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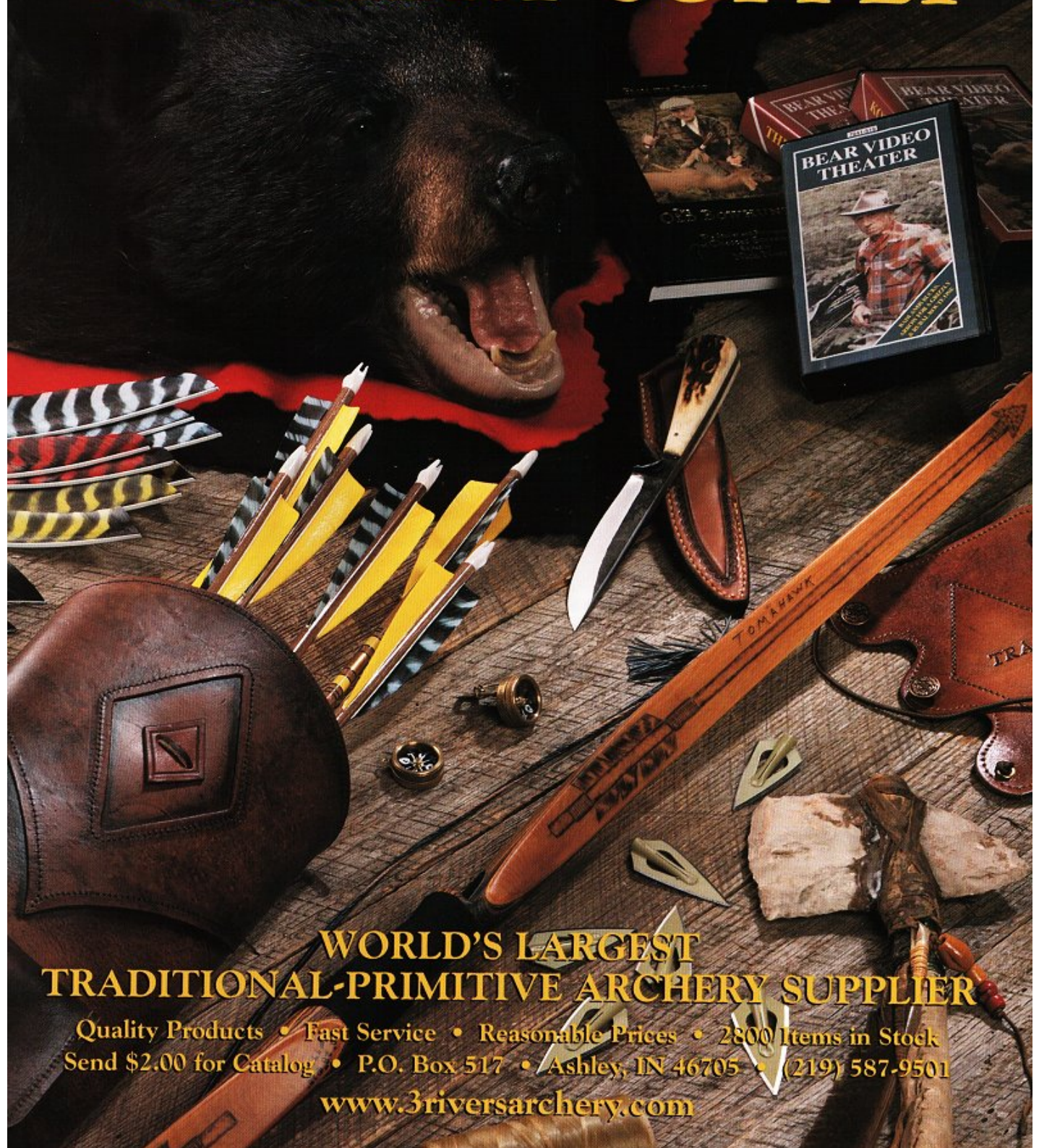
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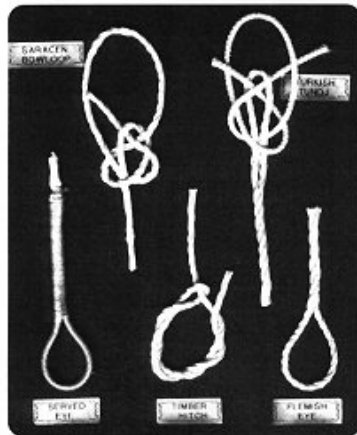
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Spring 2001

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# **INSTINCTIVE ARCHER® MAGAZINE**

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## *From the Old Oak Desk of the Editor*



Left to Right:  
Rik, Tracy, and Robert—the North American contingent of *Instinctive Archer's* staff, between targets at a summer archery shoot. Robert and I are shooting home-made bows, and Tracy tried pretty hard all day not to laugh at our never-ending attempts to point out the obvious inferiority of the other's bow (we all know who's was better though, don't we—wink wink.)

Is it spring yet? I certainly hope so! My driveway has had packed snow on it since early October, the ground near my house where I normally stump shoot has frozen to the consistency of arrow-breaking granite, and cabin fever just doesn't have the same old allure that it used to. In fact, I have recently determined that cabin fever is the single most insidious of all maladies that beset mankind—at least it is for those of us who love to stalk the hills in search of appropriate recipients of well-aimed arrows.

Spring brings with it fresh air scented with lush grass, long hours of glorious sunlight, and an outpouring of archers seeking others with which to share the fun of launching arrows. Whether we are pincushioning targets at a spring shoot, calling turkeys in the river bottoms, or slowly belly-crawling toward a wickedly tasked wild boar on the steep, grass-covered slopes of Northern California, the joy of spending time in the sun with a bow in hand is pure nirvana, the stuff of which fond memories are made.

There is one archery joy that I know many of you have not yet experienced, but one that I can't recommend highly enough—shooting a bow that you made with your own three thumbs. Every archer should endeavor to make at least a bow or two of his or her own, if for no other reason than the fun of watching that first arrow fly. I've made a few bows of my own over the years. One was the fiberglass-backed bow shown in the above photograph. Despite its many flaws and imperfections, I used it to stalk and kill a very small but frustratingly keen-eyed pronghorn buck. I was as proud as could be. The very first bow that I made was an 80-pound selfbow, a wide-limbed hickory behemoth that I fondly named "Success." I killed my first Russian boar with it at a distance of five yards. As the boar approached ever closer, I tried to focus behind his shoulder, but instead my mind was going 100 miles per hour with worry about (1) whether the big boar would spot me crouched in the grass, and (2) whether my first home-made selfbow was going to be able to drive an arrow through such a fearsome beast. Well, the boar didn't spot me and the broadhead was sticking out the far side of the boar's chest as he bolted toward perceived safety.

I learned two things from those bows. The first is that when the hunting gets serious, I trust a bow made by a master bowyer much more than the ones I have made myself. Master bowyers, like master cabinet makers, draw upon knowledge and skill gained through years of experience with each work of art they make, which means their goods are built to last. The second, and perhaps most valuable thing I learned was that there is more than meets the eye in the making of a good bow. Terms like "hinges," "tiller," and "perfection" take on much deeper meanings and importance with the knowledge gained from making your first bow.

Some of you will have the talent and patience to build quality bows of your own, and others, like me, will be able to make a bow that is serviceable. But all of you, young or old, newbie or oldtimer, should invest the research and time to make at least one bow. The lessons you learn will serve you for a lifetime of either making or purchasing fine bows.

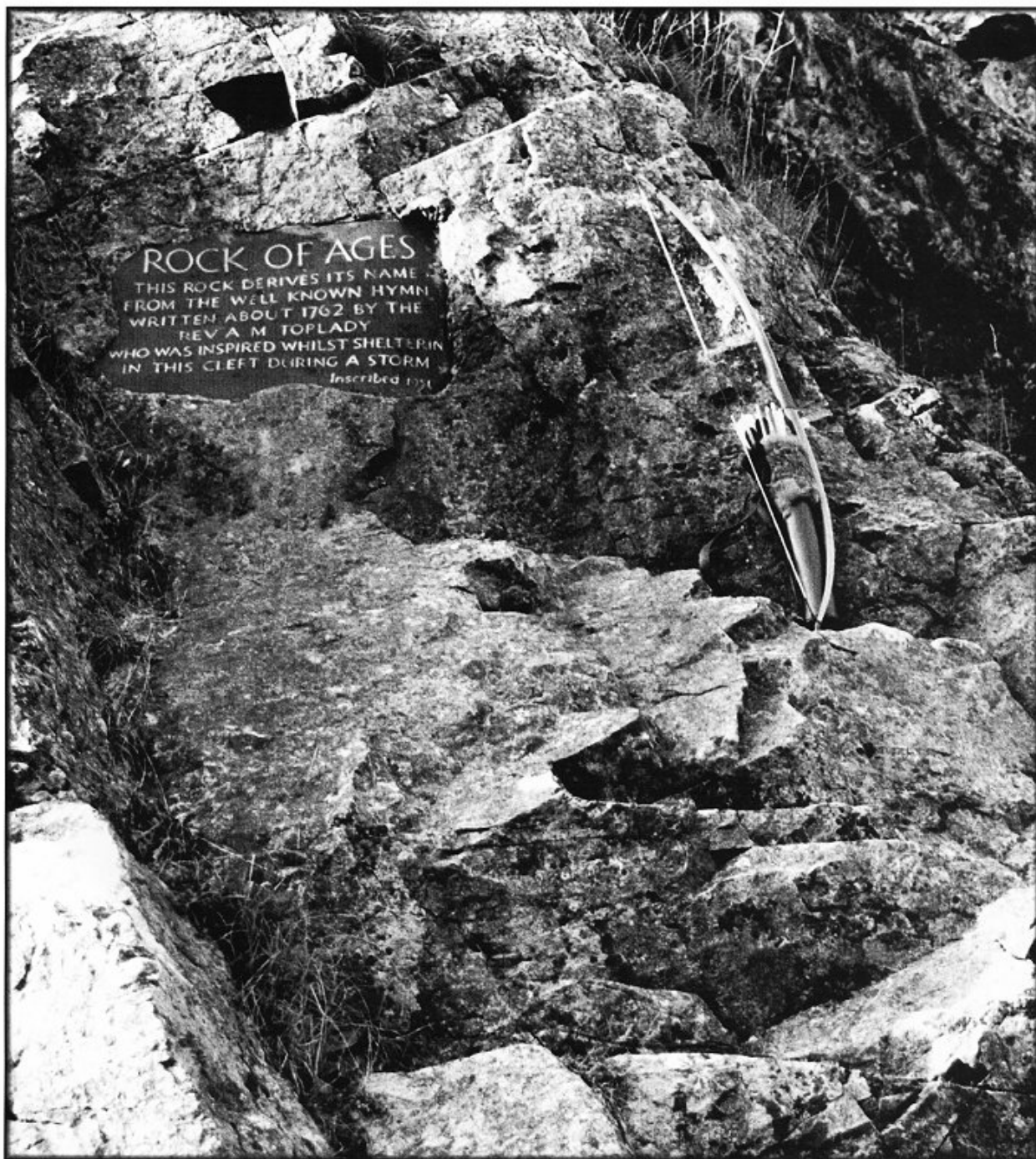


**COVER:** Ron Sherer preparing to lead some Idaho mountain camels to goat country. Photo by Mike Schlegel.



# AN AFFINITY WITH LIMESTONE

By John Durnford



*F*ew things seem to agitate archers more than the distant “snick” of a breaking arrow. I do not know an archer who fails to produce a clearly audible sound in response to this almost inaudible sound. Further, and depending upon whose arrow was broken, the sound can vary from a gentle “Tch!” to a positive explosion of bad language; apart from bad language in the case of lady archers (well, almost apart from).





