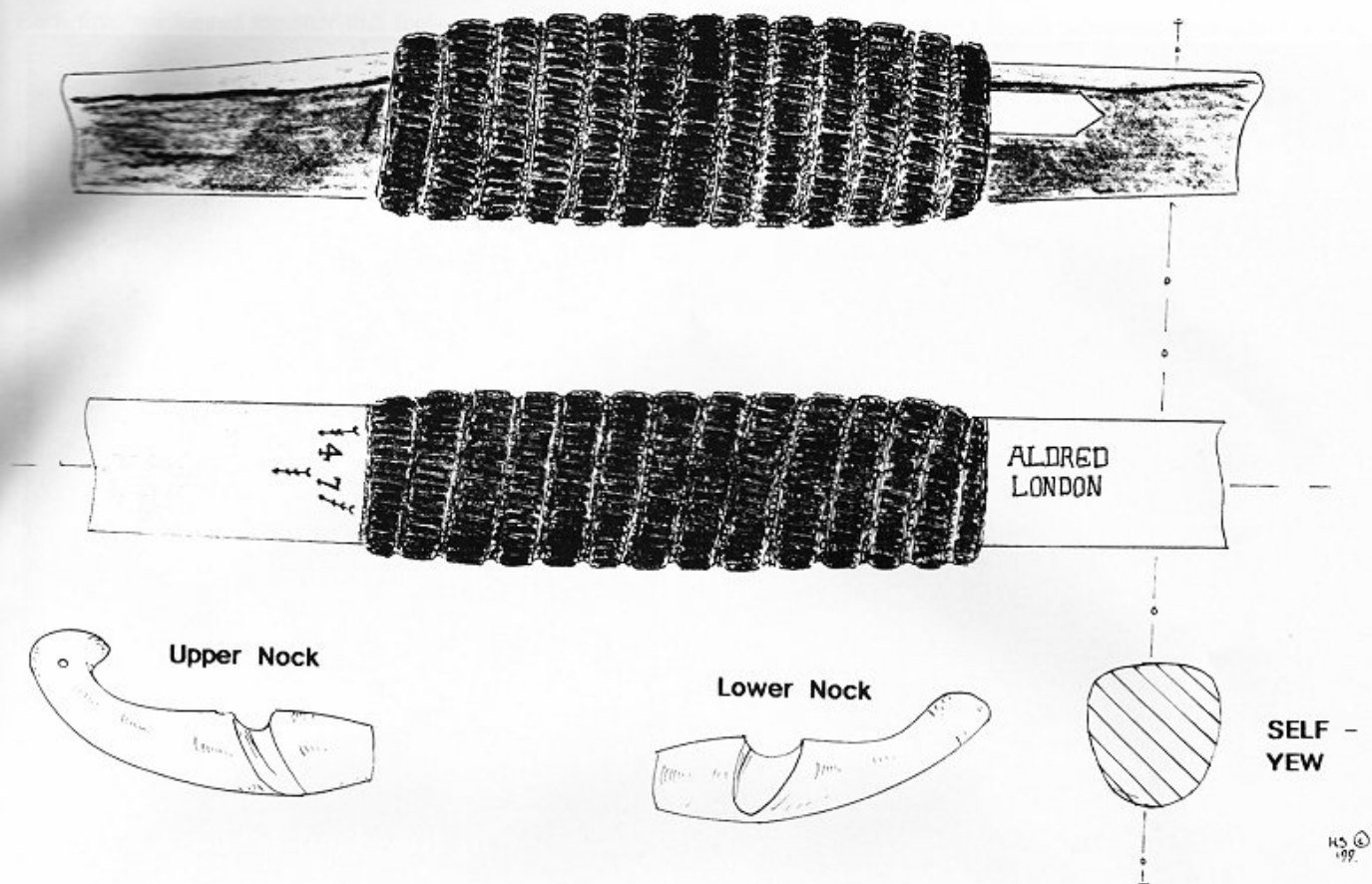
and bearing the same green braid handle binding its bound limbs speak of much use, and loving care.

Amongst his other weapons, Jack Churchill possessed two steel "SEEFAB" bows by See Fabriks Aktiebolag; drawing 39 pounds, and 34 pounds respectively at 28". One of these, by its early Serial No (G.231) may be that with which he shot at the 1939 International Meeting. Each shows the characteristic integrally forged "early" nocks of the Swedish competition steel weapons. A "cut out" just above the cork handle is not however thought to have been an original feature.

The "Churchill Collection" naturally reflected contemporary shooting practice, and it is thus not surprising to see that Jack's bowstrings, some of which have survived, contain a "back sight" in the form of a piece of coloured serving level with his eye at full draw. Those with a copy of Donald Featherstone's *"The Bowmen of England"* and who turn to the photo-



Captain Churchill's "Saxton Pope" type hunting arrows. The crested arrow is by F.H. Ayres. The others are of unknown origin, but may also be by Ayres



graph of Jack at the International Meeting will see him using it. Note, for any BL-BS longbowman today who might be tempted—don't even THINK about it! Not only will Big Brother be watching, but most of his extended family will be as well!

Jack used flat bows as well as longbows, and steel weapons. His recurved bow by Richard Galloway is a superb example of that master craftsman's work; whilst two bows by Jaques of London, drawing 43, and 38 pounds respectively (the former is illustrated) complete the picture of his weaponry.

It is not certain what arrows Churchill habitually used; Ayres wooden shafts predominate amongst those that survive, although there is a suspicion that he gathered to himself arrows needing repair from amongst his friends. There is little doubt however that he used both Apollo steel, and alloy arrows since, albeit with feathers moth-eaten, sets survive.

Of his hunting shafts, some acquired perhaps pre-war for who knows

what purpose, one F.H. Ayres, "Saxton Pope" example survives. Five others, curiously with orange coloured steels; an inch longer than the "Saxton Pope" but with identical barbed broadhead blades remain something of an enigma, whilst a large number of blackstained steels,

armed with fearsome broadheads akin to those sold by Ben Pearson in 1939 (at \$4.50 the dozen) are even more enigmatic and may well be of the type which he took to war. These latter have been passed to the British Imperial War Museum where, eventually with one of his bows they will exemplify his wartime exploits.

Jack Churchill's archery memorabilia is a unique collection of material reflecting the interests of a great man. Surviving largely by chance, it's future is happily now assured.





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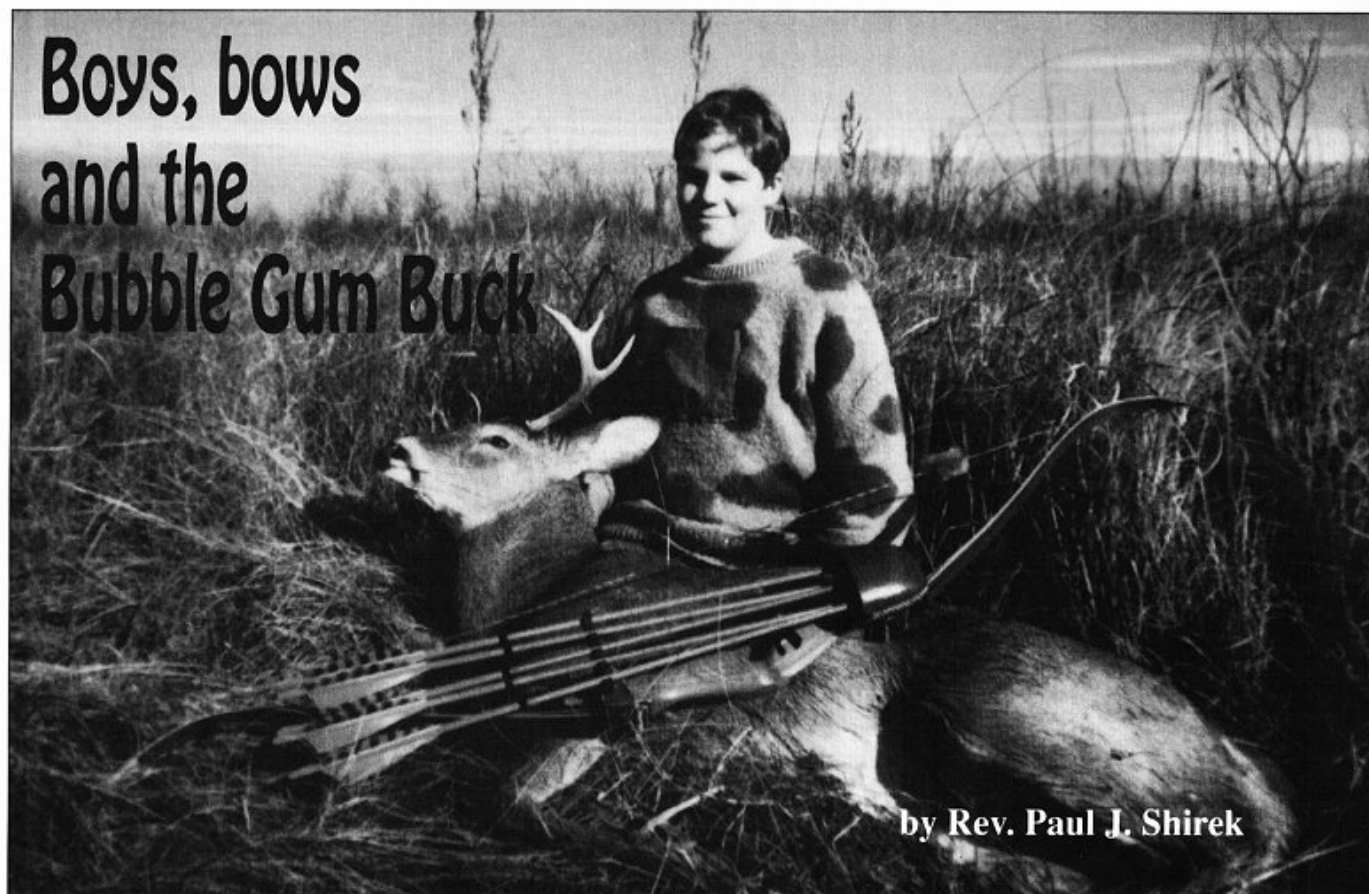
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The arrow left the bow cleanly and swiftly. As it raced toward its intended target a flood of thoughts seemed to roll through my mind. I knew this year would be different.

The archer was my son Joel. This was to be his second year of hunting. He was going through some very real changes. Having just recently turned 13 he was maturing physically. His growing frame didn't seem to struggle to make a hunting bow shoot, the way it did last year. He also was a recent convert to the recurve. After a year of shooting a long-bow something moved him to want a recurve. Now as I watched him shoot his newly acquired takedown I could see that the pieces to the puzzle were beginning to come together for his upcoming hunting season. I smiled calmly, hoping and knowing that this was to be a good year.

For my part, kids and bows just seemed to be naturally woven together. Nearly every time I had a practice session, or went on a scouting trip, at least one of my four children were tagging along. Often there were more than one as well as some of their friends. Going to traditional shoots in the summer became almost like a pilgrimage for the whole family. Occasionally, it seemed like work. Mostly however, it was a real joy as we shared together the discovery of outdoor fun and traditional values. Values that are quickly becoming lost in our modern world.

I was determined and excited to see all of our preparation unfold this fall in the Wisconsin woods as we pursued the whitetail deer together. Last season had been a hard one for both of us. Dozens of hunts together had yielded little in the form of venison for the freezer. We worked hard. I passed up a shot or two at small deer hoping for an opportunity at a big buck we had been seeing. My season ended without firing a shot at an animal. Joel was several times in the place of opportunity but just didn't feel right about taking a shot. The one time he tried to shoot a spike buck, he was spotted as he began his draw. I was sad that his season had ended this way, however, I was proud to see him learning so well. He simply would not take a shot at a deer that he was not sure he could kill. He also was a good observer. He was discovering what it really would take to bring home a deer with a bow and arrow.

The first few hunts this year were producing some surprises. First of all, there seemed to be a good population of deer where we were hunting. I hoped that the sign we were seeing would translate into good opportunities to take deer. Also, my son was surprising me. He no longer seemed a tag-a-long. He had real and viable opinions about where and how to hunt and set up stands to ambush a deer. He was doing a lot of things right. He could quietly and quickly put up a portable tree stand and would seem to just know how to be ready for the shot. A sureness and confidence was growing in him.

Each time we hunted together that feeling that this would be a good year would rise from deep in my heart.

We soon had a joy to share as I took a nice doe with a clean shot early in the season. Joel listened to my story, helped with the tracking, shared in dragging the deer out to the road and we worked together to process the deer into meat for the freezer. He was happy for me, yet I could feel his own desire growing and his resolve deepening. He was determined to bring home some meat himself. Little did I know just how well things would work out.

As the season progressed we began to gather other hunting partners. Some of our friends, also young and new hunters began to accompany us on our trips to the forest. I was discovering the joy of hunting all over again each time I listened to an excited boy tell a story. Quivering hands, pounding hearts, and close opportunities became an almost nightly event when we hunted together. I thought of all that we miss when we insist on hunting alone and wished all serious bowhunters would take the time to mentor some young people who want to learn to hunt. The joys are worth the sacrifice!

One day in early November everything was to come together in a way I would never have thought. Joel and I had planned a hunt together with two of our young friends. As we all piled into the Jeep the excitement was contagious.

There were bows everywhere. Longbows and recurves and wood arrows were all ready for the hunt. Portable tree stands were strapped to the top of the vehicle. On the way I listened as boys talked about who was going to get a shot and how big a buck it would be. The conversation turned to hoping they would stay warm on this cold November night. We would be trying a new spot tonight. My nephew said it looked real good with a lot of deer sign. We prayed together for a safe and successful hunt, and off we went into the forest.

As we began walking into the woods I smelled something strange. Looking toward Joel I saw him stuffing far too much bubble gum into his mouth. When I asked him what he was doing, he said something about the gum being a cover scent. "*Boys will be boys.*" I thought and I wondered just what this night's hunt would yield.

My nephew was right. There was a lot of deer sign. One by one we set

up hunters in promising-looking areas. While I was excited for them, I knew we were pushing the area to its limits. Four hunters surely all couldn't expect to see deer, could they?

Waiting in my stand I heard a rustling nearby. Thinking it must be a deer my heart rate quickened. After much waiting my "deer" proved to be a flock of turkeys on their way to an evening snack. My thoughts turned to the boys. I smiled and shook my head as I thought of the bubble gum. It seemed to sum up the challenge of helping a boy become a man in the deer woods. I wondered if my work and lessons would pay off. Sometimes the young hunters seemed well across the line of boyhood and ready to be a real hunter. Other times, well...

My thoughts were interrupted by some loud crashing out in the brush at the edge of the marsh. This had to be a deer I thought. Then, ever so slightly I thought I heard the sound of an arrow clacking against the brush as the deer ran. Could it be?

As darkness began to come thoughts came to me of the work involved in gathering the young hunters back into the Jeep. My son Joel was the first to be picked up. As I approached him there was a puzzled look on his face. He whispered intently from his stand, "*Dad, I hit a buck.*"



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Quickly he informed me that the hit was not perfect. *"Too far back"* was his explanation of where. The buck had been moving along a trail with his nose to the ground looking for does. He explained that he tried to stop the deer with a whistle—but he was too intent on his quest to care about the sound and kept right on walking.

Joel quickly began to tell me that we must leave quietly so as not to spook the deer, which he said he saw lay down about a hundred yards out into the marsh. I couldn't have agreed more. He also told me that he took a compass reading to the exact spot where the wounded deer had layed down so he could be certain of the area when we returned in the morning to track the buck. Hmmm, maybe the lessons were being listened to after all.

The evening passed quickly for me arranging the tracking party for the morning. I don't think Joel felt the same way. Questions were asked over and over. *"Are you certain the shot was not too high?"* and *"how much penetration did you get?"* We all went to sleep hoping for the best but knowing that it would probably be a hard tracking job.

In the morning we were all back out on the edge of the marsh where Joel had been hunting. He brought his stand and climbed back up in his tree so he could direct us to the spot where he saw the buck lie down in case we could not find a blood trail. *"Here's blood!"* came the announcement from my brother, Joel's uncle as he proceeded along the path of Joel's buck.

Welcome words, I thought. I knew all of us were deeply hoping and praying for a good outcome to this quest. His first shot at a buck, we just had to find it. About an hour later we were 75 yards farther along the trail but the blood sign was still sparse at best. We were about 40 yards from where Joel thought he saw the buck bed. Then there was a pool of blood on the marsh grass.

Evidently the deer had stopped running. For the next 30 yards the trail was easy to follow. I knew we were nearing the suspected bed and I couldn't help but look ahead. *"There he is!"* I said excitedly.

Joel was still back in his tree and couldn't hear me. We thought about making him wait more and teasing him a little about losing the trail. However, I

simply burst with excitement and shouted for Joel to come. *"We found your buck!"* The arrow had taken the deer just where he thought. Along with the stomach, the spleen was cut and I suspect the deer was dead when Joel saw it bed. We were all thrilled! Joel was the recipient of handshakes and backslaps and one big hug from Dad!

After field dressing the deer, a nice three-point with one antler broken off at the base, we began the drag out to the road. Along the way we needed to stop by Joel's tree and pick up his stand. As we looked up in the tree where he had been we saw a strange pink spot on the treebark next to his stand. What was it? *"Why my bubble gum of course"* Joel replied.

As we left the woods a group of happy hunters, I thought again of the time, the work, the lessons, and of boys becoming men. And I knew that this deer would always be known to me as the bubble gum buck!



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The Competitive Edge

by Gary Sentman

Are You Underbowed?

I have written in previous articles about conditioning oneself for pulling heavy bows, but how much pull weight is "heavy enough?"

The late Jay Massey, guide and bowhunter in Alaska, felt that if one was going to hunt moose, a 70- to 75-pound bow would be a good choice. The late Howard Hill, famous bow hunter of his time, said it was true a fifty-pound bow could kill about anything, but personally felt there was no overkill with a bow and arrow when hunting big game. And that bowhunters should work hard to pull the heaviest bow that they can handle for hunting big game. Howard himself preferred 80- to 85-pound bows for most of his big game hunting, and on some occasions 90 pounds



He used a 110-pound bow to dispatch the African Elephant. I would like to point out while on the subject of Howard Hill, that when he was doing some trick shooting for the movie industry, it has been written that he used an 80-pound bow to shoot a man who was wearing a cork vest which was approximately a 12" x 12" square while both men were riding full gallop on horseback. One slight mistake from Howard could have killed the man or the horse he was riding. Why would he not shoot 40 pounds? 50 pounds? 60 pounds? Was Howard trying to show everyone that he was a very strong "macho" individual at the risk of possibly killing this individual?

It wasn't for flat trajectory, because the shot was quite close. It wasn't for penetration, because a 50-pound bow would stick an arrow in a cork vest. I feel he used a heavy pull weight bow because Howard could shoot it more accurately under fast and possible stressful conditions.

It's my opinion that the stiffer a bow is in pull weight, the less options a shooter has at the moments of draw, anchor, and release.

At this time we must divide target shooting from bowhunting and field shooting, because the physics and performance required of the archer will vary considerably in his technique of shooting. In other words I think it would have been more difficult for Howard if he had been using the 50-pound target bow instead of the stiff 80-pound longbow.

Lets look at some of these options to better understand the point I am trying to make. A wide, thin limb as is most often found in a target bow of 45 to 55-pounds allows the shooter in most cases to very easily "heel" the bow (changing the tiller from the upper to the lower limb), or to squeeze the grip which may torque the bow out of alignment with the string causing either poor arrow flight or a change in point of impact with the arrow, or to pluck the string causing the arrow to jump as it leaves the arrow shelf. These are a few reasons why I feel a flimsy-limbed bow is more adaptable for target shooting than for trick shooting as in the case of Howard Hill. However the target bow as is found in the recurve doesn't tire the shooter as readily, is very smooth on the draw, almost dead in the hand upon release, and promotes very good shooting form.

From my observations made over many years of shooting the bow, the features found in a recurve bow promote better shooting accuracy for the average shooter. Let's face it, we don't see a lot of archers shooting from galloping horses today. However, under extreme, adverse conditions the longbow has its place in archery or bowhunting. When your glove is wet and the string drags slightly on your glove upon release or when shooting very fast, I prefer the longbow because it offers less options for shooting a poor arrow.

Let's talk about pull weight in general. For many years I have tried to pull a bow in the 50- to 60-pound range, and for as many years I have failed to do my best shooting with a bow in that range. I have to say my shooting style is rough. Sometimes squeezing the grip too tightly or allowing my drawing fingers to reach too deeply on the string. Sometimes I don't hold a perfect anchor and allow the arrow to creep forward on my face slightly before releasing it (just allowing your arrow to creep forward an inch before releasing can cause a loss of 10 to 12 feet-per-second in velocity).

With a 50-pound bow, creeping forward one inch releases the arrow with the force of approximately a 47-pound bow. If you've estimated the distance to the target to be approximately 35 yards and the actual distance is 42 yards, you will likely shoot too low with your arrow. On the other hand, if you can draw, aim, hold, and release a heavier bow of say 60 pounds or more, making the same mistakes in distance calculations would not

change the point of impact nearly as much.

I refer to the extra pounds pull in a bow as "insurance." It allows me to get away with more mistakes in my shooting form as well as slight errors misjudging the distance to the target. It's true that heavier pull weight bows can promote poor shooting habits. One must be able to pull and shoot the bow with controlled relaxation. On the other hand the lighter the pull weight, the more deliberate the archer must be in shooting the arrow.

I continually read articles which promote lighter and lighter bows. This may be advisable in many cases, but I personally feel that this philosophy of light bows applies more to

beginning archers or to target archers. Beginning archers can establish bad habits very easily while struggling with a bow that is too heavy for them.

What most articles fail to mention is that once the

basic form is established, archers should look closely at their objectives. And if the objective is bowhunting or true field shooting, they should be working harder to pull heavier bows rather than lighter ones. A lot of us learned in our childhood how to shoot a .22 rifle. However to be effective hunting big

Look at some of the best bow hunters and field shooters of yesterday and quite often you will find they used 80- to 100-pound bows for their hunting and trick shooting. They worked hard to be able to pull heavier bows—not lighter ones.

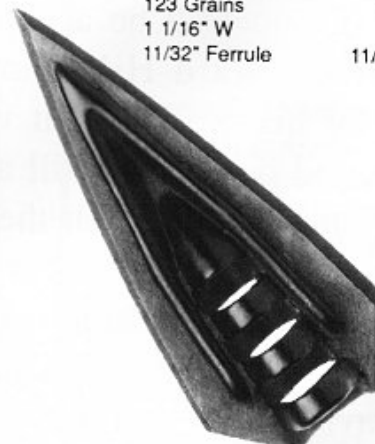
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game, one needs to learn how to mentally and physically handle a larger caliber. This not only promotes cleaner kills but also extends your effective range. I believe the same concept applies to the bow and arrow.

How Much Is Heavy Enough?