"He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock..."

Archers' motor responses also vary, and can be anything between a relaxed stroll and a bad tempered dash to the retrieval area. There is something in common though, and it is the search for the object which caused the destruction of that beautiful missile. The short rueful examination of the "broken" is followed by a long revengeful search for the "breaker."

Another thing in common is that if shooting in open meadowland and the breaker is a small stone or rock, then it is picked up and an attempt made to hurl it into outer space. Gravity being gravity though, it quickly returns to Earth, there to await its next feathered customer. And it is a safe bet that there will be another customer for I swear that if there was only one stone in a ten acre meadow that an archer's arrow will find it.

Now I am divinely gifted with the gentle "Tch!" type of disposition. This enables me to rove (stump shoot) in all types of terrain without fear of a broken arrow causing a fatal rise in blood pressure. The local terrain about my home in England comprises large areas of limestone country which offers wonderful days of roving in exchange for the risk of breaking a few arrows. The well

lit limestone valleys, clear water streams, easily climbable cliff faces of greyish-pink rock and the scattering of light reflecting silver birch trees make it a delight just to wander in, let alone wander in with a bow.

I also shoot in the dark and hard terrain of granite country. I must admit that here I shoot with some trepidation about breaking arrows. If granite breaks my arrow, I utter an almost hostile "Tch!," whereas if it's limestone which carries out the execution then, more often than not, I quietly forgive it.

Now why is this? Well, for a start, my local limestone country is great country in which to give bow and body a rest. On the cliff faces there are countless ledges which are carpeted in soft grass. On these I can comfortably sit and savour the enchanting views surrounding me in total peace; excepting perhaps the intruding hiss of a small camp stove boiling water for the mid-morning coffee or frying bacon for the midday snack. A sort of absolute contentment sets in, considerably aided by seeing my bow and quiver resting across my backpack. Even the onset of rain doesn't matter too much, for there is always a sheltering rock overhang or cave within a couple of arrow flights.

Somewhere deep inside me, the country looks and feels strangely familiar. But more important than that, it feels downright friendly. I came to the conclusion many years ago that, for some inexplicable reason, I have an affinity with limestone. When within (to me) the mystic cloak of its silent domain, I never feel so at home, and this feeling always puts me in a pensive mood when resting up. Worries like one's current bank over-

draft and next tax bill completely vanish. They are usually replaced by much pondering on "Now why is this?"

Yes, why is this? Perhaps it is to do with my childhood during World War II. During that time, I spent many weekends with my father in the local limestone quarries. He was a plant engineer, and in those days the quarries were worked by Italian prisoners of war. They assisted dad in his work, and were always extremely kind to me. They did not possess money so gave me small toys carved from wood, and gave me my first bow and arrow made from a combination of hazel, string, and wood pigeon feathers. Even at that age, the tender look in their eyes told me their kindness was nothing to do with dad being one of the enemy, and a task master at that. I'm sure it was due to the presence of a child bringing them cherished, if desperate, memories of family and home. It was an early (and thankful) lesson in the fact that not all of our enemies are as inhuman as we are led to believe.



The author contemplates the days activities at a favorite resting spot amid England's limestone ledges.





**But my thoughts become quite secondary when I buckle on my backpack, pick up my bow and wander on looking for the next mark.**

Or is there a religious answer? Why, I often loose a few shafts about the limestone cleft in which that most famous Christian hymn "Rock of Ages" was written. Its writer, the Rev. Augustus Toplady, wrote the hymn whilst sheltering from a thunderstorm in that very cleft. I wonder if he was out roving with a bow?

Very unlikely, as the hymn was first published in 1775 when—in of all places the British Isles—archery for sport was almost as dead as archery for warfare. Incidentally, archers who are unfamiliar with "Rock of Ages" (and are thus probably non churchgoing) should try to behave themselves.

As some sort of solace, the demise of archery referred to above is only assumed. It is assumed from written records which did not include details of bowhunting in the Robin Hood style. This style was also called poaching, the choice of term depending upon who owned the forests and who didn't, or put simply, the permanent state of one's stomach. Due to the appalling poverty of

most country folk in those times, I would not be surprised if archery was very much alive, for that most meaningful use of all—survival.

However, when compared to the date of our beloved bow's first appearance in art, the antiquity of the 1775 date hopelessly disappears like an arrow dropping into the middle of a lake. The artwork goes back some 20,000 years, and the "canvas" was the wall of a limestone cave. So is there some sort of biological connection? An inherited gene, maybe, that makes me feel so at home.

This puts the bow at around 20,000 years old of course. From ancient arrowhead finds, some claim the bow may go back 50,000 years. Who really knows? When resting in limestone country, I always glance at my bow when thinking about its ancestry and can testify that it takes on a smug appearance.

Without hunting, it appears we wouldn't be here. Which may explain the extraordinary, if not lunatic,

behavior I read about in Instinctive Archer. For example, how quite normal and respectable working people, living in warm cozy homes, brave Pacific Northwest storms, Alaskan mosquitoes, desert snakes, and bear country, armed with nothing more than a tent and a bent stick. Yes, it must be an inherited gene!

But my thoughts become quite secondary when I buckle on my backpack, pick up my bow and wander on looking for the next mark. That small mound of grass alongside the stream, some 50 yards below me. . . there's a posy of white wild strawberry flowers crowning it...looks an ideal mark...nock a shaft, draw, aim with the backpack's weight holding me as steady as the rock I'm standing on, and loose...keep stance and follow through. Oh dear! it's gone to the right. Select another shaft and repeat...a hit!...followed a microsecond later by a distant "snick."

"Tch!" Still, never mind. Something tells me my descendants will have an affinity with limestone too, particularly those who shoot in a bow.







## The Monster Buck

ROBERT V. MARTIN  
© 2001

BY GARRY SCHUMACHER

**B**ack when the earth itself was a lot younger, and more importantly so was I. It was my good fortune, with an overabundance of dumb luck, to encounter a "Monster Buck" one day while hidden beneath the out-stretching boughs of a sturdy old spruce tree. Surrounded by a forest of poplar and birch, the old spruce tree stood as the only example of its species in the immediate area. Perhaps because of this it had grown shorter in height than it would have had it been surrounded by fellow spruce. Not having to compete for the sun by extending its height toward the sky it had instead concentrated its growth on foliage and branches.

Under its out-stretching arms, there was no fresh growth. Even the hardiest of weeds could not get a foothold to take root in the thick carpet of fallen needles. Perhaps the soil was too acidic or more likely the lack of sun and light contributed to the



failure of even the more tenacious and persistent weeds to grow.

Sitting under the tree's canopy was almost like sitting in a large tepee with several window openings through which one could view the world around. This appeared to be an ideal spot for a clumsy gangling youth, just six months past his 14th birthday, to hide in ambush waiting for some unsuspecting deer to wander past, either browsing the forest growth or on its way to or from better forage. What really made this spot so ideal was the convergence of several game trails just yards away from the base of the old tree.

The season had long since changed from summer to fall but although it was late October, the weather was absolutely fantastic. It was truly an Indian summer day to die for. Even the preceding days had been warm and dry. In the farms and fields surrounding the forest, farmers scurried frantically, busy finishing the harvest. The same fall winds that were such a boon to the farmers by drying the crops and the fields had purged the trees of leaves, leaving them standing naked with nothing to do but wait for the change of season and a renewal of life.

Walking quietly down the game trails was completely impossible. As if the crunching of leaves underfoot was not enough, it seemed that the willows and small shrubs all reached out to grab my leg or foot as I passed, creating a loud scraping noise as they brushed against my blue jeans. Many times I wished for a pair of woolen pants, but alas, my wardrobe consisted entirely of blue jeans. A wise choice no doubt for my mother who had to bear the expense for clothing me as well as my siblings, but it was a poor choice for a "would be" slayer of deer.

With no one to teach me I had endeavored to learn how to hunt with a bow by reading stories and articles written by people who had walked this road before me. In my imagination I saw myself slipping through the woods like an Indian stalking his prey, but reality dictated that perhaps I was more like the proverbial bull in a china shop. At 14, even if I should have been quiet enough in passage not to disturb any nearby game, because I had not yet adapted to my latest growth spurt, I was just likely at the most inopportune moment to trip over some minuscule object and fall flat on my face.

This day all had gone well. I recall that I had managed to make it to my hide under the spruce tree fairly quietly with little disruption to the peace and tranquility of the forest. Long on enthusiasm but a little short on common sense, I found myself under the boughs of the old spruce tree. A few minutes after having arrived there I had cleared several shooting lanes and seeking to make myself comfortable, I realized that I should have brought something upon which to sit. Well no matter, I was young and I could sit on the ground or I could stand and lean against the tree.

So here I was, in position, ready for whatever should pass by. My plan was not simply to wait for a deer to pass, but rather I planned to help encourage a whitetail buck to come my way, if I could. Just the previous week I had read an article about rattling a pair of antlers as a method of attracting a buck. I also knew, in spite of my limited experience, that the

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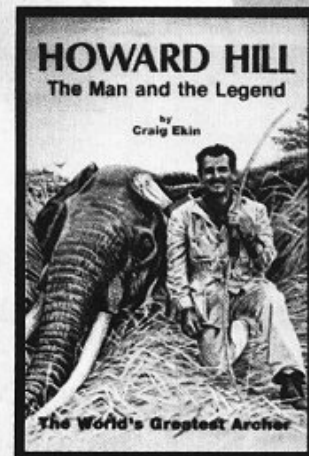
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deer were not ready to begin rutting for at least another month. So the question was, would rattling antlers be effective this early in the season? I thought so. I knew from reading that the deer started scraping the velvet from their antlers early in September, polishing them to a soft shine by rubbing them against small trees and shrubs. And just the week prior I had seen two bucks sparring with each other.

I nocked one of my hunting arrows to the string of my longbow. It was one of those old solid-fiberglass bows, the only kind this 14-year-old kid could afford. With the arrow nocked I carefully laid the bow on the ground within easy reach. I remember thinking that I really should wait for a while before doing any rattling in order to let any disturbed animals forget about my passage. Perhaps I didn't really think it would work, or perhaps I simply didn't think that I would see anything even though the game trails nearby seemed to be well used. I picked up the pair of antlers I had brought with me. I wasn't even certain about what to do.

With one antler in each hand I banged them together. They sounded quite loud under the canopy of the spruce tree. I did it again. The next time I clicked and rocked them at the same time. "That must be realistic," I thought. Heck, what did I know? I did it once more.

Yep, that sounded good to me. It all sounded good under the spruce tree, but I thought perhaps maybe the tree was muffling the sound, not allowing it to carry out through the forest. I slammed the antlers together harder this

time attempting to make a sound that would carry. I banged them, slapped them, rattled them, rubbed them, and just generally created the sounds of a terrific fight. I was reproducing the sound of a battle of the giants to be sure.

Now all the time that I was doing this you know I was watching the forest, intent on seeing any deer, right? Sadly I must confess, that is the one thing that I completely failed to do. So intent on creating the grandfather of all buck fights, I suppose I had temporarily forgotten just why I was doing it. I think back today and smile and just shake my head when I visualize myself pounding away with those antlers under that spruce tree.

A loud harsh snort jarred me back to reality. It absolutely startled me to an awareness of my surroundings, causing the little hairs on the back of my neck to stand erect. My hands froze their motion and silence descended upon the little space under that spruce tree. I swept my gaze across the bit of forest that I could see in front of me. I saw nothing in front. I turned slowly to my left and I almost died right then and there. Directly in front of me, peering in through one of the shooting lanes that I had cut in the spruce canopy was the biggest buck I had ever seen in my life. It stood there with head cocked to one side staring at me with a quizzical look. If I had held my longbow in my hands instead of the set of antlers, I could have reached out and hung the bow from that magnificent rack.

The seconds ticked by so slowly, each one seeming as long as a minute while we stood there and looked at each other. I'd like to think I froze

there realizing that any movement might have frightened him away, but in reality I was probably petrified with fright. That possibility was not all that surprising when you think of it. The buck's ears flicked and its nose twitched, but other than that there was no movement from either of us. Finally, I suppose the buck had enough of staring at me and it let out another loud snort. The snort was so loud in the quiet under the spruce tree and startled me so that my tensed muscles let go like an unleashed coiled spring and my body slammed back against the spruce tree as though it had actually struck me.

I remember how the buck turned soundlessly as though in slow motion and casually trotted away seemingly unconcerned. Certainly it had little to fear, for I was the one most frightened with this encounter. The buck paused once about 20 yards away looking back over its rump at me, then with one final snort, perhaps an expression of disdain, it disappeared from my view.

Although I hunted that area many times in the months and years that followed, I never again waited under the boughs of that old spruce tree nor did I ever see the old buck again. Somehow it seems only right though, and I'd like to think that buck lived out its days to a ripe old age never falling to some hunter's gun or some archer's arrow. It's possible the buck wasn't even all that big, except perhaps to a 14-year-old boy. Whether it was or not, it will always be a monster buck in my mind.



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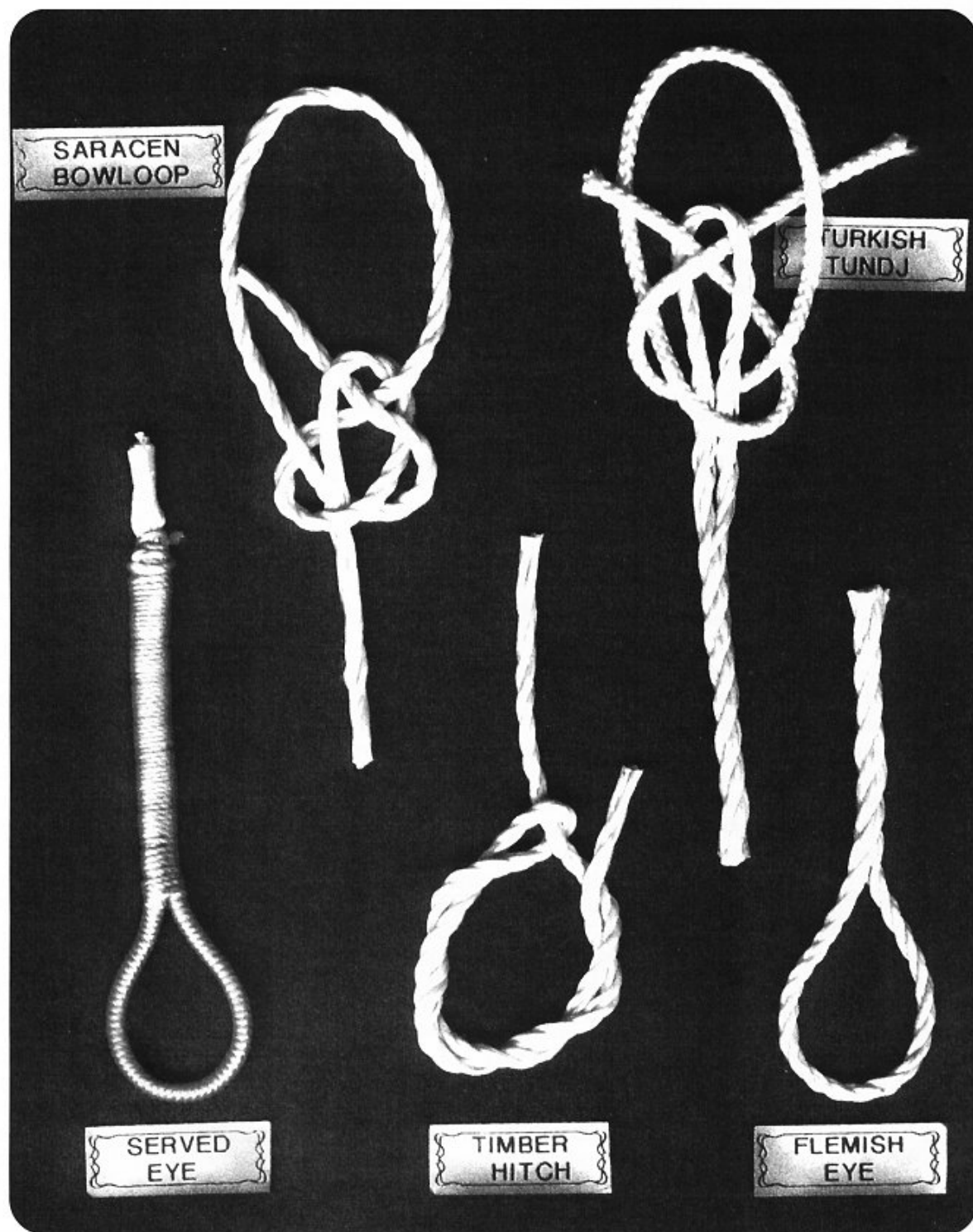


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# A bit about Bowstrings

By Richard Hopkins

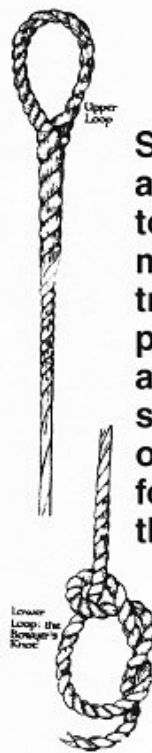
Should anyone not know, a bow is just a bendy stick with its ends joined by string, and over the several thousand years that the bow has been in use, either as a deadly weapon of war, instrument of the chase, device for pest control, or a recreational tool, that string has been made from an amazing range of materials. A fine but strong and reliable cord is required, able to withstand the shock and repeated strain of shooting without breaking too easily.



Bowstrings have been made from almost every possible vegetable fibre, from intestine, sinew, leather, hair, wire, and now from synthetic fibres. There are records of Saracen strings made from human skin, and Swedish fox crossbows (pest control) using just three iron chain links. (I do not count rubber, where any power comes from the elasticity of the string rather than from the bending of the limbs of the bow.) Techniques involved have included twisting, spinning, braiding, plaiting and even, as above, blacksmithing. Fitting the string to the stick can also be done in a variety of ways, from whipping the ends in place, using eyes (of various construction) in one or both ends of the string, using a timberhitch or other knots, to tying loops in another loop at the end of the bow. The Turkish "Ctundj" is an example of this last method.

Nowadays, commercially produced strings, made to fit the factory-produced bows, usually have an eye in each end of the string. In order to accommodate the range of bow sizes, the strings are made in short increments to suit the most common bow lengths. Traditional longbow users, however, since their longbows are most often made to measure, often prefer a string with only one eye for the top of the bow. The lower end is fixed with a timberhitch. This allows for correct fine adjustment of the string, as the characteristics of a bow can alter the the course of a day's shooting. This is more noticeable with the wooden bows than with the modern laminated materials frequently found in high-tech bows.

In England, the bow developed from the short tool of the common man into an efficient hunting and war weapon, influenced greatly by the longer and more powerful bow, used to great effect by the Welsh against the English. The quality of the bowstring then became of paramount importance but very little was done officially to ensure a reliable product, although bowyers and fletchers had their own guilds to ensure quality control of their products.



**Since longbows are often made to measure, many British traditionalists prefer an adjustable string with only one fixed eye for the top of the bow.**

After Agincourt in 1415, there were probably several dissatisfied customers among the remains of the army of Henry V, for in 1416, bowstring makers petitioned the mayor and aldermen of the city of London for a warden who would be responsible for inspection and quality of bowstrings as "they were being blamed for many soldiers having lost their lives as a result of defective bowstrings."

In those days, bowstrings were generally made from raw, undyed silk, linen, or hemp thread, using perhaps 60 or more threads, stranded together and treated with wax and a waterproofing glue. Ideally the hemp threads were produced from the female hemp plant, those made from the male plant being considered worthless.

Strings today are generally about 2mm diameter but study of the nock dimensions of some primitive arrows suggest that they may have used strings of up to 5mm, probably made from twisted gut or sinew which needed the thickness to give the strength required. The nock is the groove at the end of a bow or arrow in which the string fits.

There are various special strings such as double strings held apart by small bridges for stone or pellet bows, and crossbow strings which could be as thick as a little finger. These thick crossbow strings often would require at least 150m of fine, well-waxed thread wound between two pegs set about 5 metres apart. The hank produced was folded several times to give a string of the correct length. The loops were served and then the string was frequently dressed with a thicker thread, i.e. cockscombing. The centre of the string was served tightly. These strings did not usually fit an arrow nock, but pressed against the flat back end of the bolt or quarrel. Their eyes did of course fit the nocks of the crossbow limbs.

Incidentally, the term quarrel, now indicating a disagreement, stems from the four (quatre) pointed head of a crossbow arrow designed to discourage the wearer of plate armour. When used against flesh it had characteristics akin to a dum-dum bullet. Given a serious dislike of ones opponent, choosing a quarrel indicated a desire to cause distress above and beyond the call of duty.

Nowadays, although some purists may still use linen thread (e.g. Barbour thread), many strings are commercially made using Dacron, Kevlar, Spectra, or Dyneema, and the same materials are also used for custom stringmaking. Selection of the thread depends on the requirements of the archer, some needing a forgiving string, while others need a string that allows the bow to react rapidly and so make the arrow fly a little faster and flatter. Detailed explanations for the choice of material are outside the scope of this article, although the degree of stretch is important, as is the application or particular discipline followed by the individual archer.

Many strands are needed to produce a safe, reliable, and effective bowstring, but stronger modern materials can use fewer strands, although there is still a rule of thumb that the string strength should be at least five times the draw weight of the bow, in

order to be able to cope with the tremendous momentary strain when the arrow leaves the string and the bow snaps back into its braced position. The arrow might be going as fast as two hundred feet per second and gets all its oomph from the rapid straightening of the bow limbs when the string is "loosed."

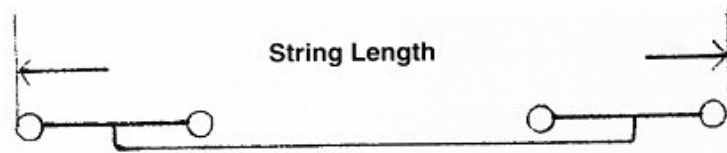
Thus, for a bow of 50 pounds draw weight, you would need at least 50 strands of 51 pound linen thread, but only six of 50 pound Dacron. In fact you would use more strands of Dacron, usually between ten and 16, in order to build the thickness of the string, and we get a figure of six strands in this example, not five as the calculations suggest, because of the method of construction.

Such a modern Dacron string should be good for a few thousand fun shots before needing to be replaced, although some repair may be called for during this time. Competitive archers get through strings more quickly. Kevlar has a shorter life than Dacron, but some of the latest synthetic fibres claim a life of up to 25,000 shots, although they are not as forgiving to the bow.