As I stated earlier, this depends much on the archer's objective and physical capabilities. I recently returned from a trip to California where they held The Western States Traditional Rendezvous, a competitive shoot. One of the events that took place late Saturday night was a 15-target night shoot.

This shoot was done by placing a glow stick on the center kill of the 3-D target and another glow stick on the ground at an unknown distance from the target. No other lighting was allowed. The archers shot only one arrow from the glow stick on the ground to the glow stick pinned on the 3-D target.

I personally did not shoot in the event, but observed approximately 50 shooters who competed, using recurves or longbows. The recurve shooters were allowed to use aluminum arrows, while the longbow shooters were required to use wooden arrows. The shooters ranged from the more experienced archers to the ones who wanted to shoot just for fun. There was a possible 10 points per target.

When the scores were added up at the end of the event the winner was Jeff Schock who shot a perfect 150 score. Jeff was using a Sentman Longbow of 70-pound pull at his draw length. Jeff also placed in the top 5 of the overall event. He is an advanced shooter and has no difficulty handling this weight.

When I asked Jeff what contributed to his success, he said he worked hard to be able to handle the 70-pound bow with controlled relaxation. When it was all dark out there and all you could see is the glow stick and the distance could be from 10 to 50 yards away, it's real hard to guess distance or know for sure what limbs may be in the way of the arrow flight.

He said *"I had to shoot pure instinctive. But with the flat trajectory of my bow, I actually pinned several glow sticks to the target."*

This points out to me that Jeff may not have been as effective under these conditions if he had been shooting a very light bow. Jeff told me he needs at least a 70-pound bow to feel the tension. I might add here that Jeff's shooting is "Rock Hard" both in his physical ability to pull and hold the bow at full draw as well as having the mental conditioning to maintain control and not explode with the release.

If an archer can't draw, hold, and aim a particular pull weight with controlled relaxation, then the archer is over-bowed at that pull weight. For the best performance in hunting and field shooting, I feel, archers are wrong not to take the advantage of pulling a heavier bow if

they have the mental and physical conditioning to do so.

Look at some of the best bow hunters and field shooters of yesterday and quite often you will find they used 80 to 100-pound bows for their hunting and trick shooting. They worked hard to be able to pull heavier bows—not lighter ones. Especially when a person's life was at stake while hunting dangerous game.

So remember, don't over bow yourself, but don't handicap yourself either by using a bow lighter in pull weight than you can comfortably handle. Good Shooting.

—Gary





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EL LEON

by Ricardo Longoria



Mountain lions are a relatively common occurrence in my native Northern Mexico. What makes them almost impossible to hunt with a longbow, however, is the relatively uncommon snowfall. I have had the opportunity to see many different cougars taken over the years in Mexico and South Texas. Usually the results of coincidental encounters by rifle hunters who happen to cross paths with one while hunting for white-tails. I have even measured the skulls on several of them, some of which were huge. One female had a skull which measured over 15", making it eligible for the Boone and Crocket Record Book!

Taking one of these elusive predators had always been a dream when I was a rifle hunter. At one time, I even tried to bait one while I was in my early teenage years. My father had told me about how he had hunted for leopards in Africa in the late 50s and early 60s and I just assumed that it

would work on cougars. That proved to be a very frustrating experience to say the least!

After beginning to hunt with a longbow, I again found myself thinking about mountain lions. I listened to several exciting stories of friends who had experienced hunting lions with hounds during the winter. This seemed like the only realistic way to hunt them and I was very attracted to the idea. Besides being more practical, hunting cougars in the cold weather would allow for the cat's skin to be much thicker and more beautiful than what I was accustomed to seeing in our native desert habitat.

Once I was ready to look seriously into hunting a cougar, I contacted Mark Buehrer. Mark is the gentleman that

heads Bowhunting Safari Consultants, a hunt organizer in North America. He quickly put the information on the different options together and within days had a list of recommended outfitters prepared. In an extremely thorough and comprehensive manner, he gave me what he considered to be the best options in North America and then gave me his number-one recommendation based on what I had expressed was my desire. I really had my heart set on a large male cougar. Mark's number-one recommendation for me was Mark Moncrief of Tri-State Outfitters. Though from Oregon, he actually hunts Cougars in Nevada due to the fact that Oregon has closed down hound hunting.

Upon making the decision of hunting with him, I spoke with Mark Moncrief and gave him an idea of what I was looking for. I told him that I was not really interested in anything but a mature male cougar and that I would be willing to put the required time and effort into the hunt so as to find what I was looking for. He himself is a very proficient bowhunter and was excited at the fact that I would be hunting with a longbow. We agreed on trying to get together in early January. Mark said that as soon as the conditions looked favorable, he would give me a call so that I could fly up to Elko, Nevada, where we would be meeting.

In preparation of my equipment for this hunt I decided to use a short and light take-down longbow that would be easy to carry on my back while running after hounds. My choice was the

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Siberian Wolf Longbow made by Jack Harrison of Wasilla, AK. It is a 60-inch reflex/deflex longbow with beautiful, curving lines that can be easily carried in a longbow case over the back. The bow I used was 58 pounds at 28 inches with 640-grain arrows pushing two-bladed Zwickey Deltas. This setup was more than adequate to make a clean kill on a cougar.

Besides the bow I would need a good set of wool and some nice hiking boots. Temperatures in the high country would likely be in the teens to 20s in early January. Swannie Wool and a pair of insulated Schneer's Hunter boots quickly took care of my clothing needs. Once I had my gear in order, it was just a matter of waiting.

I kept a packed bag and gear with me at all times. Mark knew where I could be reached at any hour so that as soon as the weather started to work for us he could contact me. With an open ticket I could leave on a moment's notice and was prepared to do so. As soon as a good snow was in the forecast I would be on my way.

Unfortunately, I did not count on "El Niño" being so tough on the weather in Nevada. I got in touch with Mark after a couple of weeks of not hearing from him and he said that the weather had been terrible. The period of time I had allotted for this hunt had already run out. I asked him if we could set up some firm dates in

February. This was not something that he was very comfortable in doing because he said that if the weather was bad it would be useless to hunt. I should have paid attention to him, but I needed to know exactly when I would be going on this hunt to plan my schedule accordingly.

When I finally arrived in Elko in early February, the weather and conditions were suitable for

cougar hunting. There was fresh snow and the cat tracks should have been visible. Mark met me at the Elko airport and we went to a local motel and dropped off my gear. He asked if I was ready to hunt, and I was, so we went out that same morning.

One of the more laid back ways to hunt Cougar is the way we were hunting that day. We drove out of town and patrolled the different back roads up in the mountains. We were on the lookout for fresh tracks. We did come across several tracks that day, but none were fresh. The scenery was beautiful and I was enjoying Mark's company. He told me about his recent hunts and showed me some of his photo albums.

By the next morning the weather began to deteriorate. The snow was melting and the conditions were becoming less favorable. We continued to hunt that area unsuccessfully for several more days. As the temperature increased, the snow would melt and then crust over when it would freeze in the evening. This made seeing the tracks very difficult as the cats could walk on top of the ice easily without leaving any type of print.

After hunting unsuccessfully near Elko, Mark decided to move us to Winnemucca. Unfortunately, conditions in Winnemucca were not any better. We happened to come across two different cougar tracks, but both were older tracks. We hunted this area hard for several days without any better luck than in Elko. Both Mark and I were beginning to get frustrated. The weather was just not working for us. I did not want to be wasting each other's time, but I was also determined to get a cougar and was not

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willing to go home without one, at least not this soon.

At this point, Mark decided to make a call to "Nevada Jim," a friend of his in Gardnerville, Nevada. Jim has hunted mountain lions for many years in that area. He speaks to many of the local hunters and usually has recent reports on the snow conditions in the surrounding areas. Jim said that the snow around Gardnerville was not great, but that there was enough new snow in the higher elevations to do be able to hunt. That was better than what we had in Winnemucca. We immediately packed our gear and drove towards Gardnerville and the prospect of better snow.

The conditions in Gardnerville were a substantial improvement. Mark knew the area well and before long we were covering great distances and looking for tracks in the different canyons and flats in the Smith Valley. The first day there we hunted all day long. That afternoon we were fortunate enough to find a fresh track. The pug marks went across the road and worked their way up some steep cliffs on the opposite side of a creek that bordered the road. We examined the track closely and tried to guess as to its freshness. It appeared to be either a large female or a medium size male. The track had probably been made

early in the previous night. By now, this cat had gone by about 14 to 16 hours before.

Mark asked me what I wanted to do. It appeared the cougar had gone over the top of the ridge and would very likely be in the next canyon. It was four o'clock in the afternoon which gave us about two more hours of sunlight. Time was not on our side, though Mark felt confident that his dogs could find this cougar. It was a hard decision to make, but I decided to let this cat go. If it had been earlier in the day or the cat had been a little bit larger, then I would have wanted to try to catch it. It just did not feel right at this moment and I decided to pass on the opportunity. I thought to myself that I would rather keep hunting and look for the big Tom I was determined to find, and not start on the less than perfect track of a medium-sized cat.

Soon after I began to regret having let that cat go. By the next morning the weather had started to warm up and the snow was crusting over and melting. The hunting was going to get hard again. Mark had two snowmachines and we decided that our best option would probably be to ride up on the high altitude trails where the snow would stay fresh. He had a sled that he took his dogs in so that if we cut a good track they could be

let out on the spot to start the chase.

We traveled north of town and drove up on a road that was used often by campers in the summer though at this time of year there was little or no movement. Driving in as far as possible, we then unloaded the snowmachines. As we rode up into the hills and the altitude increased the snow conditions got better as well. The snow in this area would be good enough for us to hunt for several days unless, of course, the temperature warmed up even more. We were riding out into a flat area and suddenly a herd of mustangs galloped out of one of the draws. There were roughly a dozen horses in the herd. This was something I had never seen. Truly wild horses! My imagination wandered and I pictured a group of Native-Americans chasing down these wild horses in the days when a domesticated mustang was the ultimate means of transportation. Several paints and a golden palomino were among the group.

The powder was great and we rode for many miles. There were very few deer tracks which was a cause for concern. The cats were going to be in the same areas as the deer and the deer did

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not appear to be in this area. As we came around a bend there were several sets of cat tracks. It appeared to be a female cougar with two kittens. Not what we were looking for, but nice to see anyway. We ended up spending most of the day riding through those hills and did not come across any more cougar tracks, new or old. Though the snow conditions were good in the higher elevations, the cats were not there.

The conditions remained much the same for the next few days. Each new day the meteorologist promised snow for that evening, but none would come. Fortunately the snow up high kept well and we were able to continue hunting on foot and with the use of the snow machines. We did see a fair number of different cougar tracks, but none of them were made by the type of cat that we were looking for. One of them was about the same size as the first cat I had decided to pass on three days before. I thought for a while about letting the dogs out on the trail and ultimately decided in not doing so. We had already hunted an extra three days for a better cat and after that I was not willing to settle with something similar to what I had already passed up.

The following morning we drove out to an area that we had not been to before. It was not nearly as high, but Mark said that this area was one in which he had seen many cats in previous years. We drove up into one of the draws as far as we could. Mark wanted to ride up further and check this draw on one of the snowmachines. He said it was not

that far up to the top and that he would go on by himself. I waited in the truck with the dogs. Mark had been gone for about an hour when I heard the distant whining of the snowmachine signaling his return. He told me that he had seen a set of huge tracks. Definitely a large Tom and the type of cat we were looking for. They were two days old and probably by now this cat had traveled into the next canyon. We decided that the best thing to do would be to drive over to the other canyon and see if we could find fresher tracks.

I now began to get extremely excited. We had found the tracks of the type of cougar I was looking for. Now it was just a matter of getting to it. I figured that even if it took us several days to find, we would most likely do so in one of the canyons in the same area. Finally we knew what we were after and approximately where it was. It is one thing to be looking for big cougar tracks and another thing to be looking for the cougar that made the tracks that you already found. Once you find the first set of tracks it is just a matter of time before you come across a newer set of tracks in the same area.

We traveled around and then up the next canyon. Mark said the cat had been traveling in that general direction and would surely be there. We went all the way to the top and did not find its tracks. There were many bobcat tracks, but not our cougar's. Then, we hypothesized it might have gone over the top of the ridge and into a canyon on the opposite side. We went around and tried the

opposite canyon. No sign of the cougar there either. I was not terribly concerned. The cat would surely be in the same area and it was just a matter of time before we found it. I was really excited just to know that there was a lion like that in the area.

By this point it was already late in the afternoon and we decided to call it a day continue hunting the next morning. On the way back to town I could not stop talking about how excited I was to have finally found a set of large tracks. I was sure we were going to find this cougar. Our area of focus was about an hour and a half from town and we wanted to be back right at sunrise. We would need to get rest and be up early the next morning. As we drove into town it began to snow. Things were finally taking a turn for the better. Tomorrow would be the day!

The next morning I woke up and put on my wool outfit and rubber-soled boots. Somehow I felt that I would be needing them this morning. I walked outside and noticed that it had snowed about four inches overnight. Not a great deal of snow, but enough for us to have good hunting for one day or maybe even two. We started out to our hunting area long before sunrise. We were discussing what our different alternatives were and wondering which was the best strategy.

While on the highway, about four miles from where we had seen the tracks the previous day, Mark suddenly slammed on the brakes and the truck slid to a halt. We had the trailer in the back and I wondered what had happened.



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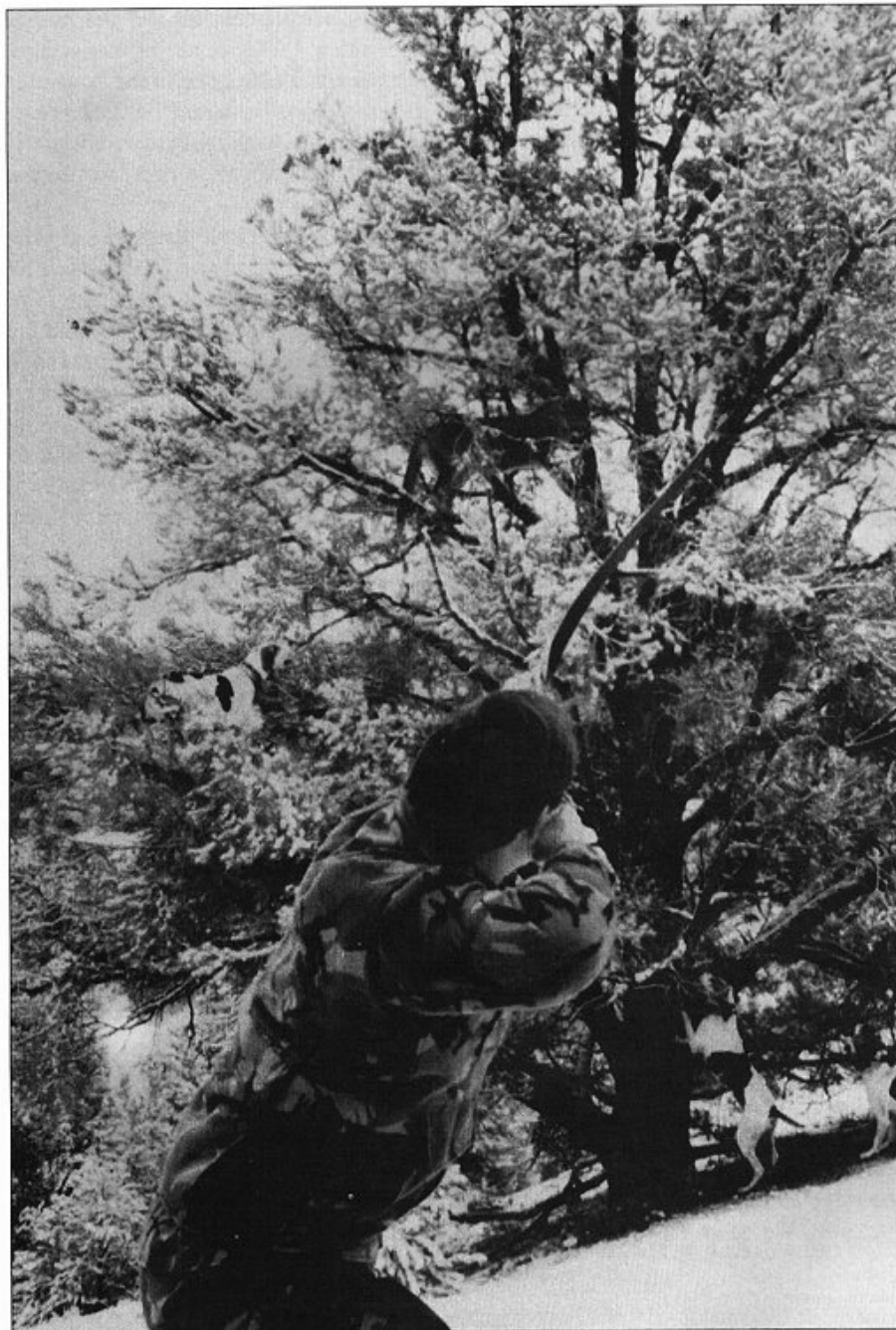
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Two hard weeks of hunting in the snow and steep terrain finally brought me face to face with the big lion.

When the truck stopped, Mark jumped out and ran in the direction we had just come from. There was a set of fresh cougar tracks going across the road!

I ran up and examined them closely. It was clearly a big Tom. The tracks were really fresh. The cat had probably only passed one or two hours before we arrived. It had stopped snowing a few hours earlier and these tracks had clearly been made after the snow

had ceased. Mark went back to the vehicle and began to prepare the dogs for the chase. Once ready and upon showing them the fresh spoor, they ran up the hill bordering the highway and were out of sight within a few moments. I was ecstatic! Finally we found the cat we had been looking for. The next part would be up to the dogs.

Mark showed his experience at this point and calmly stated that there

were still many things that could go wrong and not to get too excited yet. Just because we had found the fresh track did not mean that we had the cougar. Before going after the dogs, we would also have to go and ask the owner of the land permission to enter his property. It ended up that Mark and the landowner already knew each other from previous years. The gentleman was a cattle rancher and was more than happy to have a cougar removed from the area. He mentioned to us that he had seen one large cat's tracks and that they had been getting closer to his cattle in recent weeks.

We drove up a canyon in the direction the dogs had gone. After driving in as far as was possible we unloaded the snowmachines. Once on the snowmachines, we set out in the general direction that we thought the dogs had gone. Though they had tracking collars, we were not going to use them unless the dogs were lost. Upon reaching a hilltop, we stopped and turned off the engines. I could just make out the faint sound of the dogs baying in the distance. I knew this unmistakable sound only meant one thing. The cougar has been treed! Following the sound was not that difficult. We were able to take the snowmachines within several hundred yards of where the dogs had treed the cat. At that point we got whatever gear we needed and trudged through the deep snow towards the sound of the dogs. I had my take-down longbow over my back with a bow quiver attached to the bundle.

As we approached the dogs, I could make out a figure in the pine tree. It was about twenty feet above the ground and was unmistakable. The dogs had done their job extremely well! Now it was again up to us. Once under the tree I was finally able to see the cat clearly. He was very calm and watched us suspiciously. The gaze of his blue-gray eyes was terrifying. He was silhouetted perfectly against the sky and the pine needles and snow on the tree around him provided an incredible setting. I barely heard Mark say: *"If looks could kill, we would both be dead!"* I couldn't believe it. Right above me was one of the most feared predators in

North America. I stared transfixed for several moments, the dogs baying continuously. One of the dogs had even climbed up into the tree and was just a few feet from the big Tom. Mark asked me if I was going to want to take this cougar. It was an unnecessary question, the reply was obvious.

I took my Siberian Wolf Longbow out of its case and assembled it. I had not had a chance to shoot my bow in two weeks and decided to take a

couple of practice shots at a log that was about 20 yards away. Meanwhile, Mark tied down the dogs. He did not want for them to try and get at the cat if it jumped out of the tree wounded. My two practice shots were reasonably accurate and I felt I was ready to take the shot at the cat. At this point Mark told me that if I did not make a good shot and the cat jumped out of the tree and began chewing on his dogs he would have to dispatch it with his pistol. I paid no attention to his statement, I wasn't going to let this happen.

I stood away from the tree at about ten yards. I had a 40 degree upwards angle to the cougar. He was only 15 yards away, making me quite nervous. Jumping that distance would have been easy for a cat this size. Having been five yards or 50 yards away would not have made much of a difference. At this point I could not hear the dogs or anything else. I was fully focused on the moment and the shot. I concentrated on a small swirl of hairs behind his shoulder, drew back and released. The cat snarled and hissed as he jumped up higher into the tree, needles and pine cones falling everywhere. The dogs were yelping and baying loudly. I scarcely heard Mark yelling at

me: "shoot him again, shoot him again." I nocked another arrow, drew back while concentrating on a spot just behind his shoulder, and released. There was a loud crack. The arrow had hit the shoulder and penetrated no more than a few inches. It did not matter, the first arrow was all that was needed.

At this point the cat jumped from the tree and ran down into a small ravine below us. We were both listening for some indication that the cat was mortally hit. At that moment we heard a series of hideous snarls. The Tom was less than one hundred yards away from us. I knew that this was the end. A few seconds later the snarls ceased. "That cat is dead," I heard Mark say. We let the dogs go and walked down into the ravine and saw the motionless body of the cat lying under a large pine tree. I walked up and examined him closely. He was obviously a very mature cat. He had scars on his face and one of his ears had two gashes in it. His body was huge! I tried to pick him up off the snow, but was unable to. The dogs were examining the carcass knowing that they had done their job well.

Everything felt in place at that moment. I understood what attracted people to cougar hunting. People like Nevada Jim that spend their entire lives pursuing the elusive puma. Finding this seldom-seen animal is a great challenge. Using the help of hounds that have been trained and educated in the ways of these sly cats is part of the beauty of the hunt and adds a great deal to the overall experience. I felt that the dogs, Mark, and I had worked as a team with a common goal. The two weeks we had spent driving through back country roads and racing snowmachines across hard-to-reach hilltops had finally come to an end. I felt truly rewarded for having held out for so long. Initially I had regretted letting that first cat go, but now I couldn't have thought of doing it any other way. After two weeks of hunting hard in one of the driest winters ever, we had finally gotten the big cougar I had been looking for. Things do come to those who wait!



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The FALL

By Mike Coffee

That fateful morning started out as one of those moments in time that are permanently etched in any outdoorsman's memory. Dawn was fast approaching as the sun started to peak over the horizon. With each ray of light, tiny droplets of dew glistened like shimmering diamonds. Fall was in full swing showing off all of its magnificent colors for our delight. Reserved for those willing to take the time to pause and enjoy our natural surroundings. A time of the year that the whole woods is a beehive of activity. As wild game prepares for the inevitable—winter.

There was the promise of an ideal morning of bowhunting with my older brother, David. The morning plan consisted of starting with a stalk and then into our tree stands for a few hours. Both of us knew that the trip would be cut short due to family coming into town and pressing obligations that come with out-of-town guests. A few precious hours in the woods are better than not being able to go at all.