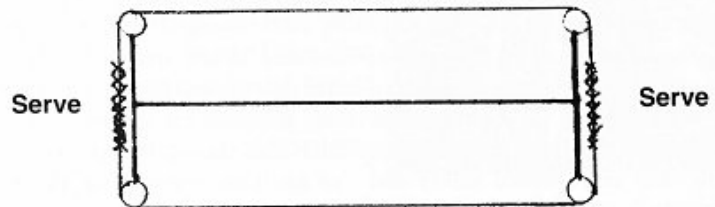
The first requirement when forming a bowstring with two eyes is to get the pins, around which the strands are led, to be the correct distance apart. This distance depends firstly on the size of the bow and then on the properties of the material used, as the degree of stretch affects the final dimensions.

For the professional manufacturer, producing a range of strings in increments to match bow lengths, the final result can always be sold. For the amateur, however, a degree of trial and error usually occurs until the ideal positions are found. Strings with one eye are simpler, provided that they are long enough to tie the timber hitch securely.

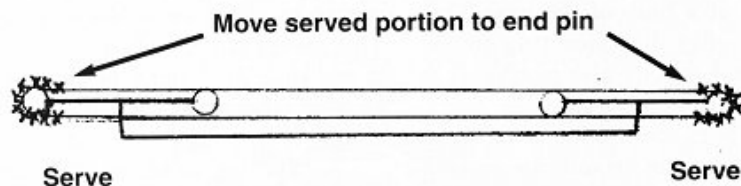
Examination of a bowstring reveals that it has only about two twists per inch, unlike a laid cord. The twists are sufficient to keep the strands together, but do not allow too much stretch, maintaining the strength and stability of the strung bow. The



Jig arms in line with main shaft.

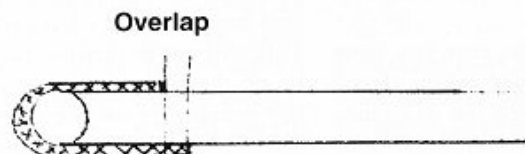


Arms at 90 degrees to shaft.  
Threads wound around pin.

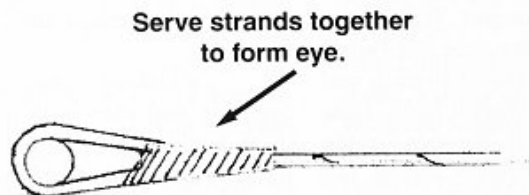


Serve

Serve



Overlap



Serve strands together  
to form eye.



length of the string affects the degree of curvature of the bow and this can have a critical effect on performance—in addition it is very easy to break an overbraced bow.

Provided that the string is of the correct length, fine-tuning can be carried out by putting a few extra twists in the string, or removing them, to adjust the length fractionally. This is of no use if the string is too long and can only be done when tuning on the range as it is necessary to see the effect of different variations on the arrow placement and flight. When all is as close to perfection as can be, waxing of the string, and rubbing in the wax with a piece of leather, holds the strands and twists in place so that the string may be removed safely and will be ready for the next time.

The second requirement is to get an even tension on all the strands making up the string. If one strand is loaded more than its fellows, there is a likelihood of it breaking and the others will not be able to maintain their integrity. The weakness will probably cause the string to break at an embarrassing moment, and might lead to breakage of a limb of the bow. This can be highly disconcerting to the shooter and anyone else nearby. It is also potentially dangerous.

There are a number of ways of setting up the strands to make a bow but they all involve a means to get the threads to the correct length. I shall describe two methods of making a bowstring. One, using a jig, gives a string with two eyes. The other method produces a Flemish eye on one end of the string.

Let us assume that you have the old, worn but unbroken string from your bow. Loosen the wing-nuts on your jig and place the swivel arms in line with the central shaft. Put one eye over the furthest pin and adjust the shaft until the other eye just fits over the opposite far pin. Tighten the nuts and note the distance for future reference. Remove the old string and shorten the central shaft a little. How much you shorten it depends on the trial and error mentioned earlier and the material you will be using. Note

this position also.

Tie one end of the thread to the end pin and wind the thread around the jig until you have a sufficient number of strands. Cut the thread and tie the ends together. You now have an endless loop which you will slide gently around the pins in both directions for a few inches to help equalize the tension in the strands.

Slacken the wing-nuts and rotate the short arms to a position at right angles to the main shaft. The string now forms a rectangle.

Using a serving tool, apply a serving to the strands at the centre of the short arms. The length of this serving depends on the limb size of your bow and should be just over an eighth of an inch longer than the bow nock loop groove. This may be different for the top and bottom limbs. The ends of the serving are finished off like a simple whipping.

Turn the arms until they are once again in line with the shaft. Slide the string around the pins until the served portions are centred on the outermost pins. Now slide a little more until the ends of the served portions overlap by about an eighth of an inch. (This means at the ends of the jig. We do not slide everything to the middle. We have other plans for that part of the string.)

Starting at the overlap of the first serving, apply another serving down the length of the combined strands for about four inches and finish off as before. Do this at both ends.

Using your old string as a guide, apply a serving of about four or five inches to the centre of the string. This will not be central; two thirds will be on the lower half of the string and the remainder on the upper section. This serving takes the strain and wear of the fingers when shooting. This step is probably best carried out when the string is actually fixed on the bow and more precise positioning will then be possible.

Rubbing the string with beeswax and then with a bit of clean thick leather, to melt the wax through friction, completes the process, but it is worth putting in a few twists when the

string is on the bow and rerubbing the wax to hold all together. If you don't use leather you will burn your fingers.

Apart from positioning the nocking point, which enables the back of the arrow to be placed in the same place every time, the string is ready to shoot. There are several different ways to fix a nocking point and each archer has to learn to do this for him or her self. The simplest way is to build up a little lump of thread or dental floss in the correct position. This is part of tuning the bow and not within the scope of this article.

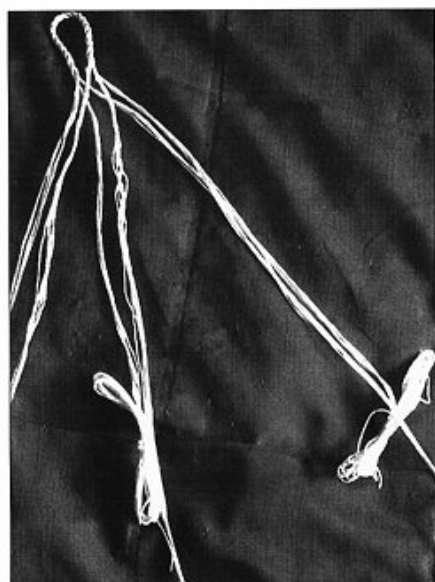
To produce a Flemish eye in a length of cord will not be a revelation to most knotters, but I am including it to complete the story of bowstrings. We start, as before, in getting a series of strands of the correct length. This can be done by looping the thread over hooks on the wall, or by using a board with pegs or nails in the proper places.

If making a single Flemish eye there is more scope for playing with the length, but for a two eyed bowstring the dimensions must be more precise.

I shall only describe the single-eye cord, as making the second eye involves the same process and it is only a case of how to sort out sizes.

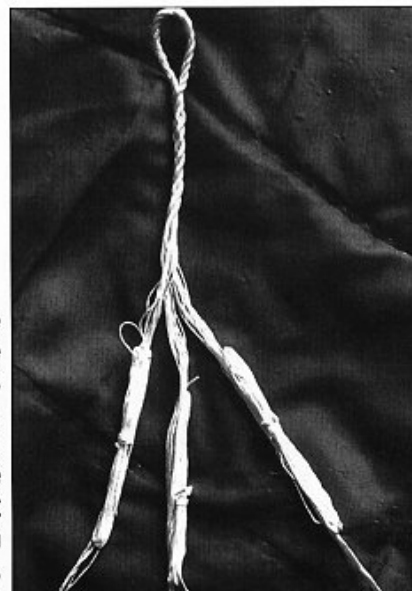
Assume that we are making a string requiring 12 strands of Dacron. The strands should be about 15 inches longer than the finished string will be. Separate the strands into three bundles of four, and hank them, leaving a long end on each of about 18 inches which you wax. Some authorities now add further-tapered strands of about 12 inches to this part of each hank in order to reinforce the loop. This could also be done when using the jig described earlier, and was no doubt helpful in extending string life when using linen thread. It is not so necessary with modern materials. You can also taper the eye by cutting your main strands to different lengths.

Hold all three hanks in one hand, usually the left if you are right handed, with the waxed ends together and pointing in the same direction, either away from you or to the right.



**Arrange them so that each short strand is lying alongside a long one, preferably from a different hank.**

**Holding the three strands, continue twisting exactly as you did before, ensuring that you maintain the direction of twist and an even tension.**



With the other hand reach for the strand furthest away from that hand. Grasp the strand between thumb and first finger and twist it strongly away from you until you feel it tighten. Now pull it towards you, over the other two skeins and hold it in place with the left thumb. Repeat this process with the next strand, and again with the third strand. Don't lift your left thumb to see what has happened. Continue this process, twisting hard and keeping the skeins in the same order as you twist, lift, and pull.

Very soon you will find that you have created a small three strand laid cord, or small rope. The wax will help the strands to stay in place. The short cord is made long enough to fit around the bow nock, perhaps three inches or between 12 and 16 twists.

Unwind a little more from each hank and bend the cord around your thumb so that the ends are level. There will now be three short waxed strands and three longer ones from the hanks, side by side. Arrange them so that each short strand is lying alongside a long one, preferably from a different hank. Wax these pairs together to form a loop with three strands. Laying in a different coloured telltale thread for each hank at the start of the loop would make it easier to ensure that the short and long strands are from different skeins. It would not be

possible to remove the colours afterwards.

Holding the three strands as previously, continue twisting exactly as you did before, ensuring that you maintain the direction of twist and an even tension. If the short strands have been cut a little to stagger the ends, you will find that you have made a beautifully tapered Flemish eye. Do not take the cording too far down the bowstring. A taper actually improves the strength of the eye and looks good.

Go to the other end of the string and repeat the cording process, but this time do not make a loop but just a short cord of eight to ten inches, which will make tying the timber hitch much easier and safer. Once again, the exact length depends on the finished dimensions. The bowstring will probably be a little too long, but can be trimmed to size if necessary, after adjusting the timber hitch. Too short a string would have to be thrown away.

With the eye hooked over a peg or nail, introduce a few twists into the body of the bowstring and rub with wax and leather to set the string. This bowstring will still require a central serving and nocking point where the fingers and arrow touch it, but this will be done on the bow when the bracing height has been adjusted with the timber hitch. A perfectly shootable string may be made if only two groups of

strands are twisted into an eye, but it will not look as attractive as a three stranded eye.

You may find bows with a braided nylon string where the loops are secured by metal clips or staples. As you walk away, shuddering at the crudity, remember that silken bowstrings were also used to dispatch unwanted members of the Sultan's harem, and you can reflect on other suitable candidates for this treatment.

While this article, has covered the general principles of bowstring making, there are bound to be many details that have been left out through ignorance, error, laziness or my stupidity. For this, I apologize.



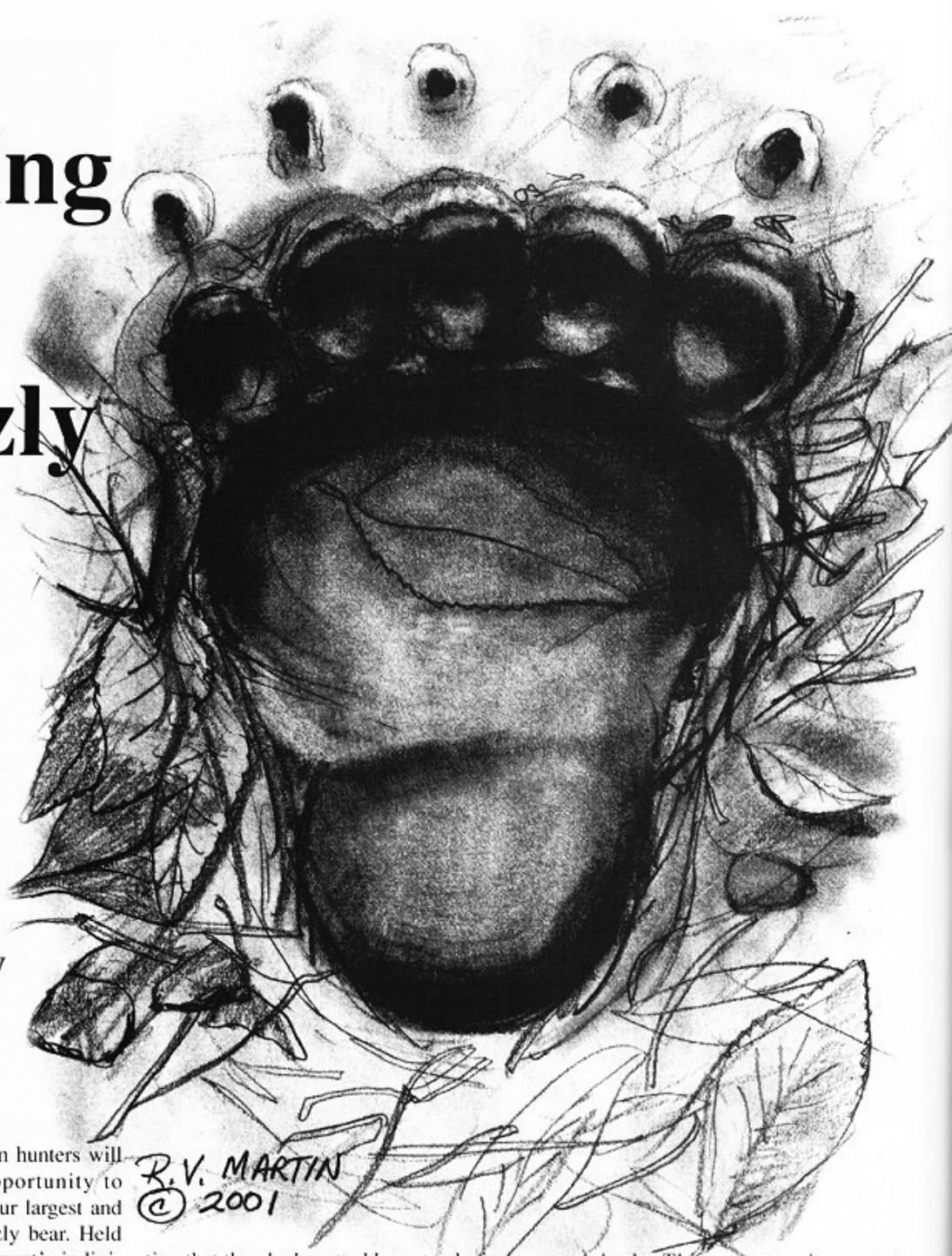
I consulted many of my books on archery when preparing this article but my principle references were:

- The Traditional Archer's Handbook by Hilary Greenland 1996 ISBN 0 9524627
- The Archer's Craft by Adrian Eliot Hodgkin 1951 reprint 1995 ISBN 1 897853 80 7
- The Longbowstringmakers by H.D. Soar. Article in Instinctive Archer Magazine Summer 1997
- Bowhunter's Digest 1974
- Archer's Digest 1971



# Trailing a Grizzly

By  
James Richey



Few North American hunters will ever have the opportunity to hunt or even see our largest and fiercest predator, the grizzly bear. Held in reverence by our continent's indigenous inhabitants, the grizzly represented those qualities they most aspired to: independence, cunning, strength, and fearlessness. Grizzlies hold a position of pre-eminence at the top of the food chain, stepping aside for no man or animal. Consequently, when my two hunting partners returned to camp one morning on a spring hunt with the informa-

tion that they had spotted huge tracks just behind camp, I responded with the enthusiasm of a child on Christmas morning.

Len, Brad, and I had come north from our home in Kamloops, British Columbia, to hunt the black bears that exist in good numbers in the country between McBride and Prince George. We were camped on the banks of the Fraser River, where in past years Len has had

good luck. This country is a vast expanse of wilderness characterized by heavy stands of timber, crossed by countless small streams and surrounded over all with snow-capped mountains. Driving in the first night, we had seen one small black and in the two days since, had seen the tracks of many others in our scouting trips around the area. While we had tags for only black bears,

I felt that if I were to catch sight of one of the big grizzlies that lived in the area, my trip would be worthwhile.

On the third morning, when the two brothers returned from an early morning hunt and told me that a grizzly had been working the area a short two miles from where we were, the feeling that a life-long ambition was perhaps about to be fulfilled had me ready to go in short order. Over a hot cup of camp coffee, it was decided that Len and Brad would take the canoe and head up the river while I would spend the afternoon stalking about the old skidder trails that had been left when the area was logged in earlier years.

My partners headed off in the early afternoon as I began the hike that would take me around the base of the mountain so I could approach the area they had described from the downwind side. Moose, wolf, and black bear tracks covered the area. The old trail I was on

was closely bordered by alder and spruce thickets, limiting side visibility to about 10 yards, while I could see ahead as far as the next bend in the old road. As I crept along with all my senses concentrated on the task of moving as quietly and with as much awareness of my sur-

## I looked down and saw for the first time in my life, the huge and unmistakable track of the greatest of carnivores.

roundings as possible, I had along with anticipation, a sense of the uneasiness that comes with the knowledge that hunter could become the hunted.

Modern life has given us the mistaken idea that we are above the laws that govern the natural world and, indeed, technology has given us the power to manipulate and destroy. Being alone in grizzly country, however, has a way of bringing proper perspective into one's life.

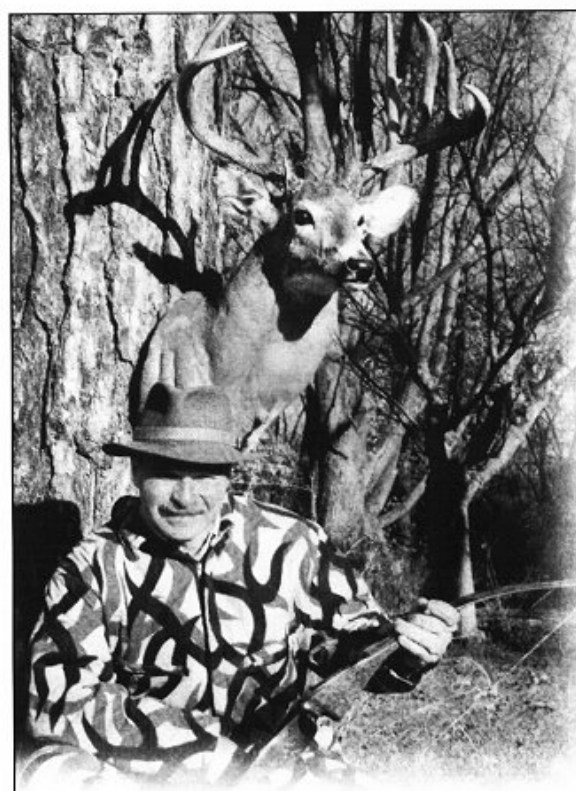
I was in ideal game habitat and I knew grizzlies were in the area, but nothing could have prepared me for the sense of awe I felt when, in stepping over a large puddle left by the rains of the night before, I looked down and saw for the first time in my life, the huge and unmistakable track of the greatest of carnivores. It was hard to believe that anything could leave such a large print. Usually, the tracks of a black

bear do not show any visible sign of its claws, but the animal that left his sign in the mud of the skidder trail showed that he carried a formidable arsenal arrayed across the front of each foot. In looking down at what was left to tell of his passing, it was clear why a grizzly has the power to bring down any game he wants including moose and caribou. The print completely swallowed my own foot and it was at least three inches wider than the distance from thumb to the outermost finger. It was hard for my mind to accept that anything that big could be strolling unconcernedly about the woods. The longbow and cedar shafts I was carrying felt rather inadequate. A double barreled .470 nitro-express would have been more reassuring!

Night was beginning to close in around me, but it was hard to turn and leave. The power of the grizzly's recent presence was almost tangible and it hung in the air like incense. Contemplating that minute spot in the cosmos, it was easy to understand why many Indian tribes deified the great bear and endeavored to emulate their ways. I was also reminded of the fact that a major cause of death among the early mountain men was grizzly attack.

My partners and I went on to collect a couple of nice black bears that spring, but I still have not laid eyes on a grizzly in the wild. But that warm spring evening in the bush of northern British Columbia will stand out in my memory for a very long time.

I was wrong too, about what it would take to make my trip a success. The sight of that track was enough.



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# Bow Hand and Release

*By Jim Ploen*



**T**he bow hand and the release are the two most important elements in understanding the role of the archer. The importance of all the other aspects pertaining to the shooting of a bow will depend on how well you either control or support your bow hand and your release. When analyzing your bow hand and release, you need to have an understanding of what is required in the act of drawing the bowstring to store energy in the bow limbs.

When you store energy in the limbs of the bow, you have to exert a force on the grip that is equal to the force applied to the string. In other words, if you are drawing a bow that has a draw weight of 60 pounds at 28 inches, you must exert a push on the bow equal to a build-up of 60 pounds of pull on the string, when drawing the arrow back 28 inches. This basic rule of physics applies to any conventional bow

with the string attached directly to the limb. Pulling on the bowstring stores energy in the limbs, provided by you in the act of drawing. Keep the rule of equal forces foremost in your mind when you start to analyze the gripping of the bow.

The use of your fingers in the act of drawing and releasing of the string transfers the stored energy to the arrow. This is where the rule for equal forces applies. Any changes that occur in the alignment of the forces generated by the archer in the act of drawing and holding, require an adjustment in aiming the arrow.

To help in the clarification of the forces generated by the archer, go back to your last issue of *Instinctive Archer* on Bow Tuning. It will help show that the most critical moment in the flight of the arrow is when the arrow nock leaves the string.



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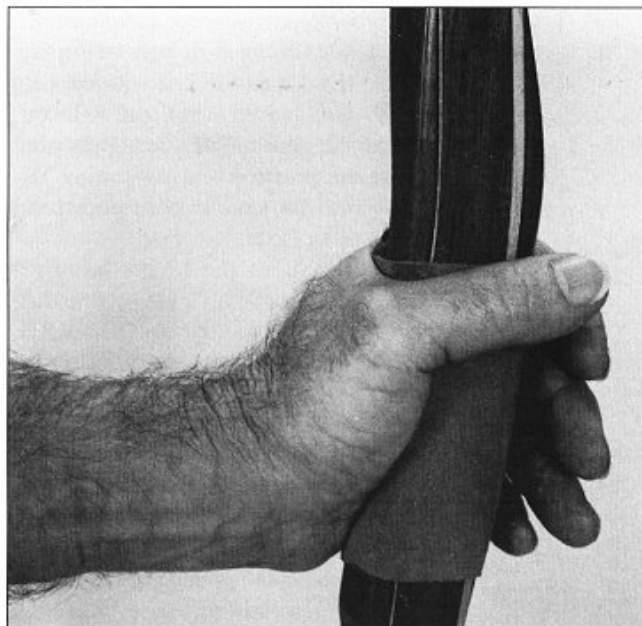
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The "low wrist" position shown here provides the strongest grip, and is ideal for shooting heavy draw-weight bows.