It was hard to believe that it was only two short weeks since my brother and I had obtained permission to hunt this beautiful piece of land. So much had happened in that short time. We had figured the deer movements that called this slice of heaven home and patterned a few nice bucks. In these times of anti-hunting sentiment we felt lucky to have a

place that a landholder was actually glad to have us. Usually he would welcome us with a wave as he worked on some old piece of farm equipment. At times he would meet us to chat prior and after our hunt to find out how we fared. His property was full of wild turkeys and deer and it gave us the opportunity to perfect our hunting skills. It was a place we could put into practice all the techniques we had read about over the years. Neither of us took this privilege for granted.

On the way to the woods, we started talking of our high hopes and the chances of seeing certain bucks. If we were lucky, maybe one would come close enough for a shot. Time was running out, due to the firearm season starting in the next week or so. Both of us wrestled with the notion of taking a doe. Throughout the season we had both passed up shots, trying our hand at being a bit more selective for the first time in our hunting careers. Not that there is any disgrace in shooting a doe, neither of us had the opportunity to put our tag on a buck with a bow before. Yet this year I was more concerned with the quality of the hunt, and being able to stalk a buck or a doe that was totally unaware of me being in their backyard. This was my goal for the season. Doing so would be a very satisfying culmination of my hunt. I was content to practice my stalking skills, success wasn't all that important to me.

As I slipped along a faint movement caught my eye. There was the flick of a deer's tail and the stalk was on. A small quail feather tied to my bowstring signaled that the wind was in my favor. With the morning dew covering the dried fall leaves maneuvering the obstacles became much simpler. The stalk led me a long distance to an area that I was not very familiar with. On I went, with every small-calculated step I inched closer to the three does. A plan of intercepting them was coming full circle and they were unaware of

the danger that surrounded them. The thrill of hunting such a beautiful creature and the challenge of a stalk will live in my memory for years to come.

The simple plan was working to perfection and I closed the gap. A look at my watch showed that this was taking a lot longer than I anticipated. Time in the tree stand would be put off till another day. At times I felt I was pressing too hard but I knew that my rendezvous with my brother was closing fast. There was no time to waste as I aggressively pursued the deer. As I set up for the shot my mind focused on the spot right behind the shoulder, slightly low in the heart region and the arrow was on its way. In a second the fletching entered at the exact hair that I was looking at and the fate was sealed. All the hours of practice had paid off. The doe ran for about 30 yards and fell with very little suffering. I'm always impressed by the effectiveness of the bow and arrow when the shot is right.

After the excitement I paused. A deep breath was in order. The culmination of two weeks of some of the finest hunting of my life had drawn to a close. I was more proud of this doe and this hunt than any buck I had ever taken with a gun. The realization that this deer was only eight feet away when the shot was taken was amazing. She was oblivious to my presence. The walk to the deer was strange event. There was an eerie feeling hanging in the air. As I stood there I realized that the woods were totally silent like I have never experienced before. It was as if the whole world paused for a moment. That's when I heard a faint sound.

The sound was indescribable, yet so familiar. I couldn't identify what it was. The sound was so low it could hardly be heard even in the silent woods. My pace quickened towards the deer. As I looked down I heard the sound again and then silence. Finally, the sound came again and it was unmistakable. It was my brother barely saying my name. Straining to determine the location of my brother, I took off running in the general direction. My heart came up into my throat as I ran towards the muffled sound, stopping often to get my bearings. There was an extreme tone of pain in his faint voice. I knew that I had to find him, frantically searching the carpeted floor of the woods ahead of me for some sign of him.

As I rounded the tree my heart sank to my stomach. There was my brother, my best friend, sprawled out in a totally unnatural position that no human could bend. He gasped, "Is the arrow all the way through me?" My mind raced, searching for an arrow, then looking at his quiver. All the arrows were there. A quick assessment of the situation had led me to believe that his spine and hip were broken and that he was in and out of shock. Secretly left wondering what to do to ease his pain, wishing it was a dream. Immediately I took off my coat and sweatshirt to warm him up. His glasses lay broken and his dirty face looked so unfamiliar, racked with pain. Almost as if he aged right before my eyes, yet I regained my composure.

I realized this situation was out of my control and that immediate action was mandatory. My fear was that if I left him on my return he would not be with me any more as he faded in and out of consciousness. Here lay the single most important man in my life, someone I had always looked up to and now he needed me to remain calm and focused. "David, you need help and you need it now. Just promise you will be here when I get back. Think of your kids, your wife—anything."

He didn't want me to leave him but we both knew this was serious and his very life was dependent on action. His parting remark was something about dying. This wasn't going to happen if I could help it. I couldn't fathom the thought.

The three quarter mile run to Vernon's house, the rush to the phone, even making the call itself was a blur. With the ambulance on the way, Vernon told me that he would show them where we were and he would take care of the doe. Hearing this, I rushed back to my brother's side. I grabbed a bottle of water and rushed to our vehicle. I drove that car over things that would make my brother mad in any other circumstances. In the past he was always so meticulous about his vehicles, almost obsessed. Before I knew it I was back to find his swelling had begun, looking almost unnatural. Gently I washed his face and told him that I loved him, secretly thinking "how could this happen?" This must be some kind of bad dream, that I wish I could wake from.

After what seemed an eternity the ambulance finally arrived. They

rushed him to the hospital and the family was all gathered around. A surgeon came in and broke the news that his spinal cord was badly damaged. His chances were slim that he would ever be able to walk again. This was a crushing blow. My brother had run several marathons and was in outstanding shape. Suddenly his running career was cut short in the prime of his life. As they rushed him into surgery, my thoughts went to my parents who live about 800 miles away. I made the call to my dad, telling him what happened. His initial response was disbelief, and then he told me that he was on his way. Walking out of the hospital, now dark, my eyes swelled and I burst into tears and cried like I never had done before and my wife comforted me in a way I will never forget. A day that started with so much promise and anticipation ended so badly.

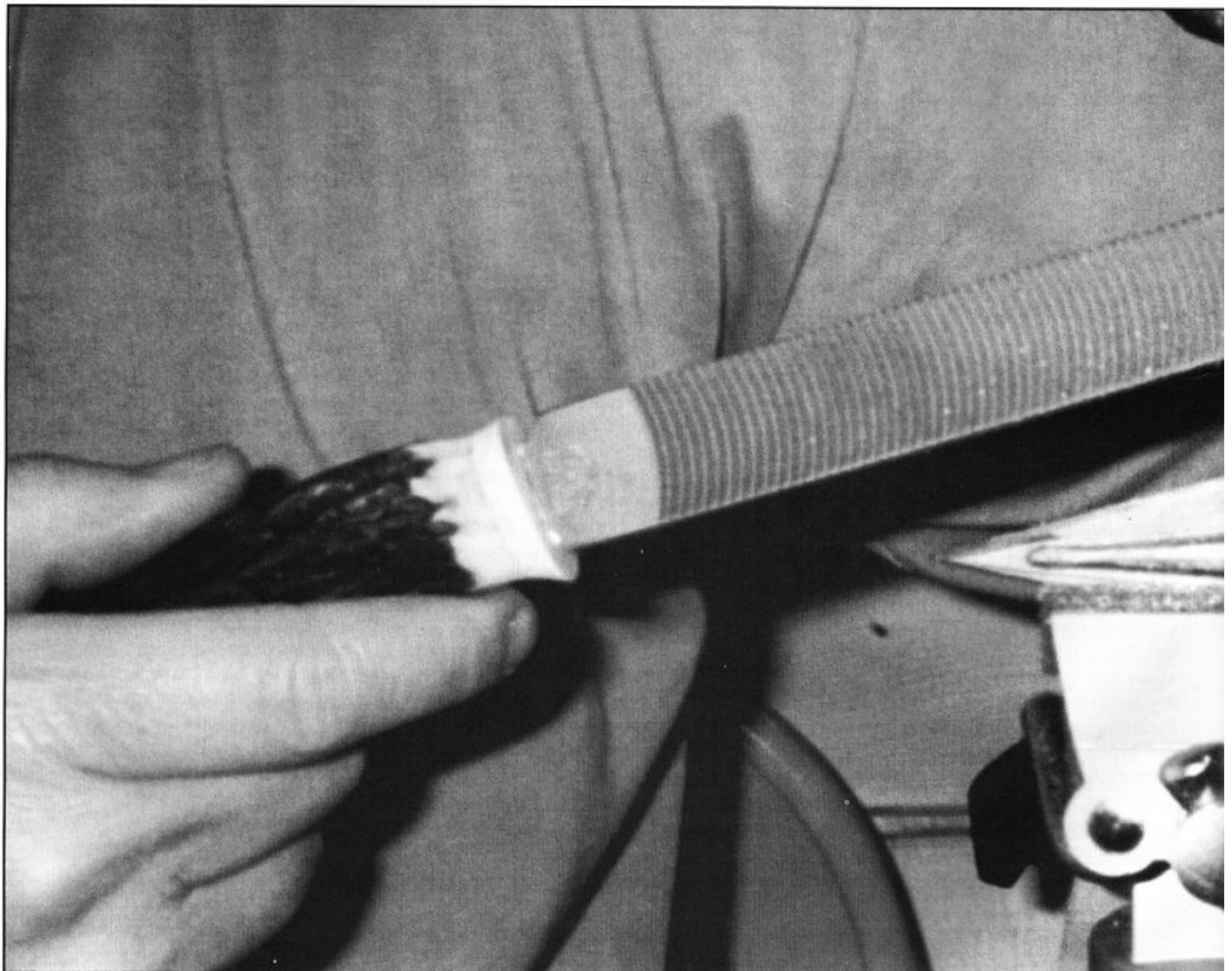
My brother was taken to Georgia for rehabilitation while we remained at home. I would continue to hunt while he was there. I was using it to remind myself and to think about the events of that day, yet always finding my way back to that same fateful tree. Sitting there for hours replaying the scene to try to make some kind of sense of it all, yet never getting any answers. Looking up at the tree stand that still hung there after giving way. It probably still hangs there to this day. I didn't have the will to take it down. Every day I missed him more, knowing the struggle he was going through to regain some semblance of his former life back. Maybe I wished I could share his pain so he didn't have to bear it alone.

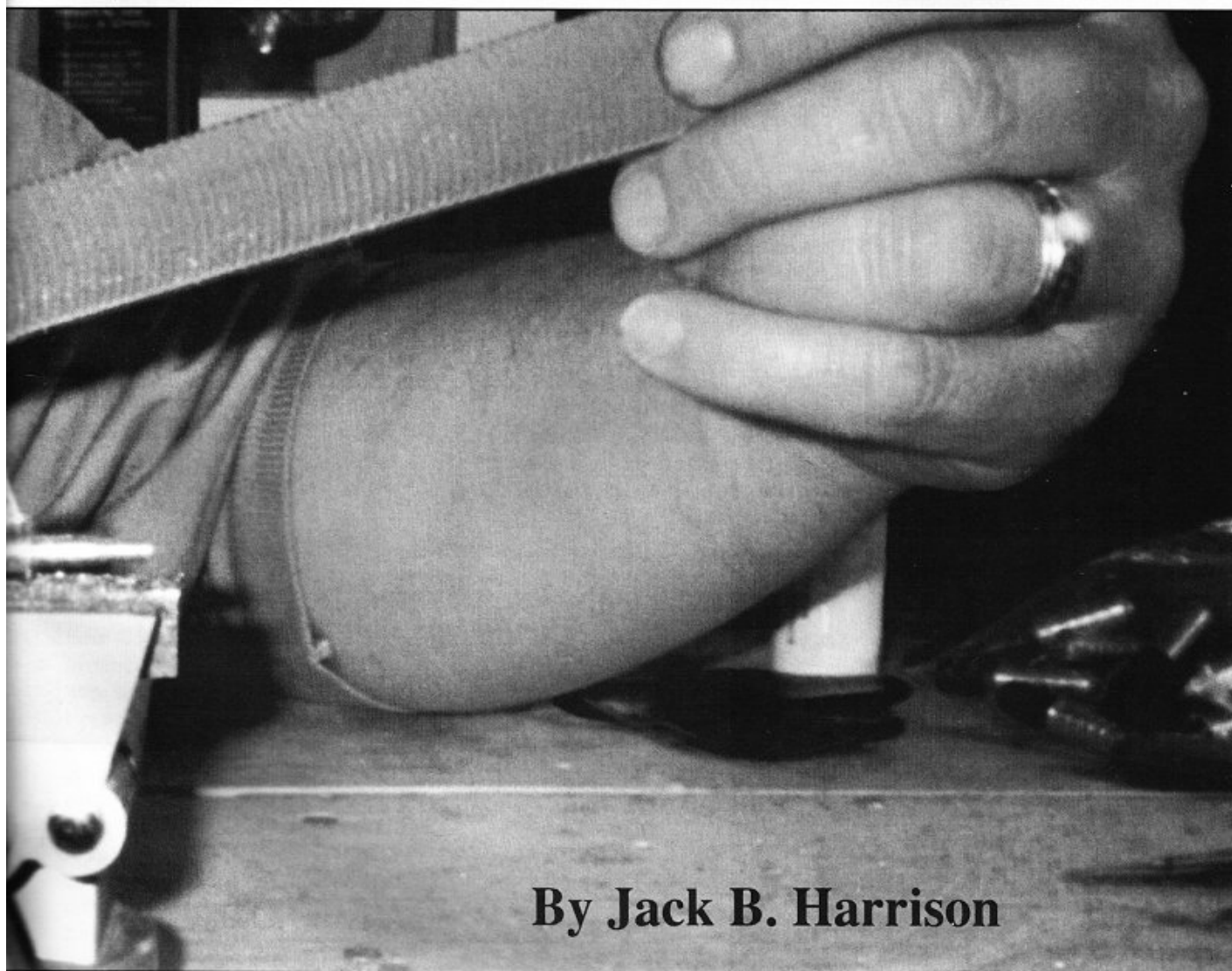
That was ten years ago this November. Every year as the seasons change, my mind goes back to that day in the woods that started with so much promise yet ended in such a personal tragedy. My brother is much better now than we were first led to believe. He is actually walking with canes and at times raises a little Cain also. He is still someone I admire and look up to and he is always trying to befriend anyone with similar injuries. He hunts and fishes, seeming to never miss a beat.

Yet every November my mind goes back to that scene and how things would be different if he only wore a safety belt.



Black Bears and BROADHEAD SHARPENING





By Jack B. Harrison

"If we can't do any better than this, maybe we ought to take up tree stand hunting." I muttered, under my breath, as we drove back to the cabin.

"Losing an animal is bound to happen, once in a while, no matter what!" Doug didn't have anything more to say, and we drove along in silence. Both of us contemplated the day's events.

Although Doug kept quiet, I had a good idea of what he was experiencing. Like me, he was frustrated. After hours of tracking, we were both exhausted and hungry. It was late. We were wet and cold. The constant coastal drizzle was not going to give us a break any time soon. The blood trail would be completely washed-out by first light the next day, and we both realized that we would never recover the bear. It was an ugly feeling, and we both found

it difficult to find any words of encouragement. As conservationists and outdoorsmen, we both felt a tremendous loss. It is one thing to successfully collect an animal with a quick, clean kill, but, it is altogether something else to wound one and not recover it

The argument should be whether or not our broadheads are sharp, and whether or not we are competent with shot placement.

No one enjoys losing an animal or seeing any animal suffer. To practice any method that contributes to animal abuse, or do things that are counter productive in hunting, which includes illegally harvesting game, should be avoided. If we are stewards of our domestic and wild flocks, then we owe it to ourselves and our animals to take care of them. Death is a part of life. In the animal kingdom, there is a place for all of us on the food chain, like it or not. The hunter is at the top of this food chain, right up there with the butcher who might confine himself to the local supermarket.

Instead of a stock yard and an infrastructure to raise and process animals, the hunter has the open field and his own wit to accomplish the job of collecting and processing his game. The hunters' contributions are realized in the billions of dollars annually that are collected in fees, licenses, taxes and incident-

tal expenditures for outdoor equipment, housing, food, and transportation.

For all hunters, it is a mistake to rationalize like the anti-hunters in any debate over the merits of fair chase, methods and means. Done within the law, even baiting animals is something

that should not be argued over because by doing so hunters divide their ranks. Furthermore, isn't it un-American to try and force my beliefs upon my fellow man no matter how passionately I believe one way or another about anything,

including my politics, my religious convictions, and lifestyle?

As a hunter, can I expect the same respect from my fellow man, whether he hunts or not, like it or not? Wars have been fought over these things in the past, and will probably be fought over in the future. Nevertheless, any element of hunting that can be exploited will be, and my resolve is and will continue to be to fight with the ballot. In the meantime, I will hunt any way I choose that is within the law that subscribes to fair chase with focus on my responsibility to the animal. Bear in mind there is no substitute for a quick, clean kill.

No matter how much my hunting partner and I disagree about how we hunt Black bears, individually, the debate should not be over such methods as baiting or stalking. The argument should be whether or not our broadheads are sharp, and whether or not we are

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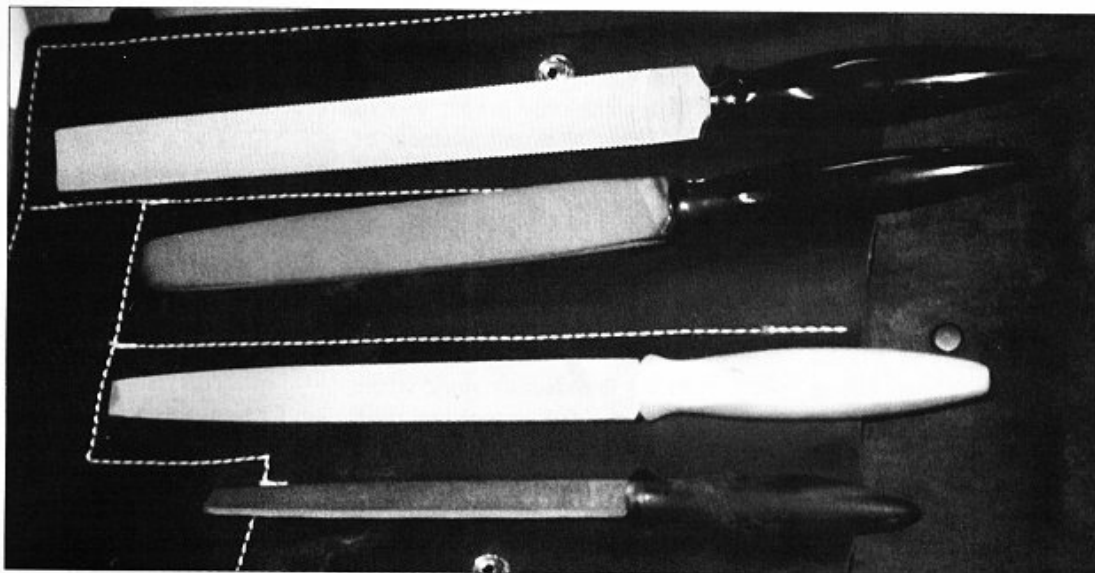
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The author uses an assortment of high-quality files when sharpening his broadheads.

competent with shot placement. What should be focused upon is the responsibility we have when we hunt, i.e., to do it within the law and to kill the animal. When the shot is made, the animal should be dispatched quickly and cleanly. If we hunt, then we ought to know how to do it with some degree of proficiency. However one may choose to do it, the goal ought to be to make an effective shot that does not leave the animal to suffer a useless death.

This introduction serves to kindle a flame within the reader and as a reminder to hunters to make sure that their broadheads are sharp. A good shot needs no apology, explanation or rationalization. Done properly, shooting a black bear with a bow and arrow is the thrill of a lifetime!

Like many of my friends and acquaintances, I have stalked bears successfully and collected them with a single arrow from my bow. I have also shot them from tree stands over bait. In every instance, I made sure my broadheads were sharp and that the arrows shot well. I practiced a lot with these same arrows before going into the field to hunt with them. I have always been concerned about wounding animals, in general, and black bears, in particular. The reason is because bear anatomy is different enough that extra effort must be made in order to execute proper shot placement. Everyone has a theory, but the fact remains bears seem to be able to survive

more often when it is perceived that they are hit properly. Also, by comparison, stalking always seems to present a more difficult situation for ensuring proper shot placement, versus shooting over bait. If I were pressed to choose in an argument between stalking and baiting black bears, I would decline to participate altogether. The reason is because I enjoy both methods of hunting. But, if I were to choose which method ensured better shot placement, I would have to say baiting presents more opportunity for the moment. Even though there is more work in baiting, the benefits are greater, in my opinion. For selective hunting and conservation, baiting is more effective for

the time spent trying to harvest a bear.

What's more, it is easier for me to execute the perfect shot to collect the animal. I suspect it is also easier for others to do this, but I know of one instance in which it made no difference. This particular situation was with an individual who could not shoot, under any circumstance. As I have gotten older I have discovered doing things with less calculation produces results that are less desirable. So, I spend more time in preparing myself and the situation in order to ensure proper shot placement.

Running bears with dogs is something that I personally have chosen not to do. Even when I have treed bears,

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using the baying hound trick, I have declined to shoot them. It just doesn't appeal to me. On the other hand, I would shoot a lion out of a tree after baying it. Hypocrisy? I don't think so. I just make choices that appeal to me, while allowing for individual preferences for others who like to do things differently.

Regarding black bear conservation, many people do not realize that the highest predation of bears in Alaska occurs as a result of mature boars killing and eating cubs. No—Walt Disney never told you that *"they eat their babies"* did he! By baiting in a big boar and killing it, the hunter can pass up other mature animals with a great deal more selectivity. Sooner or later a dominant boar, which lives in the area, will take over a bait station and become first in pecking order. Once he is gone, i.e., killed by the hunter, the local bear population increases, as often as not, because fewer cubs are cannibalized.

As a side benefit, sitting in a stand watching bears is exciting. There

is always more activity, and it can be a lesson in bear ecology.

Today, the only proper way to hunt black bears, with any element of sport, is to hunt them with a bow and sharp arrow, in my opinion. Except for safety and back-up, there is no contest using a rifle of any kind. Most of the time the shot can be executed within a few feet versus yards. Getting that close is a rush!

In the introductory story, where Doug and I were hunting together, there was a tremendous black bear population, with a total of three that could be harvested per person. On one stalk I crept up on five bears feeding at a time in one area of a field without getting close enough to take a shot. In fact, Ray, another bowhunter in our group, watched me in disbelief from a distance and got a good laugh over what happened.

When I ran out of cover while stalking these five black bears feeding on green sprouts, I tried to tree them by running at them and baying like a hound.

It worked for a second or two, and then I became the hunted! Two smaller bears treed, two ran off, and the biggest one in the bunch came charging toward me. I yelled and waved my hands to slow him down, out of surprise, without thinking.