The photo on the previous page shows the classic "high wrist position." Experiment to see which position provides you the greatest shooting accuracy.

### GRIPPING THE BOW

The primary role of the bow hand is to form a base upon which to push against the bow to compensate for the action of drawing the string to anchor. How do you hold your bow hand to lend maximum support for both the pushing and pulling actions of drawing a bow? You either allow the bow hand to relax conforming to the bow's handle, or you look for a bow with a handle area that conforms to your hand. The fewer number of muscles used to hold and draw the bow, the smoother the act of shooting will be.

When discussing the role of the bow hand, we also have to include the bow arm and the bow shoulder. Bows come with various kinds of handle shapes—some are functional and some are simply cosmetic. When you grasp the handle it may have a great feel, this does

not mean it will solve any shooting problems when you apply pressure to support the act of drawing. The handle's shape may cause you to twist the bow, preventing proper string/arrow alignment, or your grip on the handle could place a positive twist on the bow aiding the string arrow alignment. (This grip you would like.)

Start with your bow hand relaxed at your side, and then raise your arm with a relaxed hand into a shooting position pointing at a target. This is an ideal position for the hand when holding the bow. Make sure that your bow-arm elbow is bent enough to allow clearance for string travel upon release. Your shoulder position should be in line naturally when raising and holding your arm extended towards the target. To firm the alignment of your shoulders, simply



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inhale slightly to expand the chest, you will feel the alignment of the shoulders through the back.

Your thumb pad should support the weight of the draw. Place the bow's handle deep enough into the "V" of your thumb and index finger to prevent your

hand from slipping. If you hold your bow arm extended in front of you and apply pressure to your thumb pad with the fingers of your drawing hand, you will feel the brachialis muscle of your upper arm react to the pressure and supporting the elbow joint. Be sure to keep your bow hand fingers relaxed.

What about the bow's handle? Should it be pistol-grip style or straight? Since your wrist is a very flexible joint, it will allow your hand to conform to almost any handle. If you are shooting a recurve with lots of mass in the riser, a pistol grip that has enough material to support the mass weight of the bow on the V of the bow hand lessens the need to grip the bow. This is functional. Other functional handles are designed to offset the grip to match the desired string/arrow/limb alignment. This application appears more often in the design of target recurve bows. With the build out in the sight window of longbows, an off-set handle could be a benefit.

A straight or high-wrist shooting position is perhaps the most sensitive because of the flexibility in the wrist itself. To help overcome this flexibility, a deep pistol grip will help your hand to conform to the bow's handle, stabilizing your wrist.

A simple straight grip on longbows (where your thumb pad is vertical), results in a more rigid wrist position. This is ideal for shooting heavier draw weights. Gripping a bow too tightly or shooting a bow with a large handle that forces your hand open can have the same effect, as both actions can cause you to apply a twisting action to the handle.

Simply look for a bow with a handle that helps you to maintain string/arrow alignment as you push with your bow arm to match the draw weight exerted by the drawing of the string. Relaxing your bow hand, allowing it to

conform to the grip, may be all that is needed to achieve proper alignment.

Speed shooting, trick shooting, or snap shooting can be fun. Doing it well requires an inline draw that balances the draw weight between the push against the handle and the pull on the string. Mastering it takes timing and aiming coordination. Once this style becomes a habit it's hard to go back to methodical, controlled shooting without a lot of hard work.

Snap shooting excels when you are performing trick shots or swing shooting at moving targets. However, you seldom see snap shooters compete well in target or field events with any consistency. Archers who do not snap shoot have their own set of consistency problems, most of which occur at full draw when they are taking time to aim or moving the bow arm to achieve an adjustment in trajectory. The push/pull balance is forsaken when moving the bow arm to adjust the trajectory. It requires addi-



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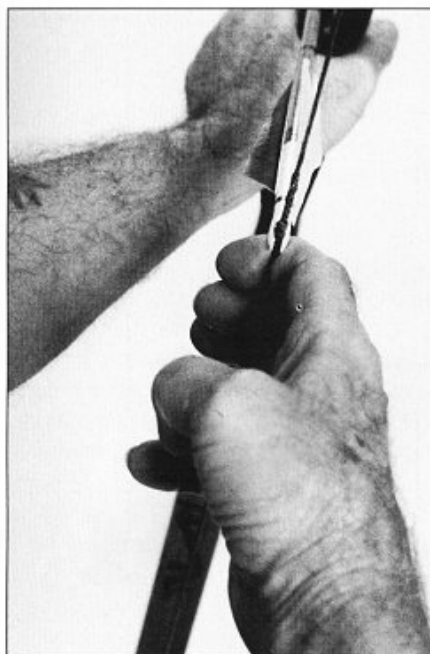
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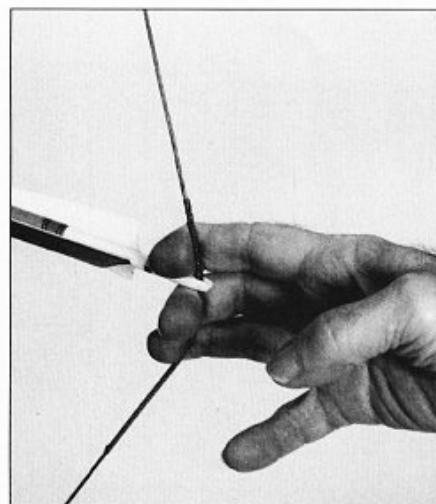


**Whether you shoot three-fingers under or Mediterranean style, your fingers are just hooks with which to draw the string.**

tional muscles to assist in aiming and can cause a creep in your draw or a loss of back tension. Losing back tension while at full draw allows you to drift slightly out of alignment, so that the nock end of your arrow is no longer directly in-line under your eye. It may also cause you to relax your bow-arm shoulder.

#### **GRIPPING THE STRING**

There has been much written about proper ways to grip the string, with much discussion about finger-joint alignment, finger pressure, shooting with three fingers under the nock or with split fingers (one above and two under the nock). Let us start a new chapter, basing the information on the efficient use of the bow arm with all the movements involved from the nocking of the arrow, to drawing and releasing. The explanations of the muscles used will be in generalities, for more precise names and use, I suggest reading Kinesiology by Wells.



**When you reach full draw, relax your fingers slightly in preparation for the release.**

After nocking an arrow on the string, allow the back of your string hand to relax slightly, straightening out your knuckles. Your thumb should also relax, pointing down towards your little finger. When you are at full draw your thumb then can relax under your jawbone. At this point your fingertips are simply hooks to hold the string. You may see some archers hold their thumb straight up along the side of their face, this requires a lot more action in the forearm and can be a hindrance for aligning the arrow. Some archers place their thumb behind their neck prior to the release.

When shooting with three fingers under the nock, the string nock must be placed above the arrow on the string to hold the arrow in place through the draw. The depth of your fingers' hook on the string should be set to meet your need for string control. As a starting position, place the string at the first joint of your finger. As you start your draw, allow your fingers to adjust to the angle of the string, which changes as the draw length increases. You can curl your fingers around the string at the start of the draw for a deeper hook. Remember—the fewer number of muscles used, the smoother the release will be.

When using the split-finger style (one finger above and two below the nock), new archers may have a problem with the arrow falling off the arrow shelf.



### **Association of Traditional Hunting Archers**

We are pleased to announce the formation of the **Association of Traditional Hunting Archers**, a new national organization developed for the traditional archer. Its purpose is to provide a home where we can hang our hats, a home from which we can gain strength and grow. Though ATHA's focus is upon the hunting archer, its foundation rests upon the love of the same traditional archery tackle that unites hunter with rover, rover with recreational archer, and all of us with our past. ATHA aims to reinforce that foundation, to be a positive voice for archery, both within the community of archers and with state wildlife agencies, to present its true form and identity to the public, and to build its future.

For a copy of our mission statement, a list of our goals and a membership application, please mail to: Craig Oberle, C/O American State Bank, P. O. Box 197, Mellette, SD 57461

Please visit us at our website <http://tmuss.tripod.com/TA>, where this same information and a membership application are available, as well as a copy of our charter. Signed, ATHA Steering Committee, Doug Borland, Cory Mattson, Tom Mussatto, Craig Oberle, John Rook, Dale Sharp, Lon Sharp, Dean Torges, Mark Viehweg, Larry Yien, Jim Dahlberg, Chairman.





**Putting it all together. Lock into a strong, full-draw position, anchor deep (note thumb position above), and follow through while keeping your eyes locked on the target (see photo below).**

To compensate for this, as you start to draw, relax your hand so that your fingers are just hooks. This will place a positive rotation on the nock, and turn the arrow in towards the bow, which will keep it in the shelf. If you shoot with three fingers under the nock you will not experience a problem with keeping the arrow on the rest, because there is very little pressure applied to the nock by the fingers.

The wrist of your drawing hand should be relaxed to maintain proper

alignment with your forearm. Electromyography studies show that this results in the tightest grouping at 20 yards. These studies also showed that the release actually starts with the relaxing of the flexor muscles of the forearm that control the fingers. Deviations from proper string-hand/wrist form result in a different hit on the target.

The position for your drawing elbow should be one that helps to keep the weight of the draw primarily on the middle finger of your string hand. If that

requires a slightly high elbow, fine. Look for a relaxed feeling where you feel the most comfort using the fewest number of muscles to maintain your aiming reference location, setting your scapula to anchor the draw.

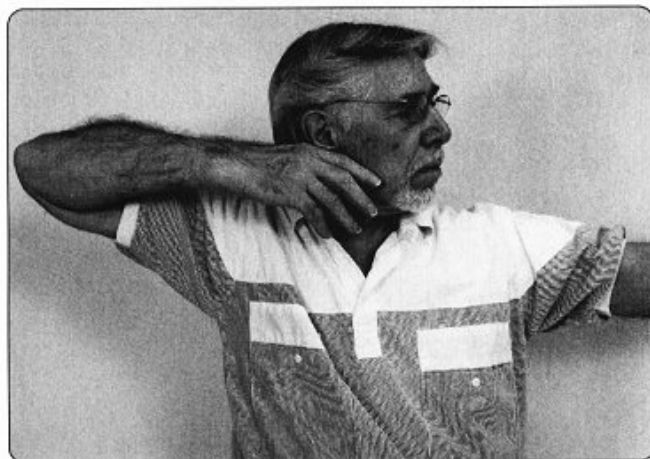
When observing archers at full draw and seeing the arrow from the

side, it may look like a sway-back mare. This is caused by pulling with too much weight on your ring finger, due to poor alignment of your wrist or elbow. It may cause that finger to become sore. Slightly relaxing all three drawing fingers, allowing them to uncurl slightly as they relax, will place most of the draw weight on the middle finger, this also allows your fingers to conform to the angle of the string. Follow through in archery should be nothing more than the natural reaction to relaxing your fingers. Some coaches feel that after the relaxing of the fingers, follow through is forcing the string hand back to touch the shoulder. This exaggerated movement requires a lot of extra motion to achieve the goal. Archers who are not holding the weight of the draw with their back muscles allow the weight of the draw to settle in their arms. This results in a fly-away release, then a forced action to bring the hand back inline to touch the shoulder, resulting in a right arrow for a right handed shooter.