I should have arrowed him, but, I was not mentally prepared for a charge. Also, I was not competent at shooting something that was charging me. I had never practiced shooting at anything moving toward me that can bite! Subconsciously, I counted on one or two treeing, and the others to run off. When the biggest bear in the batch came after me, I

retreated. I had not thought about that happening, so the bear caught me in my reaction.

This particular experience happened a few years ago, but to this day I remember it and how I behaved. Today, mentally, I feel I am now more prepared to go into the field to handle a charging animal. Back when that black bear charged me, I didn't have a clue what to do!

The tracking party that Doug and I had gotten involved in was an eleventh-hour effort to find a black bear Ray stalked and shot. Ray had to leave earlier to catch the ferry at the terminal in Hollis, so Doug and I went back to try and locate the wounded bear. The effort ended after spending most of the morning and afternoon looking in vain.

This particular black bear hunt occurred in the Spring of 1991, while some friends of mine and I hunted on Prince of Wales Island, in Southeast Alaska. It has served as a reminder of the care that needs to be taken in being prepared to go into the field. Mentally, one must be prepared for anything to happen. Are you? If you hunt black bears in Alaska, sooner or later, you will experience a close encounter with one of them. They seem to have their own book of rules that is filled with interesting chapters of behavior that surprises many of us. None of the bears I have hunted graduated from college with a degree in biology, so they do not behave like they are supposed to!

You have probably guessed by now, but both Doug and I figured that Ray lost his black bear because it did not bleed out properly. We both knew what a good shot Ray was, so the only thing that we could conclude about the lost bear incident was that his heads must have gotten dull in the quiver. At any rate, it was the only thing either of us could think of that may have gone wrong.

Not long ago a friend of mine produced a video tape entitled, *"Bowhunting Hungry Black Bears."* Wade Nolan spent several bear seasons collecting the information and footage that was used in the production of this video. I cannot recommend it enough for anyone who is going to hunt anywhere



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for black bears. It is extremely informative and gives a great deal of information about shot placement.

The video is well done and gives 70 minutes of excellent instruction.

In the years that have followed, my friends and I have taken several bears under challenging situations from stands and by stalking. Today, we can all look back upon our experiences with a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that every effort was made to be responsible hunters. We look forward to an exciting future for hunting, despite the negative press that is constantly circulated and the doomsday attitude that so often plagues us. Despite the few set-backs that have occurred for hunters, in different areas of the country, today there are more opportunities for us all than what many of our parents enjoyed.

My attitude is, "these are the good old days!" I can't help but feel that there is "more unnecessary fun" in store for us all. In the up-coming bear season for 1999, do all that you can to ensure that your broadheads perform. Prove them before you go into the field.

My broadheads are sharp. I practice with them, and make it a point to ensure that my heads perform perfectly—all the time. Do you?

SHARPENING BROADHEADS

Over the years, I have noticed that most people find it difficult to sharpen broadheads. I offer a course on sharpening them. I learned from the old-timers. The method that I learned is different than the methods used by most people—and it works!

I use a pattern or vixen file to dress the edge of the broadhead while the blade is fixed in a vise. Obviously, the only way to stroke the head with a file when it is in a vise is in the direction of the blade. Instead of filing at a 90 degree angle (perpendicular) to the edge, the blade is dressed parallel with it (See photo above). By alternating from side to side, the edge can

be brought up to incredible sharpness.

I carry an assortment of files with me and a small vise in order to be able to work on broadheads in camp. The vise attaches easily to almost any table. The best file I have, I bought from Brownell's out of Montezuma, Iowa (1-515-623-5401; part # 191-202-910; Flat No-Clog File). Brownell's is a gun part and supply outfit that has an impressive catalog of goodies. The following is a summary of broadhead sharpening technique.

TOOLS

1. No-clog file
2. Touch-up file
3. Vise
4. Block of Polystyrene

This technique involves one additional item besides files, i.e., a vise. Any good vise will work, but I prefer one that is small, light, and portable. I like them because they can be attached to almost any work bench or table top. Any hardware store carries them.

The work file is called a "no-clog" file. It has semi-circular cutting surfaces that are surprisingly aggressive on steel. The touch-up file is a common 8 inch mill bastard. With these items, you are ready to begin sharpening.

TECHNIQUE

1. Fix broadheaded arrows in the vise with the points protruding about an inch outward.
2. Tighten the vise so that the broadhead does not move. Make sure the shaft lies flat on the top of the jaws of the vise. (See photo.)
3. Aggressively, stroke the right side with the no-clog file, using the flat surface of the file on the bevel of the blade, parallel to it from tip to the back of the head. File away grind marks. Roll the edge to the left side of the bevel. **Caution: Use both hands on the file to achieve optimum control.** File the first side until it is done before going on to the next side. Hold the flat surface of the file at the same angle as the bevel of the blade. The number of strokes depends upon the condition of the cutting edge of the broadhead and the hardness of the steel. Some heads may require a great deal of work while others seem to respond quickly with the least number of passes.
4. Stroke the left side bevel in similar fashion to step #3. File away grind marks. Roll edge to the right side of bevel.
5. Gently stroke each bevel with less force and role the edge so that it stands erect.



Place the flat edge of the file along the beveled edge of the broadhead, so that it contacts the entire cutting surface of that side of the broadhead, and stroke from the point toward the back of the broadhead.

6. Check edges and bevels visually and by feel. Gradually eliminate the wire edge.
7. Check the balance and performance of sharpened broadheaded arrows by shooting them into a polystyrene block. Cull flirtatious arrows and replace broadheads with blunts or field points.
8. Apply a thin coat of Vaseline on finished arrow heads after dressing them with the touch-up file to make the points "chisel sharp".

I use a four-power lens, glasses, or a magnifying hood to study and view my efforts closely. I take note on the condition of the blade to begin with, paying particular attention to the edge geometry.

What I am looking for is uniformity. Each stroke of the file should dress the edge more uniformly with each pass. What I can see that helps me recognize this are the tool marks. When I see that the file marks are all going in one direction, I switch to the opposite side of the same bevel. All original grind marks are gone before switching sides.

Upon close inspection, the newly filed edge should show two things: (1) a uniform bevel the full length of the blade, and (2) a slightly rolled edge. Using my thumb, I feel for the drag on the edge from the opposite side of the bevel, and with the aid of the four-power lenses, I inspect it for irregularity.

Each pass removes the original grind marks. When I'm done with this side, the edge is rolled once again to the opposite side, where I started. It makes no difference whether one starts on the left or right side of the bevel on the blade. Just make sure to file a uniform bevel, rolling the edge back and forth while working on each side.

When I first tried this method, I counted the number of strokes or passes in an effort to maintain some degree of

consistency and uniformity. With practice, I dropped the count and relied strictly upon feel to test the edge. By laying the flat surface of the file on the blade bevel, at the same angle or degree of slope, I pushed steadily using both hands. Because I am right handed, I held the file handle in my right hand. With my left hand, I held the tip of the file. It gave me full control. The four-power magnification hood enabled me to keep an eye on my progress.

The steel would roll away in tiny shards that curled at each stroke. In no time at all, the original grind marks faded away, leaving the glisten of the

newly cut steel. Eventually, I found I was even good enough to tackle the toughest broadheads, including some three-blade heads.

Sharpening heads that are already mounted on the arrow shafts presents no problem at all. In fact, it is preferred. Make sure the shaft lies flush on the surface of the jaws of the vise with the broadhead protruding about an inch beyond the edge. (See picture.) This allows clearance and helps keep the head firm in the jaws. Also, if the head is already on the shaft, properly mounted, aligned and balanced, the tip is easier to sharpen in the final step of sharpening.

SHARPENING THE TIPS

I alternately roll the head back and forth as I use the touch-up file to round and chisel the point of the broadhead. When I have created a cutting point or tip, it is ready to go. This takes a matter of seconds. Turn the head over from side to side to get rid of the wire edge and to bring the sharpness up.

TESTING BROADHEAD-TIPPED ARROW FLIGHT

Some people still do not check their broadheads before going out into the field to hunt with them. They assume their broadhead-tipped arrows will shoot properly without any problem. Unless they are individually "shot-in" it is impossible to know. I "shoot mine in" using a polystyrene block. This material will not dull a sharpened head.

Because of the difference in mass between field points and broadheads that weigh the same, most arrows will not perform the same just by switching out the field points with broadheads. To avoid any surprises, I always do two things: First, my arrows are ordered with at least a spine 15 lbs heavier than my bow draw weight, and second, I always shoot arrows that have been selected by their broadhead performance, verses field point performance.

In other words, I always match my arrows shooting broadheads, instead of field points. Field points will shoot with almost any spined arrow, while broadheads may not. Hunting arrows with broadheads seem to always require a minimum of 15 lbs more spine weight in the shaft to keep the broadheads under control.

Bowhunters must check their own arrows and broadheads personally to determine performance. There is no other way.

I use all the same color fletching so I can tell if my broadheads are "flirting" when I shoot them. The stability of the broadhead is difficult for me to see if the cock feather is a different color because the arrow appears to go down range erratically. I eliminate this illusion by making the fletching the same color.

The best target medium I have found to shoot sharpened broadheads into, that will not affect them in any way, is a material called Polystyrene. It is manufactured for insulation and can be purchased anywhere in the U.S. My target butt is four feet by two feet by

Bowhunters must check their own arrows and broadheads personally to determine performance. There is no other way.

eight feet in size. It is weather-proof and it lasts for years. A block the size of mine costs about \$80 in Alaska, so, anywhere else in the U.S., it should be less expensive. I wax my arrows to help reduce any build-up that sheds from the polystyrene.

If each broadhead-tipped arrow shoots well out of my bow, after the first shot, each gets to keep its head. If not, I replace the broadhead with a blunt and that arrow becomes a stump or small game arrow.

Over the years I have shortened my draw length to 26.5 inches so that I can shoot a greater variety of arrows with different spines, all with broadheads. In effect, by shortening my draw, my arrows all act like they have stiffer spines. Short drawing any arrow also accomplishes the same thing, and I have a friend who does just that. He can shoot any arrow out of any bow and get it to perform. He gets good penetration because he has compensated with his bow weight for drawing the arrows short.

Finally, after I have shot my arrows in with broadheads, I give the edges one final inspection to see if they will shave hair. Using the touch-up file, I dress the edges and coat them with vaseline if they are carbon steel. Vaseline helps to guard against rust, which will oxidize the blades and dulls the cutting edges. Stainless steel doesn't need any coating. The arrows are then stored in such a way to keep the cutting edges out of contact with anything, including other broadheads.

I prefer my own double-blade head that I had Brad Wenger manufacture for me. Any of his Zephyr heads are good to use on bears. I also like many of the other popular heads on the market today. Magnus heads can be sharpened to a "nasty" edge. I like the MA-3L heads and the old Herters 4-blade heads as well. Because these older heads are hard to find now, I fall back on the Magnus and other similar types. They all work well—if they are sharp.



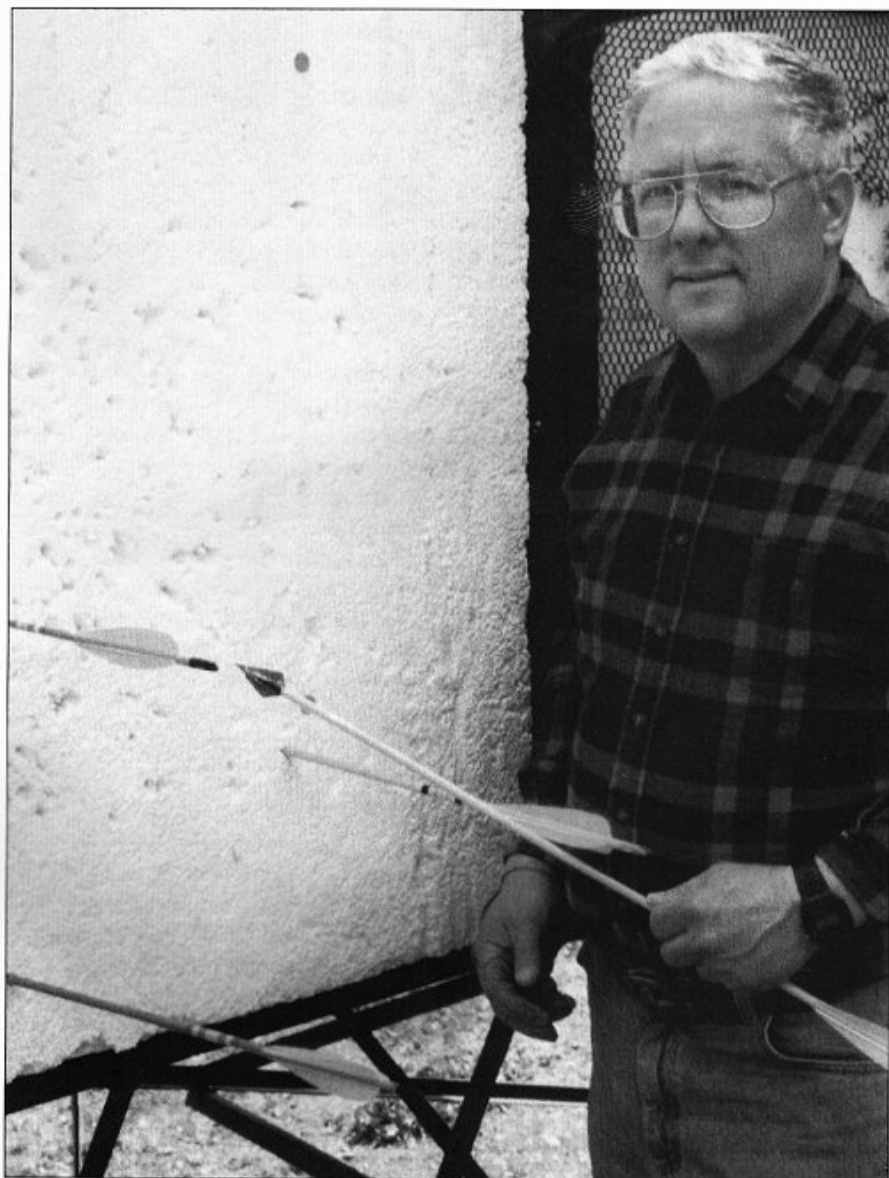
About the Author: Jack B. Harrison has been bowhunting since the 1960s, when he cut his teeth on mule deer in Nevada. He has lived in Alaska for 15 years and is the bowyer who produces the Black Wolf, Siberian Wolf, and the American Wolf bows.

He is also Steve Tanner's partner. Steve produces the current generation of Forgewood arrows. Jack has hunted in several western states, Alaska, and Africa. He is currently authoring a book, *"Unnecessary Fun, More Traditional Hunting."* This article is just

one of many that he has completed for the book.)

Hold Harmless Clause/Disclaimer

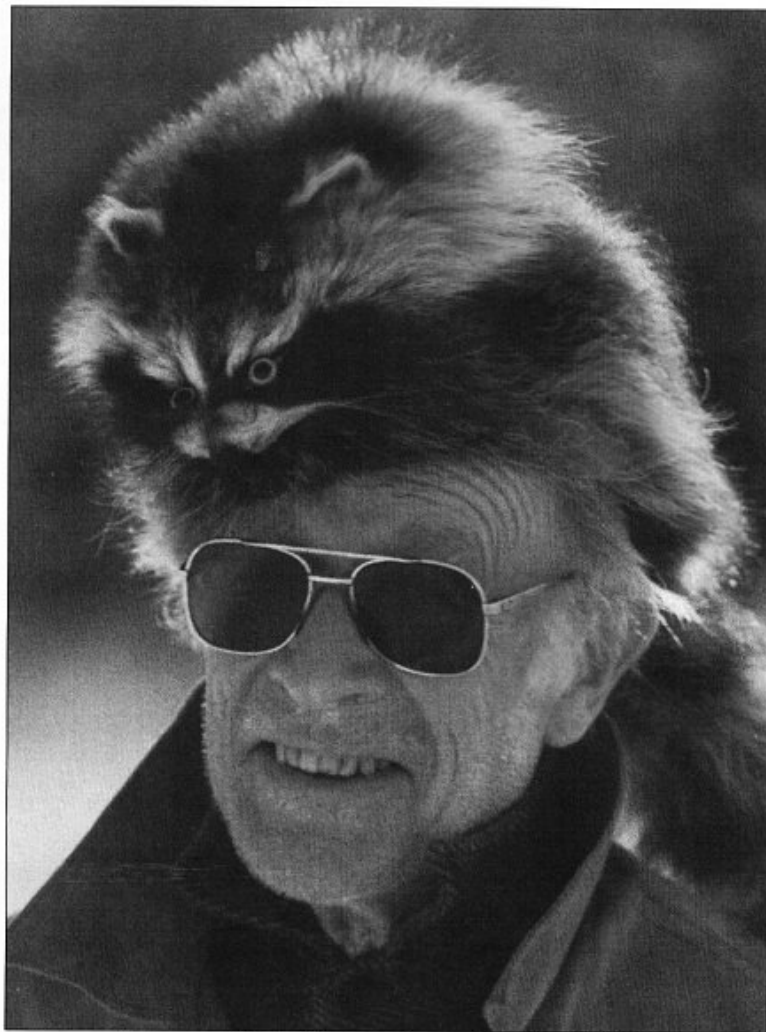
Whoever follows these instructions does so with the understanding that I am not liable for personal injury. Any attempt to follow these instructions holds me harmless for personal injury from accidents. It is impossible to guarantee that whoever sharpens broadheads by hand does not run the risk of injury. I cannot be responsible for any attempt or failure where injury occurs.



Larry Hardwig testing the flight of his sharpened broadheads in a polystyrene block.

Vincent C. Canouts and His Hickman Silk-Backed Bow

by Rev. C.E.F. Mantle



Vincent C. Canouts, 1916 - 1998

Homeward bound one spring evening in 1993, I stopped for gas at the "Trading Post" on Highway 17 North leaving Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. A general store, sporting goods store, and gas bar, it is a popular stop for sportsmen from both Ontario and the neighboring State of Michigan. Ron Simms the owner is a former employee of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, (now Ministry of Natural Resources) and is a valuable source of information concerning area hunting and fishing.

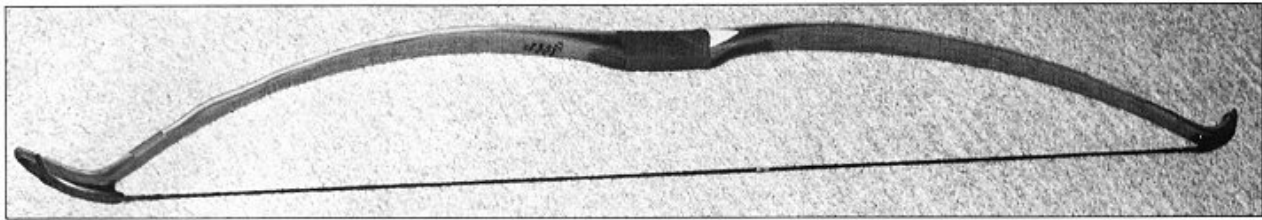
I spent a few moments chatting with Ron when he turned to an older couple who had been looking about the store. "You remember Vinnie and Jean Canouts don't you?" he said to me. "Why yes," I replied, reaching to shake their hands, "but I haven't seen them for many years."

As we talked, the conversation somehow turned to archery and bowhunting. Vinnie's eyes lit up when I mentioned having made a number of bows from hop hornbeam (ironwood), plentiful in our area and easier and cheaper to obtain than either yew or osage orange. "Look," said Vinnie

as he and Jean prepared to leave for home, "come on up to our place when you have the time and we can chat some more about archery. In case you don't remember, we are at mile 15 on the Ranger Lake road by the red canoe paddle on a post."

My first meeting with Vinnie and Jean had been 25 years earlier, in 1968. I had recently been transferred to the district and one day, in company with fellow Conservation Officer, Bill Daniher, we stopped by the Canouts' home on our way to Ranger Lake and Bill introduced me to Vinnie and Jean. Vincent Canouts was originally from Flint, Michigan. As a young man he spent much time in the Searchmont Ranger Lake area and about 1945 he settled permanently in the northern Ontario bush. Here he met Jean, daughter of Steve Lewis, a local farmer, logger, guide, and outfitter. Vinnie and Steve built the couples' present comfortable log home in 1947 and in 1949 Vinnie and Jean were married. Together they operated a tourist camp from 1949 to 1984.

Vinnie was a skilled craftsman and in the workshop behind the house he made rustic style furniture. Jean trapped in the winter months and, being a skilled seamstress, she pre-



The Hickman silk-backed bow.

pared many of the furs herself which she then crafted into beautiful hats and other garments.

In the ten years between our first meeting and when I left the area for a number of years, I saw the couple very infrequently. Oddly, during this period I never knew that Vinnie was an archer and bowyer; the topic just never came up.

A few weeks after the encounter at the Trading Post, my wife and I set out for the Canouts' home. With me were several ironwood flat bows, an Osage flat bow, and an English Longbow of British Columbia Yew which I had made the previous winter. Vinnie looked these over approvingly, then showed me some of his hunting equipment from past years. This included a favorite Osage bow pulling about 70 pounds. *"This is too tough for me now,"* he said sadly, *"I hate to admit it, but now I have one of those wheel bows."*

On subsequent trips to visit Vinnie and Jean, I would often bring one of my recently finished bows for his inspection. He would sometimes offer some constructive criticism which was always welcome. On one such visit in the summer of 1994 he remarked, *"You know, I have something for you in the basement that you are going to like. Just a moment, I will be right back."* Away he went, down the spiral basement steps, returning a few minutes later with two sets of yew billets. These were still tied together at each end with spacer blocks between them to help prevent warping. Each billet was individually stamped:

LEON F. CHAPIN
"The Yew Man"
1628 E. 8th Street
Albany, Oregon

"These are about fifty years old," remarked Vinnie with a grin, *"they*

should be pretty well seasoned by now!" I tried to pay him for the billets but he firmly but graciously declined. *"No, I have had them in the shop for a long time and I won't be making any more bows now; you can use them I'm sure."*

It was autumn when we visited again and I brought with me two bows made from the billets he had given me. One was a hickory-backed American-style longbow, the billets spliced under the handle. The other, similar in style was backed with deer rawhide and fitted with take-down sleeves purchased from the Northwest Archery Co. in Seattle, Washington. Examining both bows carefully, Vinnie said, *"I like your work. Come on out to the shop, I want to ask you a favor."*

Out we went to the large workshop behind the house. In it were a number of woodworking machines, lumber, and leftovers from past projects. Climbing up on a workbench, Vinnie groped about among boards, dowels, assorted furniture parts and myriad other items until he laid hands on the object of his search—an unfinished bow blank. Blackened with age, it had obviously been stored away for many decades. A large woodstove which heated the shop had doubtless contributed to the darkening of the stave.