The most efficient release and follow-through occur when the feeling you have in the drawing arm is a fluid action, accruing in both the bow arm and drawing arm. Maintain a constant feel of the tension building up in the act of drawing, without any change in feel while you stop to adjust the aim or check the arrow alignment. Then relax the muscles in your forearm, which will release your fingers from the string. This will automatically result in a follow through that carries your string hand back towards your shoulder—with a picture-perfect inline release and follow through.

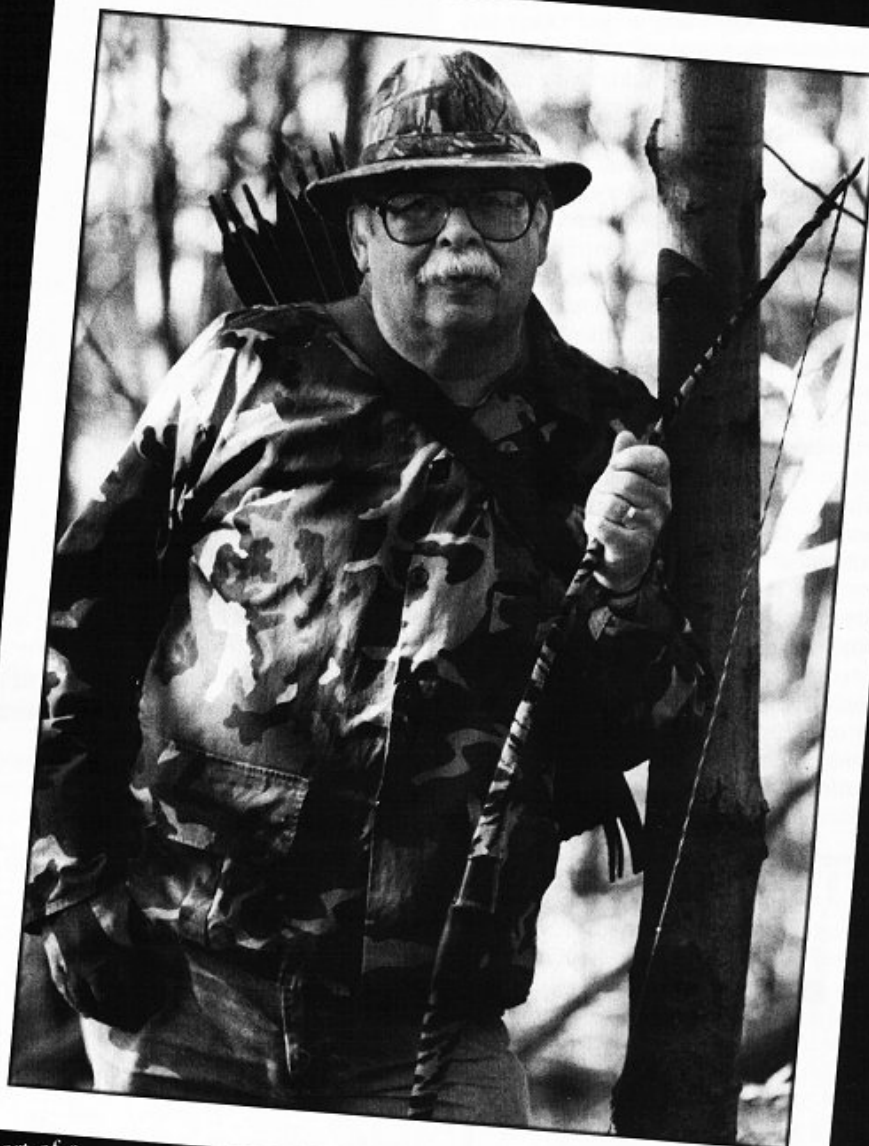
The information in this article will help you develop a shooting style to fit your needs. Once learned, your shooting style will become a habit—almost like an instinct that allows you to concentrate on the spot as your primary goal. These rules are not meant to apply to snap shooting or swing shooting, as these styles have their own set of rules.

Having an understanding of the sport's different shooting styles will give you shooting options not to argue over—but to experiment with and to enjoy.



# GET BACK ALIVE!

By Bob Krout



We were half way through another hunting season and, for the first time in years, I had not heard a single radio report of a lost hunter "out on the mountain." I live up in the mountains of southwest Pennsylvania in an area that is famous for its ski resorts, excellent fishing, and superb hunting opportunities. We are within easy driving distance of Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and even Washington, D.C. Every year our population increases with the advent of deer season. As you can imagine, living in the city does not prepare someone for finding their way in the woods. Even in this age of cell phones and global positioning systems, there are still those hardy souls who have not given up the knack of getting "turned around" in the woods.

If the truth were told, temporarily misplacing your destination is not a skill confined to urban dwellers. I am sitting ten minutes from State Game Land (SGL) #50 where I have hunted deer for the last thirty years. There is a spot in there that is a large cedar "plantation." The ground beneath these cedars is fairly flat and bare. The trees are spaced evenly, not because they were planted that way, but because of the available nutrients in the soil. The edge cover surrounding this stand is one of the best places to hunt on the entire game land, especially in inclement weather. The only trouble

is that, once you are down in amongst those cedars, everything looks the same! One direction looks the same as every other direction. If I have trouble after thirty years, imagine how confusing it must be to someone who is new to the area.

Over the years I have heard of many hunters "misdirected" in areas like this. Usually there is a happy ending, sometimes there is not. Usually it turns out that the happy endings came about because the people engaged in their little "adventure" were prepared and had some knowledge and basic equipment that allowed them to get along in comfort until they were either found or figured a way out by themselves.

Okay—Just what do you need to get along and find your way in the woods? The most important survival item you have is that fuzzy lump between your ears! What you know and how you apply it can mean the difference between an adventure and a tragedy. It does no good to have fire-starting equipment if you don't know how to use it in adverse cond



tions. A compass is no good if you don't know which direction is out! Don't just buy some equipment and carry it around. Learn how to use the things you choose to put in your little "survival pack."

What type of jaunt you are on and how long you intend to stay out determines what you carry. Obviously, what you need to carry on a visit to the back forty will be different from what you should have on an extended visit to an unfamiliar new hotspot! Just remember to keep it simple. It will do no good to assemble a huge backpack filled with every conceivable luxury if you end up leaving the pack in the truck because it is too heavy.

The day you leave your gear behind is the day that you will probably need it. And when that day arrives you will probably need it desperately.

This is my list of essentials for a simple morning or evening hunt in familiar territory. Keep in mind that these items are in addition to those things that I normally carry in my pockets on a daily basis. Things such as a good quality pocketknife, bandanna, pen, comb, wallet, keys, change, belt



**I love a good straight knife. Here are three of the best. (left to right) A Buck 105, a Case fixed blade, and a Marbles Pathfinder. All three fit my hand well, an important consideration when your hands get slippery while cleaning an animal.**

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knife, compass, disposable lighter, mini maglite, and rope.

I must admit, I am somewhat of a nut when it comes to knives. There is nothing more basic to getting along in the woods than a good knife. I always have my Case folding knife in my pocket. I use a model known as a "large Stockman." It is 4.25 inches long and has three blades: clip, sheepsfoot, and spey. When my pants go on in the morning my knife is in my pocket. I keep it clean and sharp and use it constantly for everything. However, for woods work and hunting I like to add a straight belt knife. My favorite is a quality model with a four to five inch blade of moderate design. Not too big, not too small.

Of course any good knife deserves to be carried in a quality sheath. One that holds the knife securely and comfortably. For the last few years I have been using a Buck model 105, an excellent knife that sharpens easily and holds an edge. It is big enough to handle just about any job I need to perform, but not so big that it is unwieldy or uncomfortable. I also like a Marbles "Pathfinder" model. The quality of the steel and the proportions of blade to handle impress me. It just feels right! Will it replace the

Buck as my "go to" knife? Only time will tell.

Knives are an intensely personal thing. Some like a folder like the excellent model 110 Buck folding hunter. I have one and sometimes use it. It is more unobtrusive than a straight knife, a consideration that may be important when you have to stop in town going to, or returning from the woods. It would probably cause no comment around here where hunting is still considered a normal fact of life. But, where where my son lives I could end up in jail! There it is considered a deadly weapon and the police will arrest you for carrying a hunting knife in a store or other public place. But, that aside, I still favor a good straight knife for all around woods use.

I have one other reason for carrying a sturdy belt knife. Have you ever seen pictures of Saxton Pope, Art Young, or any of the other old time outdoorsmen? Have you ever seen a picture where they weren't carrying a decent knife on their belts? Somewhere in our complacent times we sometimes forget the role a good knife might play as our last-ditch personal defense weapon. I know—that doesn't sound too likely. Just tell that to the park ranger who was hik-



**My favorite homemade belt pouch and its contents. The knife and canteen go on my belt, everything else fits inside the pouch and rides out of the way at the small of my back.**

ing in a national park south of Denver about two years ago and was attacked by a mountain lion. All he had for defense was a ridiculous little two-inch bladed Swiss Army knife. It wasn't even sharpened. His story was related in Outdoor Life Magazine as well as the December Reader's Digest. I'll bet if he had it to do over he would have added the few extra ounces of a good sturdy hunting knife, either straight blade or folder, and it would have been sharp!

I always carry a compass when in the woods. The one I favor is slightly larger than a silver dollar. It has a plastic case with a snap lid and weighs almost nothing. It has been extremely reliable over the years. I just realized that I can't remember how long ago I bought it but it cost me \$4.95 and is American made. (That must mean that it is OLD.) I always make sure that I know the general lay of the land wherever I am hunting. I take compass readings before heading out into any unfamiliar territory. I like to know the general direction of any roads, powerlines, firebreaks, etc. in the area where I will be traveling. If I should get turned around it is easy to get back out if I know that the road where I parked runs in an east-west direction and I have gone in on the south side of the highway.

If I am going into some unfamiliar area I also try to get a map. I have

topographic maps of most of the country where I hunt and they come in handy. However the ones I like best are the individual maps of each State Game Land (SGL) available from the Pennsylvania Game Commission for a very nominal cost. SGLs are numbered and each map shows the boundary lines, waterways, trails, roads, etc. for each SGL. It has been a while since I bought mine but I believe that the cost per map is now \$1.50 postpaid. We are lucky in Pennsylvania in that we have almost one million acres of SGLs across the state. State Game Lands are lands bought with hunting license money and whose primary purpose is use as public hunting grounds.

I like to carry a disposal lighter when in the woods. If the unthinkable happened and I had to spend a night out, I couldn't think of anything more comforting than a campfire. If the weather is cold the ability to start a fire could save your life. I also carry some sort of fire starter fuel. Currently I am using some military surplus trioxane fuel bars. They are light, clean, and reli-

able. One bar can be broken into about three pieces. One piece being sufficient for starting one fire, even in wet conditions.

I always stick my mini maglite in my pocket. It is indispensable during late evening bloodtrailing or when you face a long walk into the woods before dawn or back out after a long day on stand. I always start out each season with fresh batteries and a new bulb. It is a little insurance that can pay off in a big way if it is needed.

Finally I add a six-inch, fine-cut file for sharpening broadheads and an eight to ten foot piece of 1/4 inch nylon rope for dragging deer, building shelters or any other chore that might require a piece of rope.

Most of the time I will also add a small 35mm camera, which I carry in an inside pocket of my favorite camo jacket. A small bottle of water and some snacks finish off my supplies for a comfortable day afield.