With recurved ends to which blocks of wood had been glued to be fashioned into brush nocks, the bow was designed to be a static recurve—a design frequently seen in the 1940s and which the writer well remembers. This design was a favorite of the Michigan bowyer of the period, Nels Grumley, with whom Vinnie had been acquainted in his youth.

I was unable to tell of what kind of wood the stave was made, but assumed it must be Osage. Handing the blank to me, Vinnie told me that he had worked it to one growth layer and had glued a Hickman Silk backing in place. *"I never got around to finishing it in all these*

years," he said, *"other things came up and I have often wondered how that silk backing would have turned out. This is the only one I ever started with that kind of backing and you can't find it today because they haven't made it since the second World War. So suppose you take it and finish it for me; make it only a bit over 40 pounds."*

I protested that I was no expert—certainly not with a bow of that design as I had only made flat bows and English-style longbows. The change from working on straight ended bows to a recurve was something I felt reluctant to attempt with somebody else's property. Furthermore, I had some very real misgivings about the condition of the materials in the blank after its exposure to summer heat and winter cold, the latter alternating with the sudden heat from the wood stove.

"Look," exclaimed Vinnie, *"take it and see what you can do with it. If it doesn't turn out, we won't worry about it."* So, accepting the challenge, I took the blank home and put it away in my basement workshop. It was now deer season, Christmas was coming, and after the New Year there were still numerous things to do, so the blank lay untouched for the better part of three months before I ventured to work on it.

Near the end of February, 1995, I finally got started. The first order of business was to clean it up and examine it carefully for any flaws which may have developed. Using a scraper and sandpaper, I removed the accumulated dirt from the sides and belly of the blank. To my surprise, it proved to be a piece of beautiful close-grained, dark-red yew and not osage as I had assumed.

The sister billets had been skillfully spliced with a fishtail joint with not a gap to be seen. The splice had remained solid with no evidence of loosening. About 1/8" of sapwood was left

on the back, and the Hickman silk backing was still solidly in place. Cleaning up this silk backing before proceeding further was a major concern as it is very thin and I did not want to risk any damage. This was accomplished by rubbing the backing very lightly with 00 steel wool to remove surface dirt, followed by simply wiping it down a number of times with a soft cloth saturated with lacquer thinner. This removed the bulk of the soiling and had no adverse effect on the glue with which the silk had been applied.

Vinnie was unable to recall the brand name of the glue that he used, but it was probably a casein glue of some sort as this was in common use in the early 1940s. No further attempt at cleaning was made and since the backing was still quite discolored, I decided that I would stain it before the final finishing. More about this later.

Some further description of the Hickman Silk backing should be noted here. Detailed written information is scarce, Paul Comstock, writing in Volume I of *The Traditional Bowyer's Bible* classes it as "extinct as the *tyrannosaurus*." It is of course, this rarity that makes this Canouts bow so unique. Even the writings of Dr. C. N. Hickman and Dr. Paul E. Klopsteg in *Archery, the Technical Side* are extremely sketchy and vague.

In any event, Hickman Silk backings did not reappear in the post-war period but were replaced by a synthetic called Fortisan and ultimately in the 1950s by the fiberglass backings with which all archers of today are familiar. From the available texts we do know that the backing developed by Dr. Hickman is of natural silk, a material of great tensile strength. Whether the backing was made in widths a full bow limb wide or narrower I could not determine by examining this bow. It appeared to consist of a series of ribs or strips approximately 1/16" wide side by side.

If the backing on the Canouts bow is comprised of narrow strips applied individually, the work on this bow was accomplished with great skill as they are perfectly straight and uniform with no gaps or variation in the lines between the ribs. This is one of several points con-

cerning this backing and its application which I never thought to ask of Vinnie. Unfortunately, this is no longer possible.

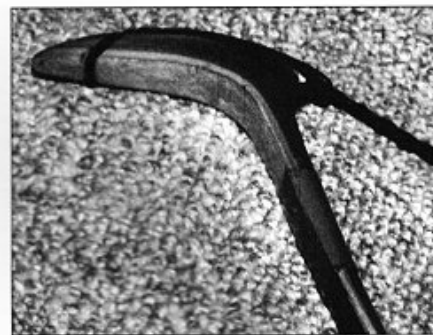
Returning to the actual making of this bow, the stave was set back at the handle section about one inch. The last 3.5" were recurved and the blocks of wood glued to the inner (belly) side of these were of black walnut. These showed some slight separation from the stave at the inner ends. This problem was solved by carefully opening the glue joint for 1.5" with a coping saw blade, filling the cuts with a 24 hour epoxy and clamping until set. By this method, any risk of damaging the recurved yew tips as could occur if complete removal of the blocks were attempted, was averted.

The limbs were narrowed to near final dimensions, working mainly with rasps and files. The belly was then worked down using a spokeshave, scraper, file, and sandpaper to within 1.5" of the brush nock blocks. When the flexion of the limbs (with the handle section held in a vise) appeared to be shaping up satisfactorily, the brush nock blocks were fashioned into the appropriate shape, including string nocks, using a variety of flat and round files. The brush nocks were then smoothly "faired" into the limbs at the base of the recurves.

The final tillering process was now undertaken with great care and I might add, considerable apprehension. Little by little the bow was successfully brought to a nice, even tiller at the desired draw length of 25" (Vinnie was not a tall man). The weight at this draw length was 50 pounds, the tiller requiring only minor adjustment.

Before the final finishing, the bow was shot a number of times over a period of several days and settled at a draw weight of 48 pounds at 25".

Before the final finishing, something had to be done about the discoloration of the silk backing. I had previously stained rawhide backings with Fiebing's leather dye with good success. It was a pleasing dark brown color so I tried it on a small section of the silk backing which would come under the leather handle-wrap. The silk accepted the dye beautifully, so I applied two coats full length, which greatly improved the appearance of the discolored backing,



A close-up of the recurved limb tips and the gold thread overlapping the silk backing.

giving it a rich brown color which complemented the colors of the yew. I should mention here that anyone contemplating using this dye, whether on rawhide or any other material, must be prepared to wait until it is thoroughly dry before applying varnish, Tru-oil or any other finish. Even after the dye is dry to the touch, any finish applied over it will take longer than the normal time to dry—it will dry, but it takes time.

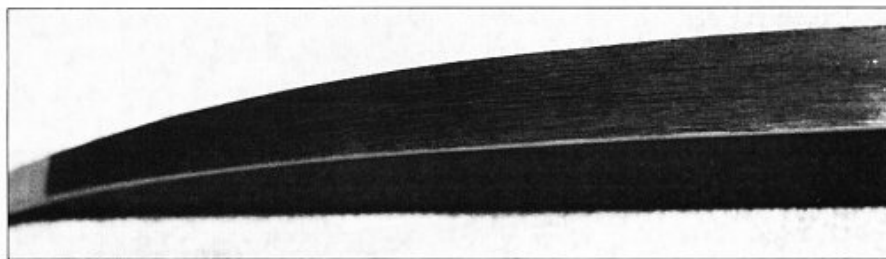
For some reason the silk backing on this stave did not extend to the tips of the bow but ended abruptly at the base of the recurve. This caused me some concern as it appeared that this was a potential point of weakness where the silk backing could start to lift. To eliminate any such possibility, short pieces of rawhide were used to back the inside of the recurve using Elmer's yellow carpenter's glue and overlapping the ends of the silk backing by 1-1/4". The overlap was then wound with a fine gold-colored thread. (see photo)

Following the final smoothing and sanding the bow was given a polishing with 00 steel wool, burnished with a medicine bottle and four hand-rubbed coats of Birchwood-Casey Tru-Oil™ were applied with a light rubbing with the steel wool between coats. A leather handlewrap and arrow plate completed the job.

The specifications of the finished bow are as follows:

- Overall length - 57.5"
- Length between nocks - 56"

- Width of limb at the widest point - 1.5"
- Width at base of recurve - 11/16"
- Below the string nocks - 9/16"
- Handle fadeout - 3" long
- Thickness at the fade-outs - 9/16" tapering to 3/8" at a point 1.5" below the recurve/brush nocks.



The silk backing on this stave did not extend to the tips of the bow but ended abruptly at the base of the recurve

The cross section of the limbs is a shallow arch or "D." The maximum limb width is maintained for 6" above and below the fade-outs, then tapers in a gentle curve to the narrowest point below the recurves. A 53.5", 14-strand dacron double-loop string gives a 5" brace height over the 1-5/8" deep handle.

One great regret I have is that I did not chronograph this bow, something I like to do with every bow I make. However, the weather and temperature in early April of 1995 was not suitable for setting up the chronograph and besides, I had now had the stave in my possession for more than five months and I felt that it was high time to return the finished bow to its owner. In any event, I did not require a chronograph reading to know that this was one peppy little bow!

April 5, 1995, was a fine day so we set off to visit the Canouts and presented Vinnie with the finished bow. To my relief he was quite pleased with it and said, "What do I owe you for your work?" "Owe me?" I replied, "you more than paid me with those yew billets you gave me. Besides, I was just pleased it turned out and that I had the opportunity to work on it."

I don't know if Vinnie got to shoot the finished bow very much. Failing health and vision limited his activities over the next three years. During that time we visited the Canouts home a number of times.

Vinnie, always cheerful, would entertain us with tales of bygone years; Jean, busy as always, continued to work on her fine fur garments.

In 1997 I purchased two of Jean's

fine beaver hats, one for myself, the other as a gift for our son. The workmanship was, as always, flawless.

The last time we saw Vinnie was in January of 1998 when he, Jean, and a friend visited us at our Goulais River home. Vinnie was very excited, having recently undergone cataract surgery and he was ecstatic over the extent to which his vision had improved. "A modern miracle!" he exclaimed. This was a comfort and inspiration to me personally as I had recently suffered a visual impairment myself and was scheduled for surgery in a few weeks.

On the 29th of April 1998, Vinnie passed away; another of that older generation of archer-bowyers whose approach to the sport was as simple and uncomplicated as the traditional equipment they loved, is now gone from our midst. I had only gotten to know Vinnie well within the past half-dozen years, but I knew many of his generation in my youth.

Having had the opportunity to complete the Hickman silkbacked bow, which had its beginning more than a half century earlier, was a unique link with the past. The archers and bowyers of that era were, for the most part, committed to the sport of archery for the sake of the sport alone; commercial considerations were secondary or absent. Often they would unselfishly share their knowledge, materials, and equipment with the neophyte. To the present-day traditional archers the torch has been passed; may they carry it worthily, continuing to preserve the ethics and sportsmanship of those who have gone before us.



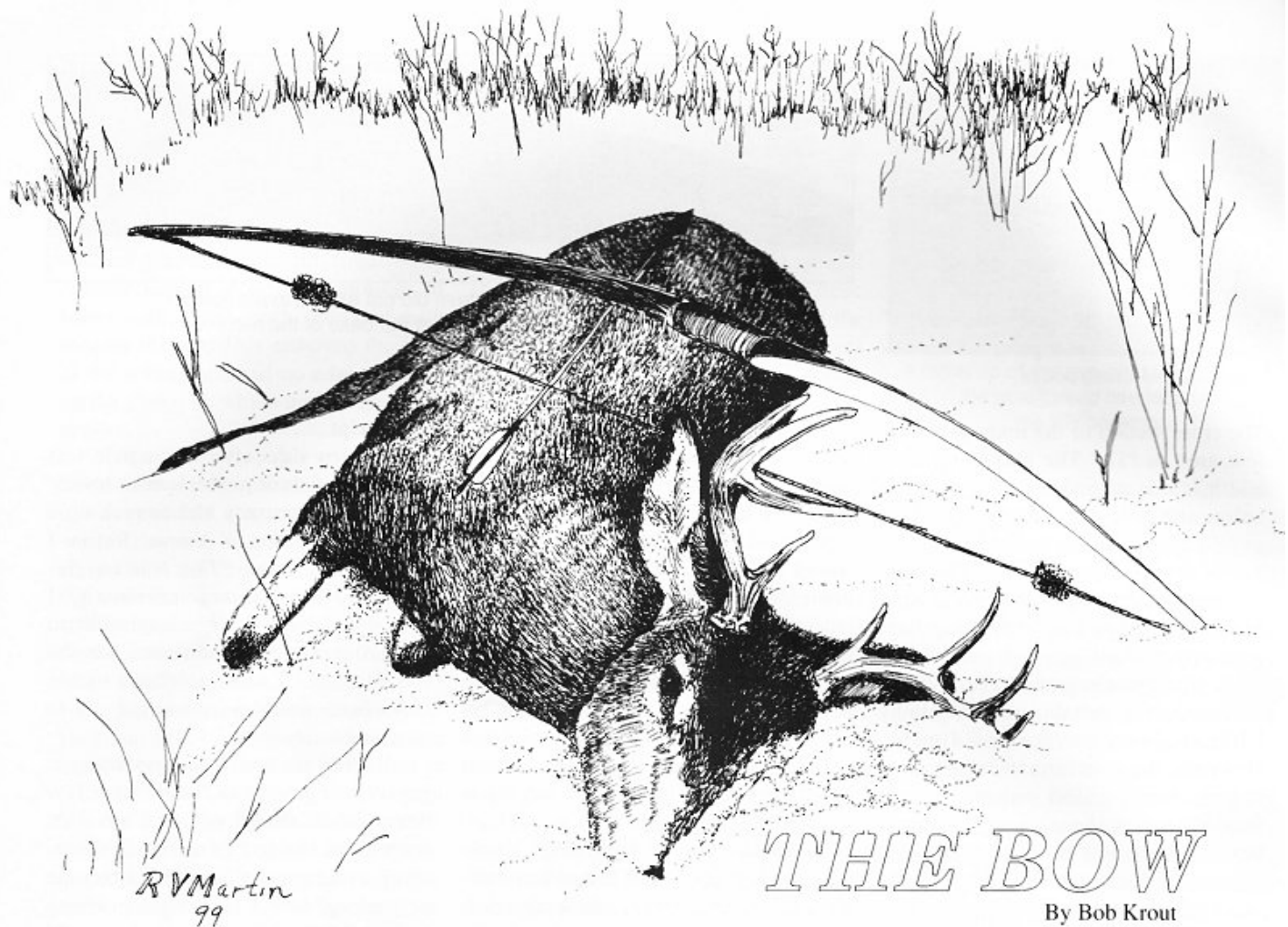
PostScript...

A few days after this article was completed, I went to see Jean to review the text for accuracy and to pick up a promised snapshot of Vinnie. Before I left, she said to me, "That bow you finished for Vinnie, I want you to have it." I protested, feeling that she might like to keep it as a special memento, but she was adamant. "I won't use it and I know that Vinnie would have wanted you to have it. Please take it."

I took the bow home and strung it, gently bringing it to full draw a few times. Its 25" draw length was too short for me and besides, I felt that this bow, being a true antique, should not become a "working" bow. I unstrung it and hung it on the wall of the den, next to an old hickory-backed lemonwood bow belonging to my wife, itself almost 50 years since it was made and now unused for a very long time. There it will remain, a reminder of the man who started to make it so long ago and also of a brief period in the history of archery—gone but not forgotten.

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2. Hickman, C.N.; Nagler, Forrest, and Klopsteg, Paul E. *Archery, the Technical Side*. National Field Archery Association. Limited edition reprint commissioned by Glen St. Charles. Published Lyon, Mississippi, Derrydale Press, 1992. pp. 85; 177.
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THE BOW

By Bob Krout

William looked at the splintered stick in his hand. A flood of emotions surged through him as he thought of the bow that was, and how much it had been a part of him. It had fed his family and offered protection from the bad things of the night—now it was gone, reduced to shattered pieces of firewood.

He had known this moment was coming from the time he had slipped along the stream and fallen on the rocks. He suffered only minor scrapes and bruises, but to the bow that was a different story. He had tried to slow his fall with his bow hand and in so doing the bow had gotten a gouge across the middle of the lower limb. Within a week tension along the back of the drawn bow had caused splinters to raise. He had glued and wrapped the injured section but the damage was too great.

Well, it can't be helped now. The bow must be replaced. William went to his little work shed and pulled two staves from the rafters. One was of black locust and the other of white ash. He had cut them in the spring of last year and placed them here to dry and season. Now they were ready.

He chose the stave of ash and replaced its locust brother to its storage place. His mind was already picturing the bow wrapped within the confines of the stave as he turned it this way and that, examining the direction of the grain and the contour of the stave itself. This will be a fine bow he thought. It will be a flat bow as long as me, fine and graceful; strong enough for taking game but easy to shoot and smooth to draw.

The first task was to rough out the shape of the bow-to-be. Using his iron hand axe and taking careful, controlled strokes, William slowly brought the bow to rough shape. He made the center of the bow at the center of the handle section so that the limbs would be of equal length. That way either limb could be the top limb depending on how the tillering proceeded. Slowly the bow began to emerge. Its length was going to be about 65 inches. The wide part of the limbs, on either side of the handle fadeouts, was going to be 1 1/2". It would hold this length out to midlimb and then taper to 1/2" at the tip. The limbs, just ahead of the fadeouts, would be just under 5/8" and taper down to about 1/4" at the tip. If his hand

was steady and all went well, it would tiller out to a draw weight of 50-55 lbs at his 27-inch draw length.

William took a box out from under his work bench and looked at his treasures. A steel draw knife, a rasp, and a second-cut file all handed down to him from his father. A craftsman from before the dark time when men could work and hunt like the free men they were. Now such things must be hidden from the touchie-feelies who ruled the country and worshipped the creations of the world and not the Creator. Not much trouble from them out here, he thought, but still it's not wise to flaunt the old ways.

Slowly, judiciously, he worked with his rasp and draw knife, bringing the wood closer to its final shape. When he was getting close he took out the big old folding knife and used its blade as a scraper, paring oh-so-thin shavings until, at last, the bow neared its completion. He cut and polished nocks in both limbs and strung the bow with his sinew string. He fit the loop over the top limb and tied the leather strip at the opposite end around the bottom nock, wrapping and tying the excess around the limb. One last look and he slowly braced the bow.

He measured the height of the string with his fist clenched and his thumb extended the ancient archers fistmele.

Carefully he examined the back for any signs of stress or splintering. The tiller was almost perfect, but there were still a few flat spots. He unstrung the bow and scraped and polished the limbs until both bent evenly and equally. When he was satisfied that all was well, he took out a piece of smooth deer antler and

arrows of dogwood and viburnum, with their wild turkey feathers, made a satisfying weight at his side. He laced on his armguard and stepped outside, searching for a target. There, that small clump of weeds. He carefully selected a blunt-tipped arrow from his quiver. He nocked the arrow and concentrated on his target as he drew the bow. The weight felt right, heavy enough but not too heavy. His thumb came back to that

spot on his cheekbone and the release was automatic. He held his position as the arrow sped away. The spinning feathers arced straight for that little clump of weeds and the arrow buried itself in their midst.

William looked down at his

new creation as he turned it in his hands. He could see no imperfection as he carefully checked, once again, for any stress or weakness. He could find none.

In his mind's eye William could see the future of this bow. He could almost smell the roasting game brought to the table by its power and grace. He could see the forests and fields where it would keep him company. Lastly he could see the faces of his ancestors as they looked down from the spirit world. They smiled in approval knowing that he was carrying on the tradition, safeguarding his knowledge for the time when the world would return to normal.

That time would come, for it was the way of nature. The ideas of foolish men may prevail for a while but, in the end, it is the way of nature that conquers and lasts. May it always be so.



A craftsman from before the dark time when men could work and hunt like the free men they were. Now such things must be hidden from the touchie-feelies who ruled the country and worshipped the creations of the world and not the Creator.

rubbed the bow all over, paying particular attention to the back, until it shone like a polished jewel.

The last step was to rub a finish of rendered oil and beeswax into the wood. He let each coat dry before applying the next, until he had four coats of protection to ward off rain and moisture.

He stepped back and looked at the bow. How beautiful it was! He took out another box, one containing more sinew for strings and the tanned hide of a

groundhog. He cut a strip of leather from the hide and wrapped it around the handle of the bow. Perfect! Now to try it out.

William picked up his worn and polished quiver and belted it around his waist. The

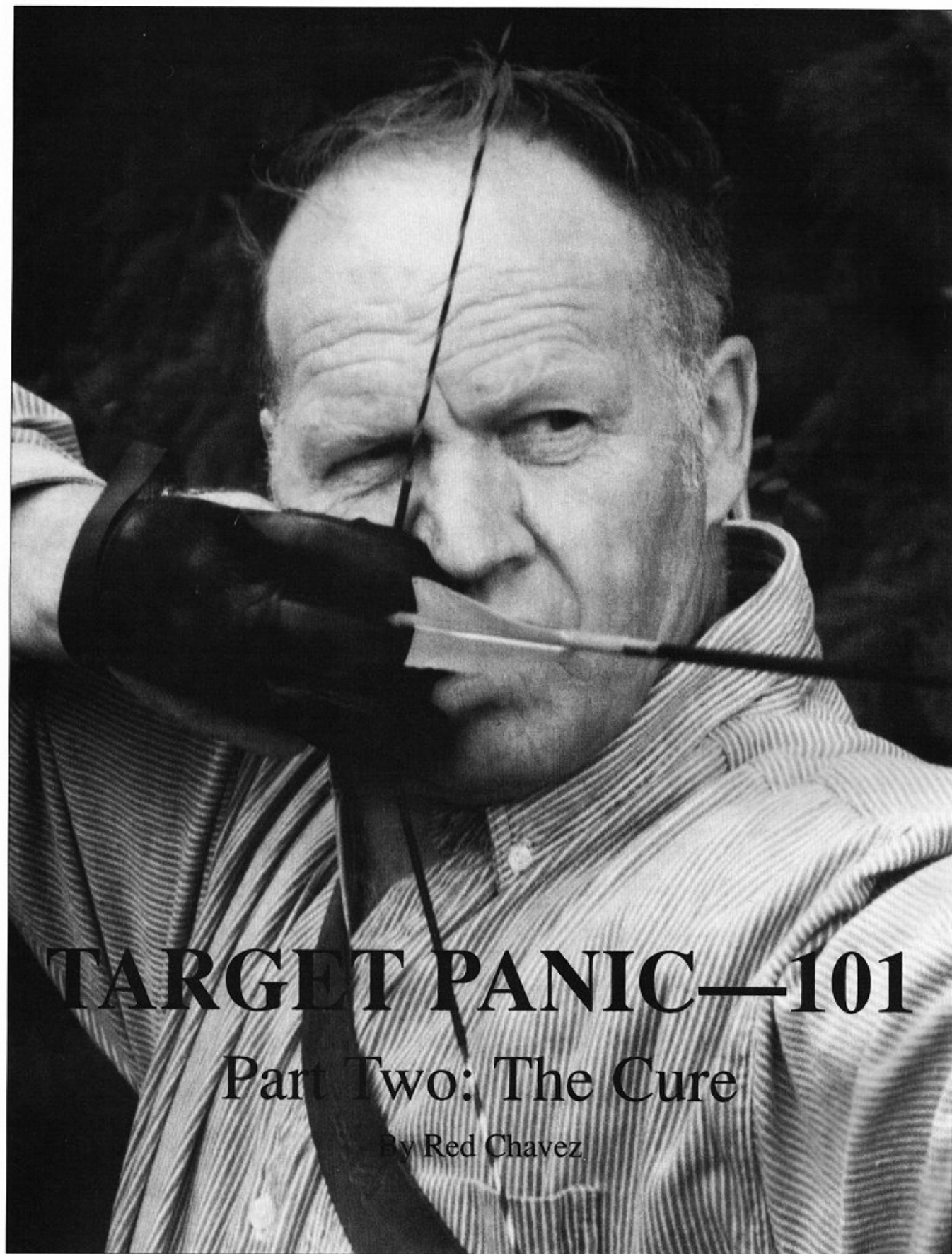


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TARGET PANIC—101

Part Two: The Cure

By Red Chavez

Previously, we decided that the major causes for the malady called “target panic” are anticipation, lack of confidence, and anxiety. But, before getting into those symptoms and the cures for them, let’s look at the “BIG” problem first. It seems that in today’s society we have to have a name for everything; and therein lies the first problem. As soon as you give your inadequacies a name, then you have a problem. Archery is 95% mental and 5% physical.

With those ratios, you are putting yourself at a great disadvantage to give your problems a name in the psychological realm. Most archers, in their search for excuses for a bad day at the range, are quick to give their problem a name to explain it away. And, WOW, what a universally accepted excuse: TARGET PANIC! Now, if you were to say to yourself and to your buddies, “*I had a bad day today and made some misjudgments and errors in form.*” Now the load is off your shoulders and you can commence to doing some form practice and some practice at tournament distances to bolster your confidence.

You could happily look forward to your next outing, forgetting the errors of the past. Sound too simple? Well, archery is 95% mental. If you show yourself that you can do it in regimented, good practice sessions, then tell yourself that you can do it and believe it, then when the time to do it comes, you will be ready and the shot will flow from you as natural as can be.

To give yourself such a formidable affliction as TARGET PANIC, then to believe it, is almost an insurmountable task to overcome. That is why so many say that it has taken

them years to solve their problem. So, my first advice is to NOT give your problem a name. Tell yourself that you are having a problem with form and if you know what that problem is, proceed to correct it. If you have no clue, get help from someone that you know is knowledgeable enough to see what you are doing and is willing to give you some advice as to how to correct your error in form.

It is wise to listen to others as they describe methods of correcting problems and to make a decision about your course of action on your own. Use your own good judgment and common sense, after hearing from others and

reading about your specific problem. Once the 95% mental aspect is cleared up, the 5% physical is easy as pie.

Again, something comes to mind that is starting to plague our shooting ranks. How can you have any confidence in what you are doing if you can’t hit what you are shooting at. You must practice, both distance and form—form first, and then distance as you work your way back to tournament or hunting distances. How do we do that? Instinctive shooting. After all, we are shooting traditional equipment.

Through the Internet, I have become aware that too many of us do not know what instinctive shooting is.

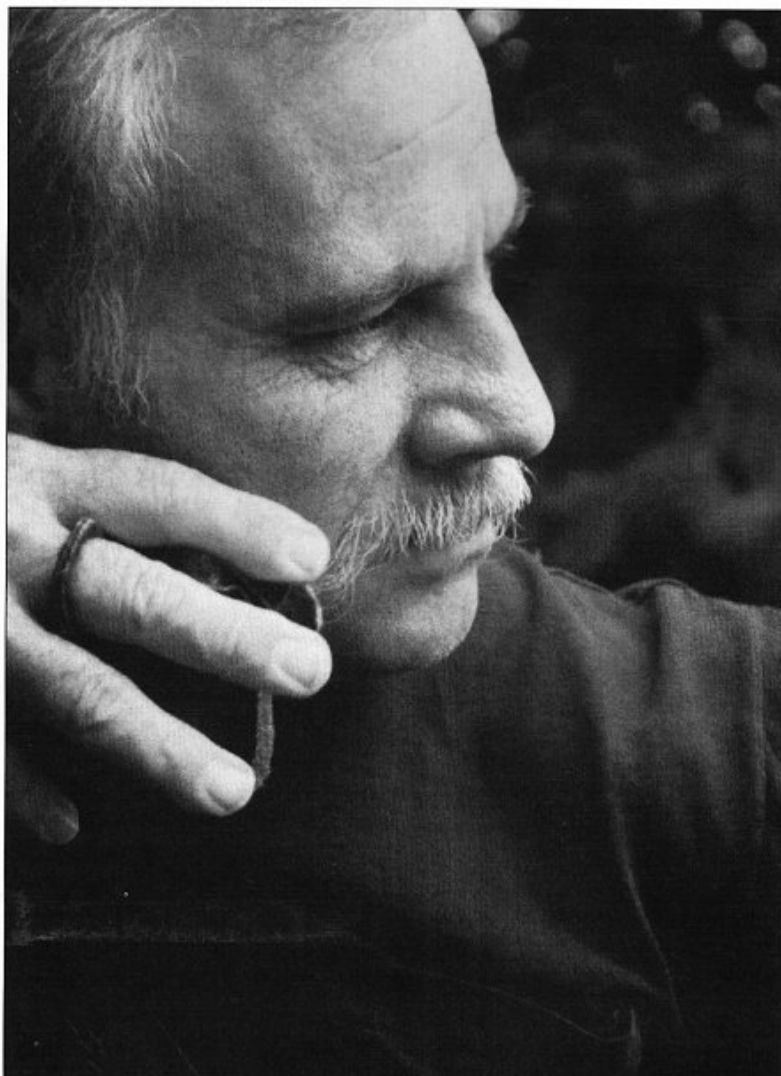


The author at full draw/anchor. When his finger touches his nose, he knows he is ready. Notice his head slightly bent into the shot.

Instinctive shooting is not picking up a bow and being able to hit everything you shoot at the first time around. Instinctive shooting is not shooting without practice. Instinctive shooting is shooting without conscious thought as to what you are doing. You are shooting instinctively if you perform the shot process without actively thinking about the shot process. You focus on the spot you want to hit, you draw the arrow and release without thinking about all of the steps that are ingrained into your mind; all the steps that are required to perform the shot. You cannot be an instinctive shot until you have taught yourself how to perform the shot process, AND then practiced that process until it becomes natural and "instinctive" for you to do.

Now that I have drifted far from my original intent, let's go back and discuss the subject of target panic. Anticipation and anxiety can be addressed as one problem, even though their descriptions are somewhat different. You'll find me repeating myself a lot in the next couple of paragraphs and I do that to get my point across to you. As in all other sports that require some form of physical conditioning, in archery, when a problem arises and persists to the point of affecting your performance on a regular basis, you must return to the basics, and recondition yourself to the proper sequences of events that lead to a flawlessly completed shot.

What am I saying? Practice form—until it comes out of your ears and spills out on the ground. Ask a really good shooter, and he will tell you that he practices form on a regular basis. Every time I go to practice, the first half of the session is form practice. Sometimes that is my whole practice session. Twenty feet from the target, arrow after arrow is shot slowly and deliberately, paying careful attention to the whole process. Each step is considered and thought out. When the form session is complete, I have the confidence to shoot at whatever distance that I want to practice at, knowing that all alignment is going to be near perfect. Alignment? In archery, when you have a spread in your arrow grouping on the horizontal plane, you have a form prob-



The author following a clean release. Notice how his hand stays in position as he "looks" the arrow into the "spot."

lem. When your form is correct, shot after shot will be on a vertical line and all that is needed is distance practice to correct for the highs and lows. I'll say it again, practice "form" first and often.

Anticipating the shot generally means that you are being quick to peek and see where the arrow is going, and in severe cases you peek long before the

shot is completed. Most of the time, this problem is not a regular recurring thing; it just pops up now and then when an important shot is about to happen. You lose control of the shot, lose concentration, and peek to see if you won.

Anxiety is more of the same, you are more concerned with the outcome of the thing that you are doing

To get control of the shot, you must break down the shot process into individual steps. Get to know each of them and know how you personally get through each step.



Dale Dye shows good full-draw form. His arm/arrow alignment is nearly perfect, and his bow hand has a nice, relaxed position. Both eyes are concentrated on the "spot." Notice the upright position of both the archer and the bow.

than with the process by which you must do it. When that moment arrives when you have to shoot a critical shot and all your hopes and self-esteem rests on one arrow, slow down and think the shot through before you take it. Don't rush it.

Pick your spot, hone in on it, and very methodically perform the "form" shot you do in practice sessions. Watch the "good guys" as often as possible and you'll see a definite sequence of events that leads to the completed shot. There is nothing haphazard about any shot they perform on the tournament scene; even at the practice butts, their shooting is methodical and precise. Their arrows may not always be in the middle of the "10" ring, but they will seldom be to the left or right.

You ask me, "What does this have to do with curing my target panic?" It's all about control; if you have control of the shot, you will make no mistakes. As long as the distances are reasonable, you'll shoot eights and tens with an occasional five (that's an error in form, not target panic).

To get control of the shot, you must break down the shot process into individual steps. Get to know each of them and know how you personally get through each step. Know how it feels to complete each step properly, then when you have a lapse in form, you will immediately know what you did wrong; then you can forget about that shot and continue to shoot without making that mistake again. Have fun, it's OK to laugh at jokes and kid around, but when you step up to that stake, get the "eye of the tiger" and fall into your shot routine that gets more instinctive as you perform it.

As we move on to "lack of confidence," you should be aware that a good deal of the confidence problem has been taken care of by your form practice. In most cases, form practice takes care of distances out to 20 yards, simply because most bows shoot flat to that distance and there is little or no hand-eye adjustment. So, by the time you have become instinctive in your form, you will also have become instinctive to almost 20 yards.

Why are we talking about distances? If you want to have the confidence in your ability to hit your target, be it in a hunting situation or on the 3-D range, you must practice at the distances you will be expected to shoot at. In a hunting situation, the choices are simple, you only shoot at animals within your effective range limitations. Example: For me, I won't shoot at a whitetail, from a treestand, that is more than 18 yards away from the base of the tree. Now, the tournament scene is a different matter. Depending on what part of the country you compete in, you must be very versatile and well practiced at a variety of ranges.

If you are on the west coast, where they are afraid of shooting up their targets and don't care if we traditional shooters want reasonable hunting distances to shoot at, you should be pre-

pared to shoot out to 70 yards. In this neck of the woods you can also expect longbows to have to compete with recurves.

If you are on the east coast, where IBO and ASA rules are more the standard, not only do longbows and recurves have separate classes, but you can expect to have separate shooting stakes for traditional shooters. Maximum shooting distances will be in the 25 to 31 yard range at these tournaments and you'll find a great deal more competitors vying for the coveted trophies. As you can see, there is a great need for standardization of traditional shooting distances, but since there is not, you must practice at the distances at which you might expect to shoot at. This will lead to a gradual build up of confidence in your ability. Don't feel distraught or incompetent if you come



Red at full draw. Notice the perfect arm/arrow alignment, relaxed grip on the bow, and his slightly "bent into the shot" form. Both eyes are concentrating on the "spot."



Results: After a year off from the tournament scene, W. Red Chavez and his trusty recurve captured the Northwest IBO Triple Crown. Dale Dye of Trails End Custom Recurves finished in second place.

away from a tournament with a low score because of excessive shooting distances for traditional equipment. Make your feelings known to the sponsors of the tournament, sometimes they don't realize that we traditional shooters want and need reasonable shooting distances.

As for me, I would rather drive the extra miles to shoot in Idaho, where they stick close to the IBO maximum distance of 31 yards, than to shoot in Montana, where most of the clubs are NFAA oriented and group recurves and

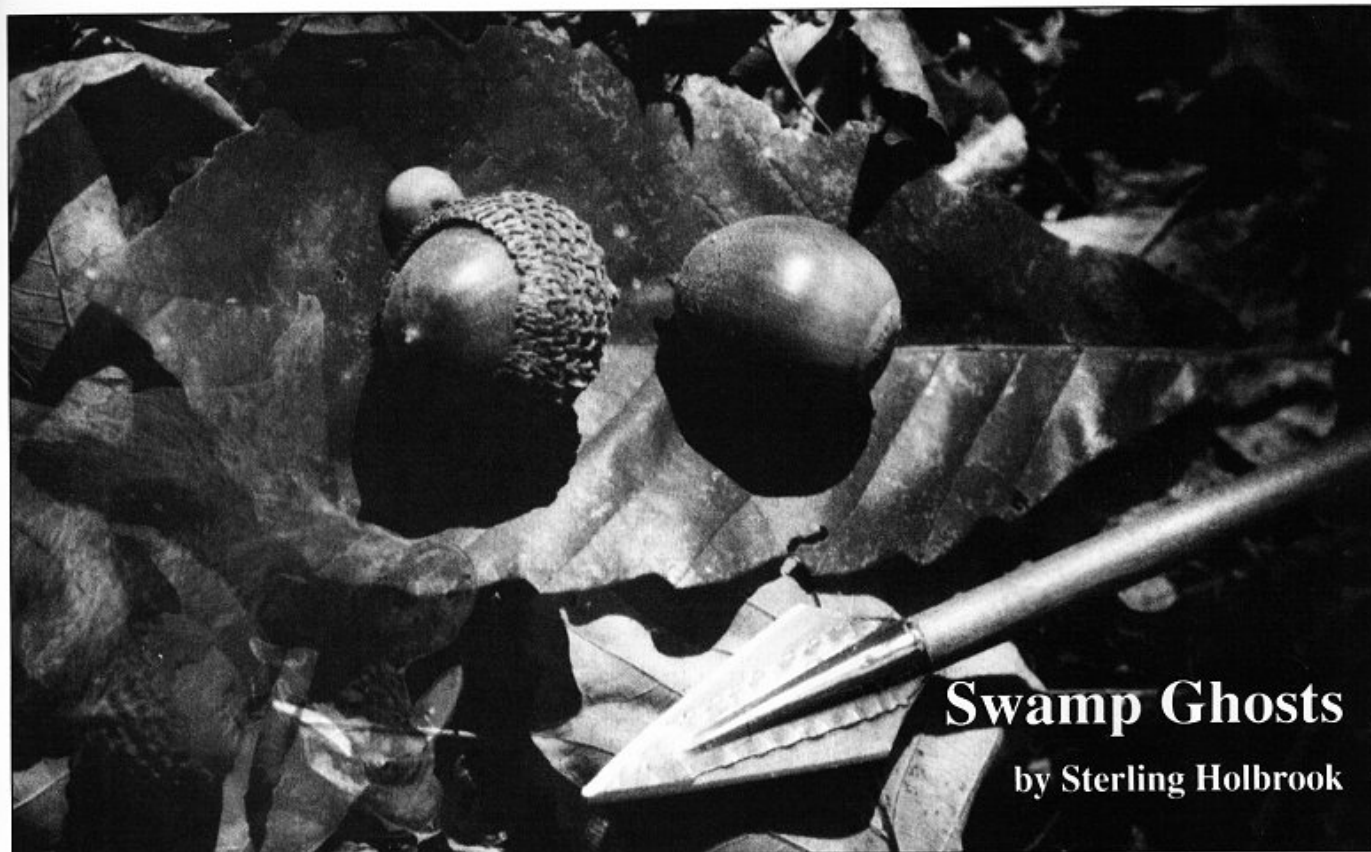
longbows in the same class, and there is not a separate traditional stake.

The easiest way to build confidence in distance shooting is to use the walk-back practice method. Shoot your first arrow at your preferred distance, say ten yards, then walk a few steps farther from the target and shoot another arrow. If you don't like the results, shoot another arrow from that distance, then take a few more steps and shoot again. Shoot no more than five or six arrows, then go pull them and start the process over, starting from a slightly different

distance. This type of practice is good for hand-eye coordination development and you'll soon see improvement in your arrow grouping at various distances.

And now we end this thing in the same manner that I began it, only this time it is at the last leg of the Northwest IBO Triple Crown in Spokane, Washington. The weather is beautiful and barring some major "brain fade," I can come away smelling like a winner. Remember, call your inadequacies by their simplest name; practice form often and then practice distance.





Swamp Ghosts

by Sterling Holbrook

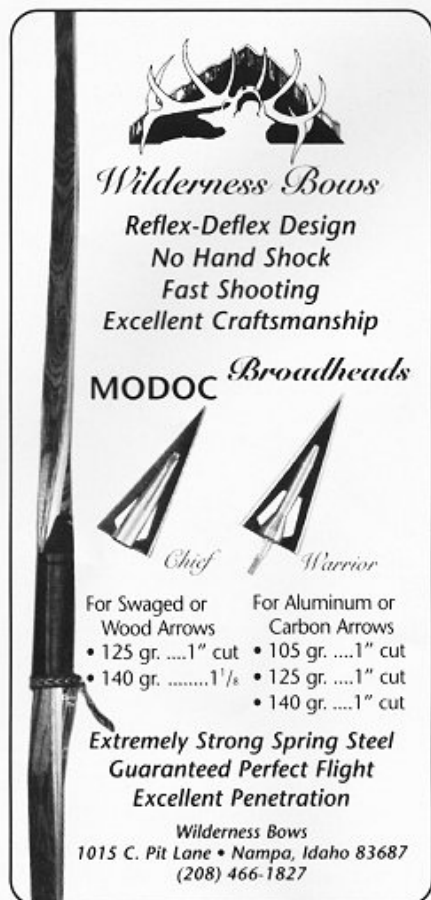
As the crescent moon sank into the dark pre-dawn, we made our way quickly into the swamp from the boat. Hurrying to get to the old beaver dam blocking the end of the slough while it was still dark, I tried to dismiss my thoughts concerning the temperature and the cottonmouths. It was obvious that snakes would be out. As the weather was warm and the winds calm, arriving at our hunt area in time for our scent to dissipate was imperative. I knew that our only chance of success was to catch our prey crossing the heavily used beaver dam in the gray dawn light as they returned to the swamp from the acorn flats.

My hunting partner and I were after one of the wariest animals an archer can hunt. An animal with hearing and scent detection equal to that of the whitetail. He is often accused of having poor eyesight, but this is only at a distance. Up close, under 20 yards, he can see as well as the deer, and like the turkey, he doesn't hang around to see what you are up to. He is very hard to pattern and never seems to stay anywhere long unless artificially fed or baited with corn.

Even when located, he travels at a fast trot and is in constant motion while feeding, which makes picking a time to shoot difficult for an archer. If he does stop, it is usually in heavy, arrow-deflecting cover. His only true weaknesses are a love of corn bait, his strong odor which can be noticeable down wind, and at times, his loud feeding habits. At other times he may appear like a soundless black ghost feeding noiselessly out of the thickest of cover. Who would believe this swamp ghost could be the lowly hog, an animal either loved or hated by modern-day hunters.

Taking a stand in the thick grass 15 yards from the old dam, I was set up for what I perceived to be a quartering away shot as a pig came off the dam. Krista, my wife and hunting partner, was set up farther up the slough as the hogs might come around the end of the beaver pond which fed into a back water lake off the Tombigbee river in Alabama. Tracks, beds, dung, and the muddy splattered trail and grass we had found yesterday indicated we had finally located a hot spot. The smell of hogs was strong, almost overpowering. I was sure they would be back.

Tracks alone mean little when hunting hogs, unless you see the animal making them. Hogs are big travelers and may cover miles at night, maybe returning to a favored bed-



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ding area and maybe not. Good hog sign means lots of fresh droppings, strong hog scent, and thick bedding cover. Many times hunters locate heavy rooting and droppings under oaks day after day but never catch sight of the hogs. The reason for this is once they are subjected to hunting pressure, they can put an old buck to shame with their ability to become "nocturnal."

Actually, when baited in the absence of hunting pressure, hogs will lose some of their wariness, but then so will deer and turkey. When hunted in mountainous terrain or heavy swamps, where he knows he is hunted and is pursued over a wild food source, he is a superior game animal—not to mention excellent eating!

We are not talking about "wild boar" kept in a pen all week and turned loose right before the "hunters" arrive to bring it to bay with dogs to collect a "trophy." When the archer has to figure out

what the hogs are feeding on and when they are there, and then out smart them, he begins to appreciate the intelligence of the quarry. Hunting with dogs or bait, where legal, is certainly an option and many times the only option if you want to guarantee pork.

Along and between the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers in southwest Alabama where we were hunting today, hogs have roamed the river swamps and been hunted with the bow and arrow since DeSoto came through in the middle 1500s. Most biologists today curse hogs and want to see them eradicated since they are not a native species, but if an animal has been hunted for 450 years and is still doing OK, maybe he belongs. Actually thanks to DeSoto, hogs pre-date white settlers by about 150 years in this region. Many later hogs have mixed with the early Spanish stock which escaped. The French came in the late 1600s then the English, and off-and-on the Spanish. The Americans moved into the area in the early 1800s bringing their own droves of free ranging hogs, some of which also escaped into the deep swamps. The arriving settlers found the Choctaw already feasting on pork and areas named in Choctaw for the pigs which spread after DeSoto and other early Spanish explorers lost stock.

Many turkey and deer hunters agree with the biologist and would eradicate them if they could, for hogs do compete with both game species for food. I think a change in the way most modern hunters kill game is the main reason for this complaint. Unfortunately few hunters, in the South, whether rifle or bow hunting, actually hunt over trails or natural food sources in the woods anymore, but rather plant food plots which are hunted from shooting houses. Also, baiting with corn and sweet potatoes is very popular, although it is still illegal in many states. Any hog within ten miles will likely find a pile of corn, or a food plot and create havoc. Deer certainly can not compete with hogs over a pile of corn. Hunting to me is just that, hunting, not just killing, and since I do not hunt over food plots or bait, that hog's "sin" does not bother me too much. In fact I chuckle every time I hear someone in Alabama complaining about the hogs eating all of their illegal corn bait that was intended for deer.

Hogs are all descended from European and Central Asian stock and

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The business-end of a long-nosed wild boar.

now inhabit much of the southern United States, parts of California, Central and South America, as well as islands all over the Pacific and Caribbean. In many areas they do cause quite significant ecological damage, though new studies conducted in the Black Forest, a famous wild hog area in Europe, indicate that their rooting in some instances may actually be beneficial to the environment. The rooting is similar to tilling the soil, and in some instances allows young plants to break through, keeping the forest floor from becoming sterile.

Some foresters in the southern U.S. aren't too happy with pigs due to this fact and to the damage to the small pines planted in plantations. They aren't interested in a diverse system of plants-only, mono-culture pines. As I hate to see our diverse hardwood pine

forest converted into tree farms, I'll pull for the pigs on that one too.

The first hog sign I ever saw was on my first deer hunt 40 years ago high on the ridges overlooking Warwomen Creek in extreme northeast Georgia. My father had relented and carried

me on this hunt when I was ten. We were hunting with a friend, an old mountain man named Kermit Dye. His tales of the ridgerunner hogs, the fresh rootings, and the skull full of bristling tusks hooked me on the animals for life. Certain mountains of Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina still have good hog hunting.

The area Krista and I were hunting today was certainly good hog habitat. The beaver pond and slough offered heavy grass cover for bedding with an abundant supply of swamp chestnut and overcup oaks close by. The deer didn't seem to care for the swamp overcup due to the higher tannin content and abundant supply of willow and swamp chestnut oaks in the area. Hogs love overcups and the fact that they will grow in the wettest habitat of all acorns along cypress sloughs and grown over beaver ponds spells good hog hunting.

Hunters are usually wasting their time looking for hogs in the open woods once the hogs know they are hunted. Nervous hogs in particular like heavy cover such as briars, thick grass, or palmettos. The heavy rooting out in the open woods are made at night.

This was just the situation we were hoping for this morning. I felt certain the hogs would cross the beaver dam to get to heavy bedding cover on my side of the dam. In the faint gray light of pre-dawn I heard the rustle of leaves from an approaching animal, and thought "not yet." It was still too dark for a good shot at a black hog. The noise



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was only an old possum on his way home with a belly full of persimmons. I wondered if he had left any and if any deer would be coming from the big heavily loaded tree I knew was that direction.

The day was coming alive with the squawking herons and squealing wood ducks. Amid the fluttering wings it seemed something bolted from the dam, but I could not be sure. Scanning around the deep backwater lake which the beaver pond flowed into I caught sight of what I took to be another of the numerous coots which were swimming nearby. This coot was swimming towards my side of the slough and as I watched it the coot turned into a pigs nose and ears. As I stared in a moments disbelief, the hog made the bank and quickly disappeared in the shoreline grass downwind of me.

It wasn't the first time a porker had made a "fool" of me. His excellent nose and the still, damp air had saved him from the barbecue. As we laughed over the escape back at camp the discussion turned serious. Would the pigs win this hunt? Would we have to settle for roast venison? Oh well, that's certainly not a bad consolation meal and that's why people say they are going "fishing" and "hunting" instead of "catching" and "killing." Hunting truly wild hogs is never a guaranteed affair.

While the pigs won that round we finished the season with several nice hogs. One key to success is the use of heavy hunting shafts tipped with extra sharp cut-on-impact broad heads. A nice 200-pound boar with 3 inch tusks top and bottom had been hit earlier by a modern bowhunter with a light shaft and modular head with insignificant penetration in the rib area. The boar dropped with full penetration from a heavy ash shaft from a 65 pound osage self bow.

A hog has plenty of "guts," literally, so be certain all shots are far enough forward to get the lung area. A double-lung or liver-shot hog will go down quick, but a one-lung hit or gut-shot hog may go miles. A boar's shoulders seem to set further back on the rib cage than a deer and makes a good angling forward shot even more essential. Hog backbones dip sharply from the neck after joining the torso leaving a lot of muscle above the backbone, so keep shots low. All of this combined with a fatty layer causing skimpy blood trails make recovering hogs difficult at times.



Stalking within bow range of mature boars is not something to be taken lightly—they are fast, agile, and well armed.

Give a hit hog plenty of time and stalk each thicket carefully because additional shots are possible. It is quite common for injured hogs to hold up in the first available thick cover if not pushed.

While I have always believed in an exiting arrow, on hogs that does not always insure much of a blood trail due to the fat and thick skin or shield. With heavy shafts, a large head such as the Snuffer, big Magnus, or Zwickey Delta are good choices. Shots are generally close so don't be over bowed. Arrow placement is always the most important

factor, and Krista has shot through hogs with her 46-pound longbow—with 650 grain arrows and Magnus two-blade heads.

A little research and a few phone calls will generally turn up a public hunting area in the South that has a huntable population of hogs. All you have to do is out smart the "Ghost of the Swamp" to have your own barbecue.



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Abundant Black Flies and Scarce Caribou

by Reg Darling

I began planning a Quebec-Labrador caribou hunt with my son, Oren, when he was 13. He was 15 when we finally headed north. In the beginning, it was a personal endeavor that I was eager to share. As our plans materialized and Oren matured, it became something more—both a gift that I wanted to give to him, and something that already belonged to him as a fully participating partner. The greatest gift was given to both of us, by the land, in the form of living experience—fully felt and deeply shared.

I've kept a journal for many years. On the hunt, I concluded each day writing by flashlight.

Monday, 8/17/98: We rose at 2:30 a.m., showered, checked out, and caught the shuttle to the airport at 3:30. In the hotel bar last night, waiting for the plane, and on the flight to Caniapiscau we enjoyed the good-humored company and shared excitement of a group of hunters from Toledo, on their way to a self-guided hunt at another camp. They're good guys, we felt at ease among them.

We were in camp by lunchtime and hunting by early afternoon. The rain shifted back and forth, from mist to downpour, and the black flies attacked in vicious legions. Oren got bit up badly, but that did little to diminish his eagerness. I'm feeling discouraged, even though I know such pessimism is ridiculous on the first afternoon of the hunt. In fact, I did see a caribou—a cow 300 yards away, swimming the river.

The country is much harsher and more beautiful than I had expected. I don't know how to describe it in sufficient detail to render even a semi-clear glimpse. I'm exhausted.

Tuesday, 8/18/98: Morning sun quickly gave way to

hard wind and cold rain. Oren and I stood in the places Marc (our guide) recommended until 11:00, when I took a short walk. I found a heavily used complex of trails leading to the shore, with better wind, so we moved there and chose stands 75 yards apart.

Among my wandering thoughts in the hours of stillness was a sudden pang of poignant love for the gentle woods of northwest Pennsylvania.

At 3:00 I'd been feeling chilled for an hour, so I went to Oren and suggested we explore the island to warm up. We were approaching the peak of the high ground, talking, with Oren lagging a short distance behind me. Oren and I must work on breaking our habit of walking with me in the lead. It's an ingrained pattern left over from when he was much younger we lapse into it without thinking.

Everything is soaked. The cutting edges of our broadheads show traces of rust. When I squeeze the leather handle of my bow, water pours down the lower limb. Oren's arrow rest came loose, so we duct taped it in place.

Wednesday, 8/19/98: Today Marc dropped us off a short distance downstream, near a crossing area on the north side of the river. We took stands on heavily used trails, 250 yards apart. The warm sun we had wished for summoned ravenous hordes of black flies.

Around 1:00 Oren sounded the distress signal on his whistle—the first time either of us have ever used it. Black flies had gone up his sleeves, inside his shirt, and then into his bug net. Patches of the netting were clotted with blood. He was hanging on, but close to panic. We ran up to the bare, rocky ridge top, where the breeze and lack of vegetation gave

us some respite. I helped him rearrange his bug net and tied his sleeves snug to his wrists.

After we ate our sandwiches and apples, Oren was ready to try again. This time, though, I kept him in sight. We took positions higher on the ridge, where we could glass the opposite hillside and riverbank, figuring we'd have ample time to set up an ambush if we saw something coming. But then the breeze died down and the bugs from hell renewed their assault. Once again they got inside Oren's clothing, and from there, into his bug net.

We hiked back to the drop off point and waded out into the river, hoping Marc would spot us. He picked us up a few minutes later.

When we got back to camp, Oren pulled his headnet off and I gasped with shock. His face and neck were a swollen mass of bug bites. His ears were encrusted with dried blood. I gave him Benadryl and helped him clean up with alcohol wipes.

Everyone is feeling discouraged. We're seeing no game, and yet today, they flew in three hunters from another camp—because this is supposed to be a hot spot! The outfitter told us we'd be in a camp with four other bowhunters, but instead, we're with six gunners. They're good people, but the only one who

speaks English well is a rifle hunter from Pennsylvania who's so bitter about his lack of "success," he's blind to the wonders all around him. It's difficult for me to sympathize when even today's ordeal was not enough to dampen Oren's enthusiasm—his spirit is so lifted by the beauty of this land. A little conversation with an English-speaking bowhunter would be most welcome right now.

Thursday, 8/20/98: This morning Marc took us to a rocky hill overlooking the rapids west of the island—a beautiful place with spectacular views of vast countryside.

I took charge of applying Oren's insect repellent. He's very conscious (and rightly so) of the dangers of modern chemicals—I think he was going too light on the DEET. Marc gave him disposable surgical gloves, which we secured to his shirtsleeves with duct tape. We taped his bug net in place, as well. Marc said he'd come back to check on us at noon and left a shotgun for us to signal with, if we needed him.

Oren chose a spot near the first big crossing Marc had told us about. When I moved on toward the second crossing, I saw an antler sticking up behind a clump of low brush. I executed a beautiful stalk, adjusting my angle of approach to accommodate the wind, utilizing all of the available cover. With quickened pulse, I leaned out from the last stunted spruce at 18 yards, ready to shoot. . . and saw the rotting carcass of a wolf-killed caribou!

With blue skies and cool breezes, the hours of stillness and watching passed with surprising speed. At noon I went back to Oren's stand, and in a short while we heard Marc's boat motor.

Oren didn't sleep well last night due to a combination of his bug bites and a veritable chorus of snoring. Tired and starting to feel discouraged, he chose to ride back with Marc and hunt a crossing near the camp, so he could return whenever he pleased.

I asked Marc to ferry me across the river, so I could still hunt my way back along the shore. I lied. I was restless, enthralled by the beauty of the land, and coming to grips with the realization that I probably won't take a caribou on this trip. I'd just like to see a few.

As soon as Marc and Oren dropped me off and pulled away from

shore, I headed straight up the ridge. Following caribou trails, I passed through several different zones of vegetation before arriving at a rocky hilltop overlooking a vast panorama of rugged hills and small lakes. As I stood savoring the wind, a wave of reverent awe swept over me.

I started down the other side, but quickly remembered that no one knew my whereabouts. I returned to the top, went parallel to the river for awhile, and angled down to the camp. Along the way I flushed several ptarmigan, foolish birds that would flush only to land in the open on a low branch, a few yards away. I also saw many of the handsome, fearless, jay-like birds Oren refers to as "our friends" because their antics have so often made us smile amidst hardship.

Now, as I write, I realize that today I finally saw and felt this land, its harsh beauty, and the perfect economy of its lushness. The hunt I'd all but given up on now seems possible again.

The wilderness hones my senses to amazing clarity. I smell the plants I brush up against as I walk and notice the smallest nuances of sound and color. So, too, with my emotions. I see Oren suffering and am near tears, while the immense beauties of the land summon moments of sheer epiphany. Is that why we really come here—to feel ourselves so intently?

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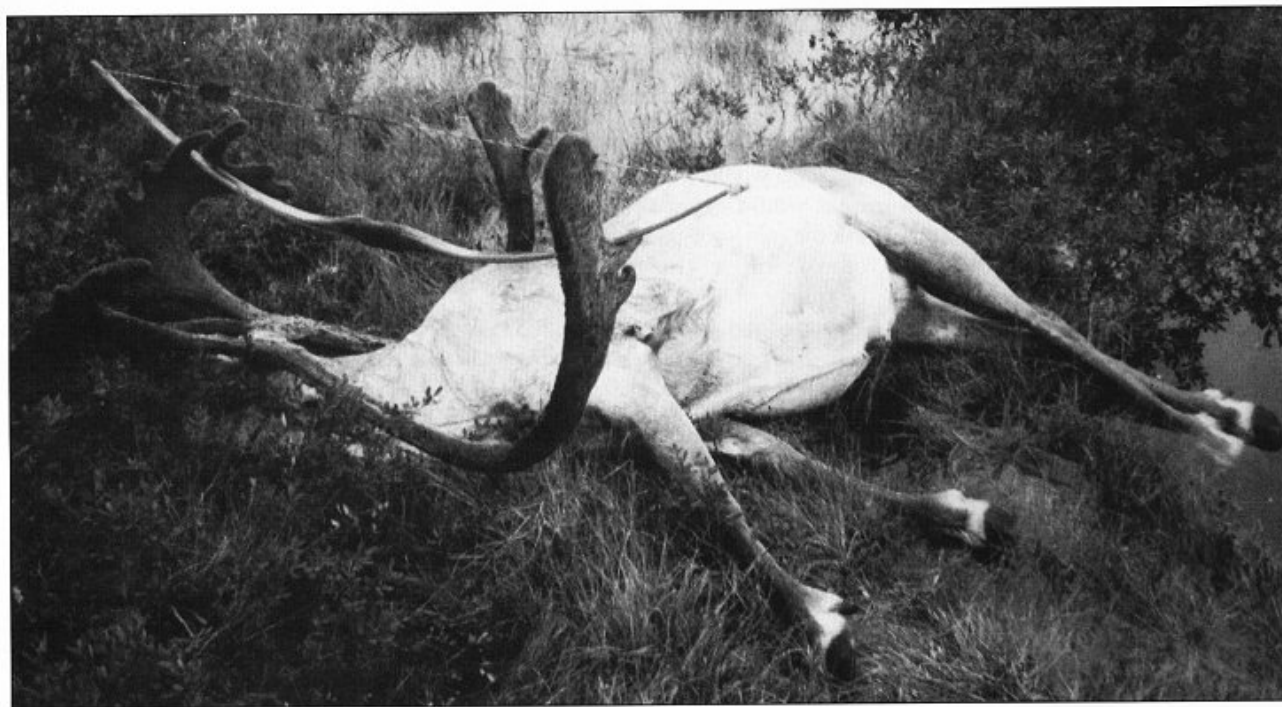
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One of the newcomers killed a cow on the island today.

Friday, 8/21/98: I rose with renewed eagerness this morning despite the fitful sleep afforded by the snoring of one of the newcomers—a pitch and volume somewhere between a helicopter and a chain saw. They're flying out this morning, so there is hope for tonight.

We loaded our gear in the boat and set off for the island. On the way we saw Marcetta coming back the other channel signaling that he'd seen a caribou swimming toward the island. Marc yelled, "Get bow ready! Get bow ready!" The boat was bouncing wildly in the waves, with showers of spray flying over the bow as we rushed for the island and I struggled to string my long-bow. It wouldn't fit sideways in the boat, so I had to hold it above the seat to step on the stringer. Gripping it with both hands, I raised it chin high while Oren slipped the upper string loop into place.

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Genesis 1:1 John 3:16 Matthew 5:16

When the boat scraped bottom, Oren and I scrambled out. Within minutes we were standing over a bull that had fallen to my adrenaline charged barrage of arrows - three 160 grain Grizzlies in an eight inch circle on his upper chest. It was a mature bull, all white. He wasn't a trophy in any official sense—his main beams weren't heavily palmated, the

back points were mere knobs, etc. but he was magnificent. He smelled just like the lichens that were his staple food. His flesh will nourish our bodies and I will honor his spirit in my life.

After we caught our breath and took pictures, Oren headed for the crossing area on the northwest corner of the island while Marc and I began the quartering, a very different process than field dressing a whitetail and dragging it out of the woods to butcher. Assisting Marc was a lesson I hope will serve me well on some future adventure.

Marc took the meat and rack back to camp and I hiked upriver along the shore to meet Oren. We spent the rest of the day on the island. A steady, hard wind came out of the northwest, bringing brief rainsqualls hourly. We saw no more caribou, but enjoyed a day full of subtle wonders. The island is a very special place. I feel an affinity for it akin to my favorite places back home.

Oren has handled hardship with courage and good cheer. He's far tougher than his gentleness allows you to readily see. I've learned to respect him in a new way.

Saturday, 8/22/98: This morning Marc led us, on foot, downstream from the camp to a heavily worn crossing area. He pointed to a clump of stunted spruce trees and said, "I bline jou here.

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Your son come wit me."

Again the weather changed constantly, squalls rolling through hourly and a cold wind that kept the black flies at bay. It was a pleasure just to watch the continually changing light and sky, munching on blueberries and being visited by fearless birds. I saw no caribou, but I didn't really want to kill another unless Oren got one.

Marc took Oren up a mountain, down the other side and back by another route, at a vigorous pace, in search of caribou to spot and stalk. They saw none. After they returned to my stand in the early afternoon, Oren went to the blind along the beach west of the camp alone. I took a walk and did some stump shooting before joining him there. When I arrived he was shivering from the heavy sweat he'd worked up on his hike with Marc, but still hoping for an eleventh-hour shot. Late in the afternoon a fierce squall approached from the northwest, so we scurried back to camp ahead of it.

Talking in the shelter of the bunkhouse, we both realized that the hunt was over. Horizontal rain pelted the windows; we were just glad not to be in

a boat. We've had boat rides here with the waves so high that the prop would be out of the water on the crest of each wave. The boat would pause for an instant and then plunge into the trough; the prop would catch water again and the boat would scoot forward to be lifted once again to a pause. There are white caps on the river now and it feels good to be snugly sheltered.

A dinnertime conversation with Marcetta:
Me: *What are those gray birds that look something like blue jays?*

Marcetta: *Those are called gray jays.*

Me: *What are those aromatic shrubs with ovoid leaves - they smell almost like pine?*

Marcetta: *We call that brush.*

Me: *What are those red berries that grow close to the ground?*

Marcetta: *We call those red berries.*

Me: *Are they edible?*

Marcetta: *I eat 'em.*

Me: *Does the island have a name?*

Marcetta: *No, let's call it Oren's Island from now on.*

Sunday, 8/23/98: The float plane flight out this morning was a bit rough, lots of turbulence. Oren was starting to get queasy as we arrived at Caniapiscaw. We're both feeling the cumulative fatigue we've ignored until now.

On the flight to Montreal, after a week of hearing mostly French, it's a pleasure to be amidst the loose, sometimes happily vulgar, camaraderie of American hunters. Despite the confused values and collective guilts of our homeland, we have found our way to a simple, open generosity of spirit that I cherish.

The group from Toledo had a tough hunt. There were no caribou seen at their camp. A couple of them were flown, on a one-day excursion, to another camp where they took caribou, so at least they're bringing home some meat. Spirits are high anyway and we swap stories through most of the flight.

As the tales subside, my thoughts begin to pull me toward home—to my wife, the cats, the creek-side, green-gold sunlight filtered through leafy trees. . .

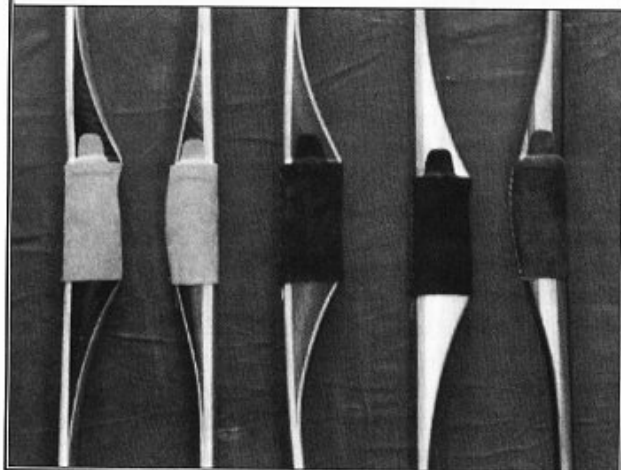


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Product Spotlight

HOWARD HILL CENTENNIAL BOW

In commemoration of the **100th year of Howard's birth**, we are making a limited edition Howard Hill bow. Since Howard was born in November 1899, orders for this bow will only be taken during the month of November, 1999. We will start taking orders on November 1, 1999, and stop taking orders on November 30th. The bow will be limited by the number of orders placed within this 30 day period.



The commemorative bow will be made of five bamboo laminations, backed with dark green fiberglass, faced with white fiberglass, and will feature a beautiful myrtlewood riser. The bow's shape and handle design will match Howard's 1950s style bows as closely as possible. Specifications regarding bow length, bow weight, and draw length will be taken for each bow.

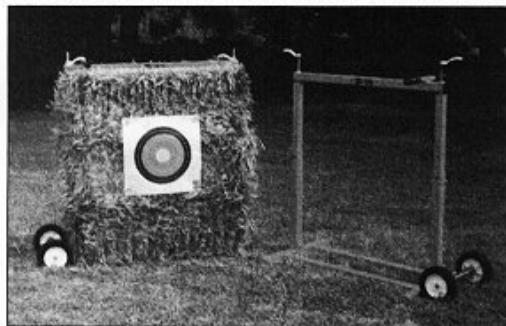
Each of these very special bows will be individually numbered, and could be part of a very limited edition, so mark your calendar now to contact us in November to place your order. Again, no orders for these unique **Howard Hill Centennial** bows will be taken before or after November 1999! \$480.00 + \$10 Postage. For more information, contact **Howard Hill Archery**, 54 North Canyon Dr., Hamilton, MT 59840, (406) 363-1359 Fax: (406) 375-0228.

* * * * *

If you are an archery enthusiast, chances are good that you have used hay bales as a target butt. Hay usually works pretty well, but let's face it, hay is for horses, unless coupled with the **BALEBINDER**, a new product by T.M.C.

The **BALEBINDER** tightly clamps hay bales together in stacks of three providing a large 36" x 42" arrow stopping surface to which target faces can be easily attached.

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Unlike most other target butts, this system is portable, featuring integrated wheels for ease of movement similar to a furniture dolly. There is no need to go to the manufacturer for core replacement. Fully adjustable, portable, arrow-stopping power can be as close as a stop at your local feed store. Suggested retail is \$129.

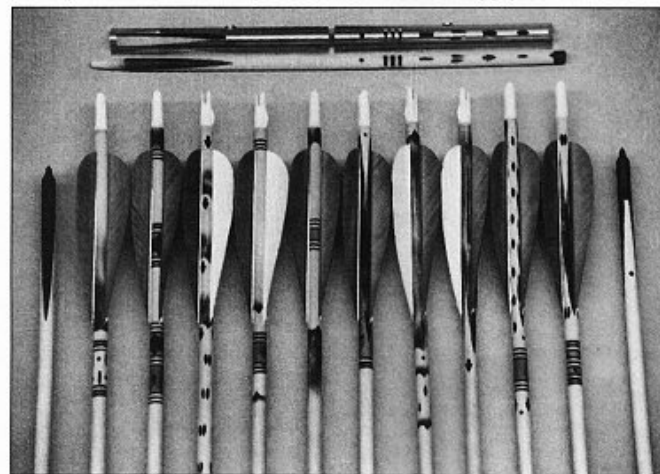
Contact T.M.C., PO Box 1174, McAlester, OK 74502-1174; (918) 260-5748; balebinder@hotmail.com; www.kavts.tec.ok.us/~compapp/Archery/balebinder.htm

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Jagermeister's **FLAME CRESTER™** consists of two brass templates with nine patterns including deer print, arrowhead, oval, dot, rectangle, smooth-end, v-notch, three-ring burn, and faux footing. The only supplies required are a small propane torch (available at your local hardware store) and a damp cloth to cool the templates. Nothing else is needed.

Jagermeister Archery Products has been manufacturing premium leather archery products for 22 years. All Jagermeister products use only the finest quality materials available and are hand assembled with great attention to detail.

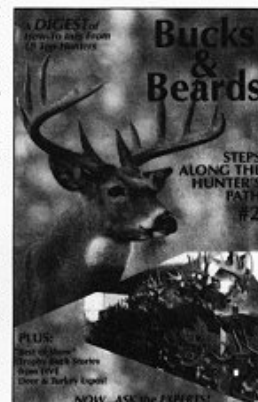
For more information, contact **Jagermeister Archery Products** at (816) 537-8880 or visit them on the web at www.jager-archery.com

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BUCKS AND BEARDS, Volume 2 in the *Steps along the Hunter's Path* series published by Target Communications, has just been released. It's an easy-reading 100-page paperback with a wide variety of how-to hunting chapters—almost exclusively on white-tail deer and turkey, from 18 well-known hunting experts. It also includes *Black Bears from A to Z*, from a traditional archer we all know as "Bear Crazy."

Some of the chapters include the following topics: Why one stand is never enough; Lessons learned from world-record bucks; Two experts talk scent and odor control; Treestand placement advice; Out-foxing super gobblers; Where most turkey hunters make mistakes, etc.

BUCKS AND BEARDS, Part 2, is available for \$9.95 plus \$2.75 shipping/handling from Target Communications, 7626 W. Donges Bay Rd., Mequon, WI 53092, (800) 324-3337, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri. www.deerinfo.com



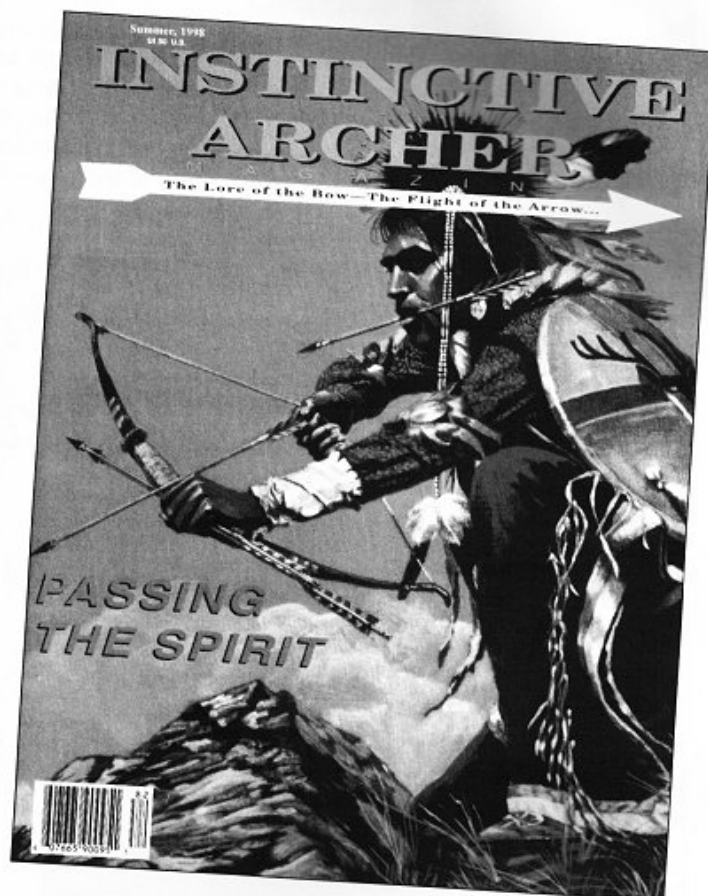
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Bow Profiles

By Bob Martin

Find a bow that fits you, "feels right" and hits where you point it, and you will be a happy camper.

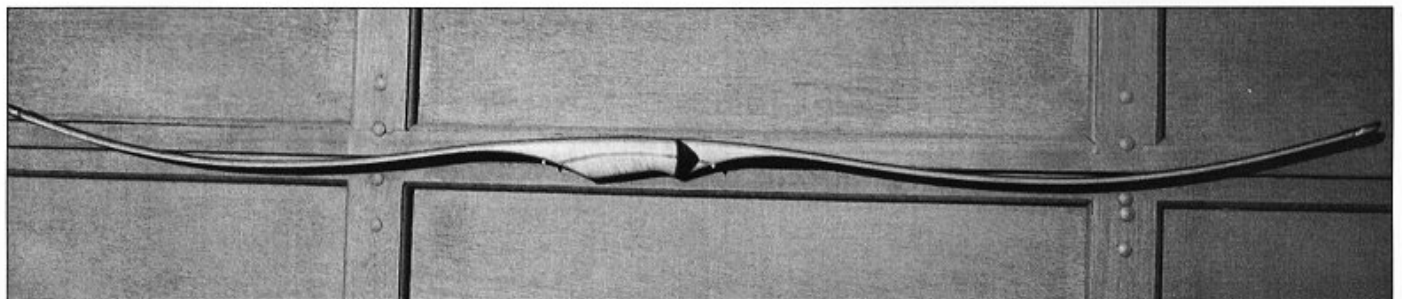
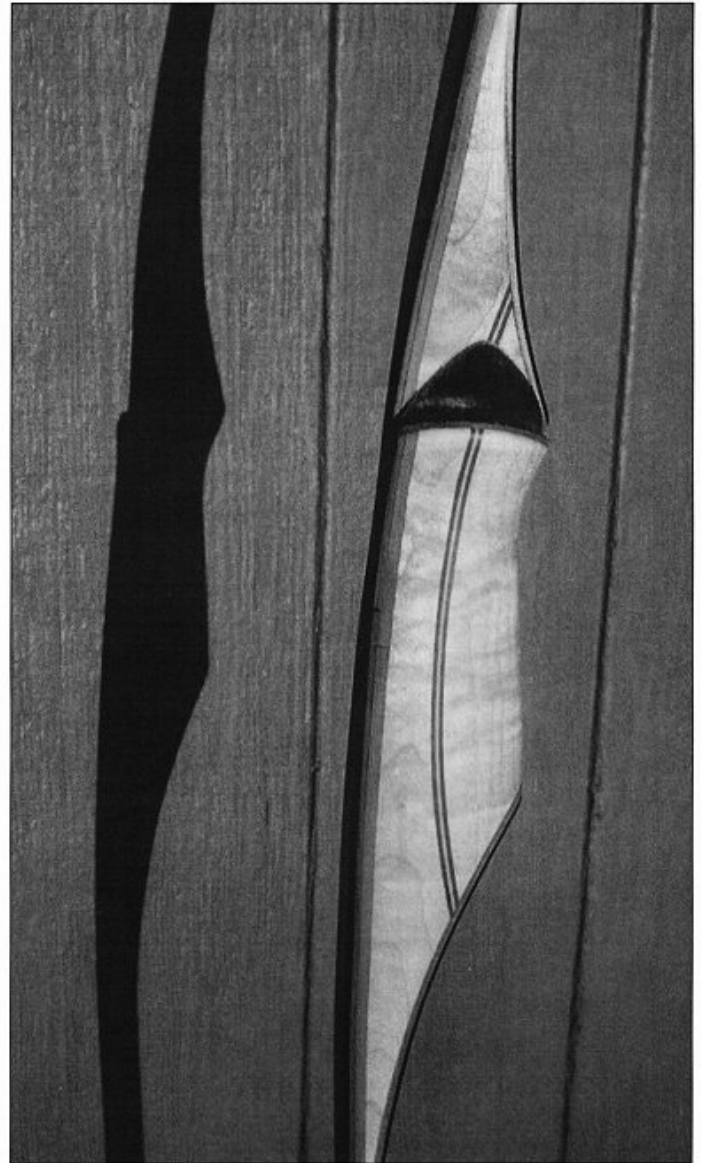
Our Fall, 1999, Bow Profile features our first Canadian longbow—an ALGOMA PACKBOW. In addition to its excellent quality, this bow represents an incredible value for the money, due to the favorable Canadian/U.S. exchange rate.

The PACKBOW ranges in length from 56" to 68". Each packbow comes with a Fastflight™ string, a protective bow sock, a proper stringer, a 30-day buy-back policy, and a two-year warranty on workmanship.

Our evaluation showed the PACKBOW to be of excellent quality, performance, and workmanship. While available with clear glass over many different exotic woods, the brown glass on the bow we tested gave it a traditional hunting-bow look that harkens back to simpler times, when performance and durability were the primary features of a good bow.



"Traditional Archery - Discover the Challenge"

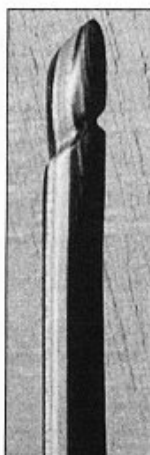


BOW SPECIFICATIONS

Bow:	Algoma Packbow 62" longbow
Bowyers:	Mr. Lorrie Arnold-Smith Algoma Custom Bows 6501 Olympia Place, Prince George, Brit. Columbia Canada V2K 4C4 Phone: (250) 962-6487
Riser:	Multi-laminate available with Bocote, Purple Heart, Bubinga, Osage, Shedua, Cherry, Maple, etc.
Limbs:	Deflex-reflex, reverse-trapezoidal, flat in cross-section. Brown or clear glass available with Red Elm, Osage, Bamboo, Maple, Yew, Sitka Spruce, Mulberry, etc.
Finish:	Satin finish, very smooth with no voids
Length:	62 3/8", nock to nock along back
Poundage:	55 pounds @ 28 (measured 1.25" forward from web of grip)
Limb width at fadeouts:	1.43" (top), 1.37" (bottom)
Limb width at nock:	.63" top, .66" bottom
Brace height:	5.75" to arrow shelf
fade-out to fade-out length:	approx. 15.25"
Limb nock to fade-out:	23.75" (top) 22.25" (bottom)
Price:	\$ 475 Canadian (Approx. \$332 U.S. on 7-1-99)

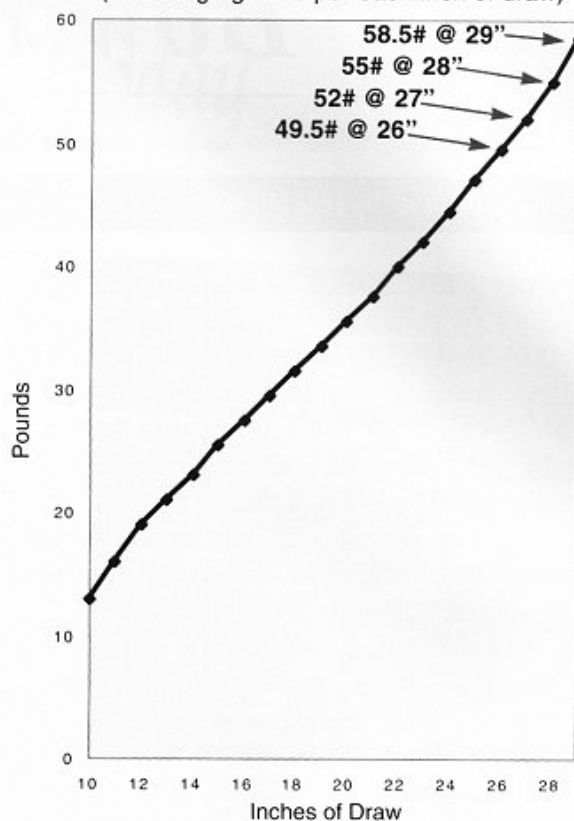
NOTE:

For a complete explanation of our bow-testing methodology, please refer to the Spring, 1999 issue of *Instinctive Archer™ Magazine*.



FORCE-DRAW DATA

(Poundage gained per each inch of draw)



Average Arrow Velocity and Kinetic Energy (10 shot average measured 4 ft. from chronograph)

Arrow Weight	Arrow Speed	Kinetic Energy
695-grain arrow:	157.9 fps	38.48
605-grain arrow:	168.4 fps	38.10
540-grain arrow:	176.2 fps	37.23

FORCE DRAW

INCHES	POUNDS
10"	13 lbs.
11	16
12	19
13	21
14	23
15	25.5
16	27.5
17	29.5
18	31.5
19	33.5
20	35.5
21	37.5
22	40
23	42
24	44.5
25	47
26	49.5
27	52
28	55
29	58.5

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SAXON LONGBOW, 61# @ 28". Great Shape-Like New. \$275.00. Call Mike 541-857-8916.

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VINE MAPLE STAVES FOR SALE, \$45 per stave, two or more \$40 per stave. Tom Hiegler, 1891 Yew St. Rd., B'ham WA 98226. (360)733-1262.



With
Bob Martin

The time spent outdoors in pursuit of game is never as complete without those twilight hours spent around the campfire. The hiss of the Coleman lantern, the klink of metal cooking utensils, the adventure of camp cookery which adds that certain little something that can be found nowhere else. Ah yes, the unbridled creativity that life under the stars in the piney woods inspires! Never is man so unencumbered by distracting details and so free to practice the purity of the art form of culinary adventure as when the kitchen floor is pine needles and the counter top a scrap of plywood.

An example of such wonderment comes from my good friend Tick. He has refined one recipe to a level of gastronomic artistry seldom attained by anyone but a woodsman. I have lovingly christened this dish "Gold Fork Gruel." The exact quantities of the ingredients is a closely guarded secret but the basic format is easily described from the debris: a package of instant chicken noodle soup, minute rice, a can of Vienna sausage, and one can of clam chowder. Simmer until thick and pasty in an old, well seasoned pot and serve in a cereal bowl. I've seen Tick's eyes roll back in his head as he savored every last chunklet from the crusty bottom of the pot. He claims it does wonders for the colon and I can verify it certainly sticks to the ribs (and the fork).

Speaking of sticking to your ribs, I wish I had room to share my recipe for "peanut butter casserole," which sticks to your ribs and the roof of your mouth, and fun to share with your pet! (anyone interested can write for it). Yes, food certainly tastes better up in the mountains (would we eat this stuff at home?).

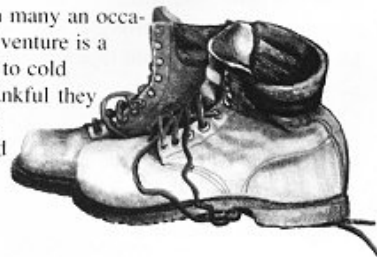
Another recipe that has tickled my taste buds I dubbed "Hawley Mountain Stew." Now the secret to this recipe was largely a matter of chance and is not likely to turn out as authentic in replication. Kind of like trying to repaint the Mona Lisa. Three friends and I had hunted long and hard that cold November day for mulies. It was really cold with a couple feet of snow on the ground. We had staggered back to the jeep just before sundown and built a warming fire. Famished, we looked through our meager rations and could only come up with a packet of instant soup belonging to Curtis, who by his own admission had been a mere "green-horn just six short months ago" (you had to know Curtis). We searched about for something to heat it in but could find nothing until we discovered some old pop-cans moldering in the brush nearby. Being sure that the boiling soup would take care of any sanitary problem we proceeded with the preparation. Each of us obtained his portion and "oohed and aahed" over how wonderful it was. It truly was a satisfying mixture to a cold hunter. As we finished off the final dregs we blissfully chewed down the tasty bits of crunchy vegetables in the bottoms of our "cups." "Mmmm, those peas in the bottom are really good!" "What peas? This is chicken noodle." (Perhaps this should have been called "Hunter's Surprise!") A close simulation can be derived by adding a half cup of dried potato bugs (roly polys) and whatever else you can imagine from the insect world that might crawl through the top of an empty pop can before expiring. Pure ambrosia!

Many a memorable trip has been made even more so by the mastery of camp cookery. Additionally, many a miserable trip has been plucked from the ashes of despair by an artful and persevering camp cook. Conversely, the opposite does sometimes occur, but even these situations must be confronted with an open mind unencumbered by the bias of civilization. (Recipes for Spam tortillas, beef jerky casserole, peanut butter and apricot sandwiches are all available upon request.)

On a more serious note, undoubtedly the finest meals I have ever had were indeed of simple fare and the best have consisted of the various species of forest grouse as the entree. I recall one such memorable feast about 16 years ago. Rik and I were elk hunting high in the Idaho mountains. We rendezvoused that evening in a small high meadow where I had managed to bag a brace of grouse with my bow. We built a small fire and roasted the birds to golden-brown perfection on green willow sticks over the coals. There under the evening sky and alpenglow we savored the succulent meat of those denizens of the forest. Two tired and hungry bowhunters huddled around a small bed of coals in a small green meadow, deep in the wilderness, miles from camp, as the deepening hush of evening swept up the canyons....aaahh, I will never forget that meal.

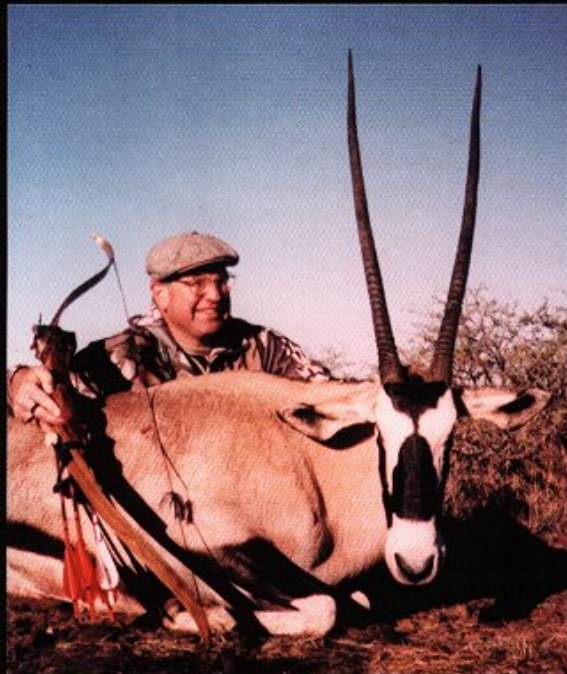
Yes, to hunt big game is grand, and success in such an endeavor is sweet, but were it not for the wonderful grouse I would not enjoy my trips afield nearly so much. Grouse have many times been my consolation and indeed have brought many a smile to a weary hunter's face. Bagging grouse is a bonus akin to smelling the roses, they take one's mind off more frustrating endeavors and reward the lucky with meals only dreamt about the rest of the year. A grouse in the hand is worth an elk in the bush.

How many arrows I have flung at grouse I cannot number. I have been humbled on many an occasion. But this only serves to make success that much sweeter. Yes, the bowhunting adventure is a tapestry made up of many beloved parts, from questionable recipes and companions, to cold hands warmed by food that never tasted finer, to flushing grouse that leave you thankful they aren't man eaters; lonesome trails, speckled trout, trusty old equipment that has seen many a rough and tumble expedition, but mostly the camaraderie of friends: "Good hunting and I'll see you on the side trail."



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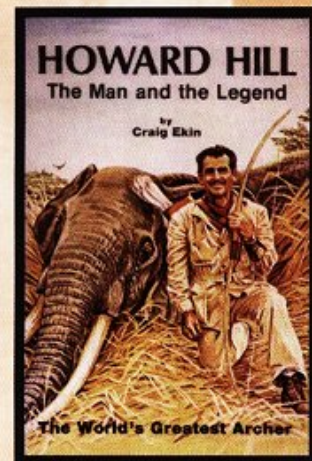
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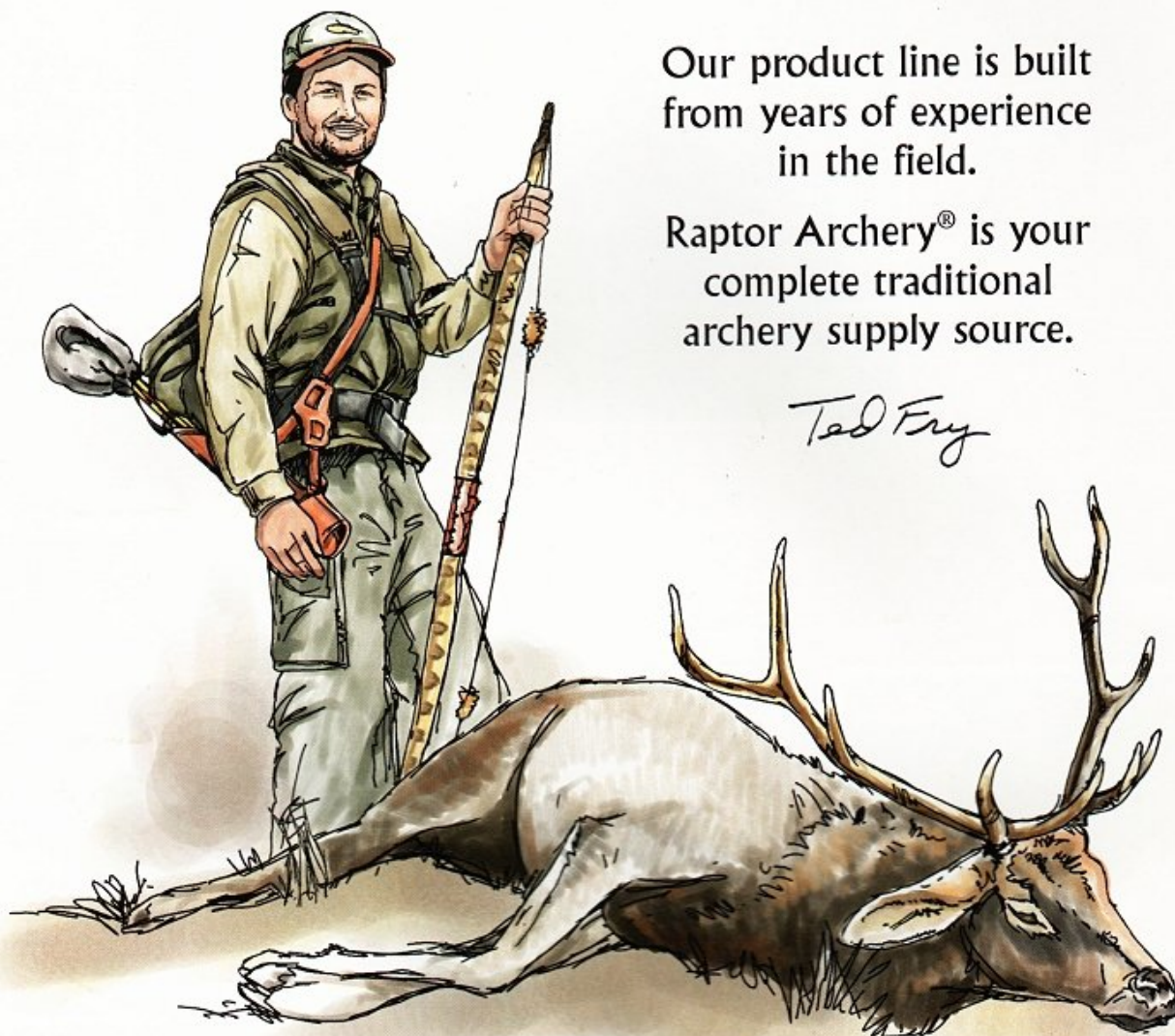
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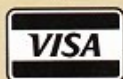


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