It is interesting to note that all of these items fit comfortably in my pockets or on my belt. They blend in and are not in the least uncomfortable to carry. That is an important consideration because what is uncomfortable will eventually get left behind. What if I am going to a new area or one where I might be a long way back in from the truck? What essentials do I carry when the possibilities are greater that I may need something more than just a knife and a compass? Here is what I add to my basic items when I feel that I might be better off with a more complete kit or where I might have a harder time getting back to the truck.

- A large belt pouch or fanny pack
- Canteen of water
- Pocket first aid kit
- Emergency space blanket
- Plastic tarp

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- Water purification tablets
- Pocket sharpening stone
- Enameled tin cup for drinking and cooking
- Small zip lock bags with salt, pepper, sugar, bouillon cubes, tea bags
- Fire starter fuel (trioxane fuel bars)
- Candle
- Cordage
- Snacks
- Notebook

Sounds like a lot doesn't it? It really isn't. Everything fits easily into my belt pouch or in a pocket somewhere. As I said before, the one thing you want to avoid is anything that is a burden. If it is uncomfortable or gets in the way of normal activity you will eventually leave it behind.

There are two ways to carry this equipment. One, the most common, is to get a good quality fanny pack. The one I have is from the Fred Bear Company. It has a quick release buckle, a large main compartment, and two smaller pouches. It is lightweight but sturdy and comfortable. I can thread my canteen on the belt at one side and my belt knife on the other. Everything rides nicely and I still have plenty of room for my back quiver full of arrows. A few years back I made the belt pouch seen in the photos. I carry it on an old cartridge belt simply because it is comfortable. Another advantage to carrying your gear on a separate belt is the fact that is not always dragging your pants down as you maneuver through the woods. That never used to bother me but it seems that my waist is not in the same position it was when I was only 40 or so!

Most of the items on this list are self-explanatory but I would like to comment on a few of them. First, why the extra compass? Why not? I have room for it and the second compass is a bit easier to use for shooting a course from one point to another. Same with the waterproof matchcase and the small magnifying glass. Just two more means to start a fire if the lighter goes on the blink.

I consider the space blanket to be one of the most important things you can carry. They are inexpensive, lightweight, and can save your life. Anyone who has ever spent a night out in the woods can appreciate what it is

like to get cold. The reflective qualities of the space blanket can keep you alive by containing and conserving your body heat. Combined with a lightweight plastic tarp you have a great combination for comfort. The tarp I use is about six feet by eight feet, and was cut from a much larger drop cloth. It folds up into a package about the size of a pack of cigarettes. It is probably a bit light for a "stand alone" shelter, especially if the wind is kicking up, but it is perfect for stretching over a frame of branches, etc. At the worst it can be used as an extra waterproof wrapping or stretched to make a roof over your head.

My tin cup is an old favorite. It can be used as a "billy can" for heating drinks and cooking. It can then be used as a drinking cup after the drink is warm. It takes a bit of getting used to when you first try it. The metal conducts heat and you could get a burned lip if you are not careful! I have made up little packets with small size Ziploc bags, the type that are used for parts. These packets contain individual packs of salt, pepper, sugar, bouillon cubes, and tea bags. They all fit into the tin cup, which is then placed into a quart size, heavy duty Ziploc freezer bag along with a candle and a trioxane bar. It makes a neat handy package that takes up little room in the pouch. The empty Ziploc can also be used as a water carrier if needed.

I don't really anticipate ever getting that far in that I need the water purification tablets. But you never know and they take up so little space that I add them just to be sure.

Cordage comes in handy for building shelters and a multitude of other chores. I like to carry a piece of 1/8 inch nylon cord about 25 feet long. It lies in the bottom of the pouch and takes up hardly any room.

Finally I always like to stick a small notebook into a pocket for trips "to the woods." A notebook comes in handy for making notes, leaving notes, or drawing maps. I guess it is just an old military habit but I just don't feel right going to the field without a notebook and pen! Sometimes people ask me if all of this

stuff is necessary? No, it probably isn't necessary all of the time! But I have used just about everything in my pack at one time or another. Many times I was darned glad to have the items when they were needed. I have also been out when I should have carried my belt pouch and didn't. Of course that was when I needed it the most.

One incident that comes to mind was a few years back when the wife and kids had gone East to visit relatives over the Christmas holidays. I had stayed behind because of work obligations. As it turned out the weather got absolutely gorgeous after Christmas and I had a couple of days off to greet the late archery season that started the day after Christmas. I wasn't anticipating being out that long so I did not carry my belt pouch with me. Indeed, I did not really have the gear that I do now. I just took my longbow and backquiver, my belt knife, and a few other things in my pockets. Not taking a flashlight turned out to be the biggest mistake. I jumped some deer and was following them through the woods when we came to a trout stream. I was able to cross on some rocks that were just submerged and got across safely. After a few hours it was getting late and I decided to head back to the truck. When I got back to the stream it was too dark to see the rocks where I had crossed. The water on either side of those rocks was a good six feet deep or more and the deep water continued for quite a ways downstream! I finally ended up making a six-mile detour to get back across the stream to my truck. If I had been able to see the rocks I would have had less than a half-mile hike! I have been carrying the mini maglite ever since.

Every person will have different requirements, but I believe that my list covers most of the basics. Whatever you decide that you need, just remember to keep it simple. It is better to have six things and the knowledge to use them effectively than it is to lug around half of the store and not know what the heck you are doing! It could mean your life!



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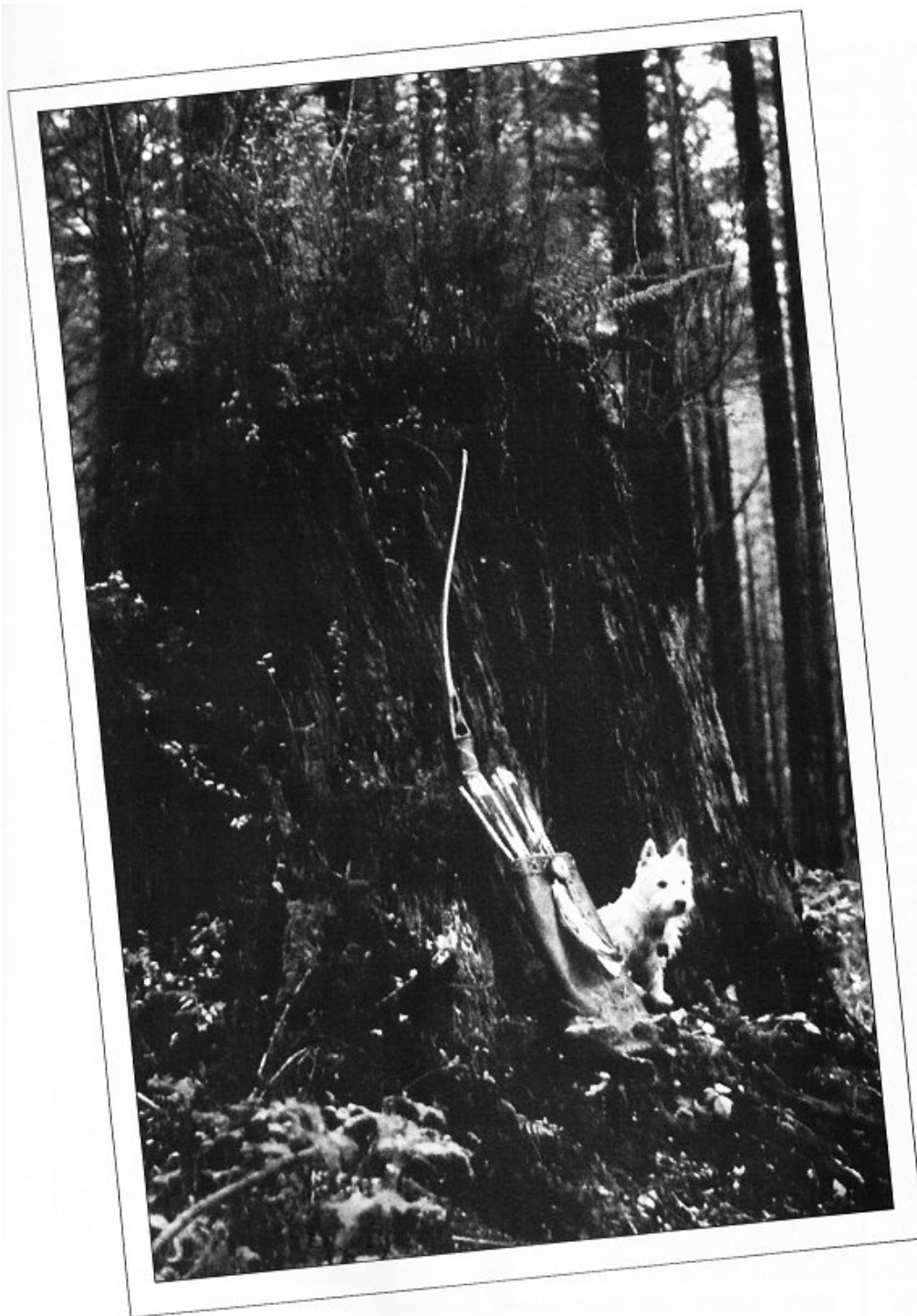
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# THE GIFT

BY  
GORD EASON

**T**he saw whispered in monotone as the two men pushed and pulled its crosscut blade to and fro, each balancing on a springboard in their struggle to bring a towering wooden giant to ground. One of the men was just a year away from retirement, and the aching muscles in his back and shoulders protested that this game was for younger men. He looked up frequently, his eyes probing the forest canopy for hazards—a broken limb falling from 200 feet or more could quickly send a man to the Promised Land, or cripple him for life. He had helped carry more than one broken body from the forest. Too many years he'd been doing this, too many close calls.

A shattering crack snapped him back to the present. He jumped instinctively from the springboard, he and his partner moved away from the tree. The undercut closed as the massive Douglas Fir fell to its own Promised Land. The tree picked up speed as it headed for the earth that had sustained it for 800 years, and when it landed, the ground shook.

"Wee Jock," the author's shooting partner, sitting at the base of a relic from another time.

That was more than 70 years ago. The forest is growing back now; the moist climate of Vancouver Island nurturing the second growth from seedlings to trees well over 150-feet tall and growing. I don't know who the man was but he left me a gift. The old stump of that fir tree is about five feet high and more than six feet in diameter. And for me it's been a deer, an elk, a moose, a caribou, or whatever my mind can imagine.

There are many things I find appealing on this island, some 40 miles off the west coasts of British Columbia and Washington State, but there are two things I particularly like: It doesn't snow much or get really cold in winter, so I can shoot outdoors all year in relative comfort; and the long history of logging has left a treasure trove of rotting stumps to shoot at.

Stump shooting, or roving, is almost as much fun as hunting. It can be a quiet walk in the woods on a summer day. I have found it so peaceful on occasion I've been known to take the odd nap. It can also be rowdy competition with close friends that share the love of a taut bowstring and a well-spiced wooden shaft. For practice at unknown distances and over varying terrain there is nothing better. Uphill, downhill, across gullies and streams, or threading the needle between trees, you choose the shot. It's also a great way to scout future hunting areas in the off season. And it beats the hell out of golf!

Every day in the forest brings something new. One of the most memorable days I've spent roving occurred in January a couple years ago, when we got a reprieve from the usual rain and dark skies. My wife, Ellaner, and I went to one of my favorite areas, shooting our way down to a creek bottom. We crossed the creek on some fallen trees and proceeded to spend the afternoon in an area with dozens of old rotting stumps and downed logs. I particularly like the logs, which for me represent bedded deer, elk, caribou or, on my off days, elephant! As luck would have it, we never made it across the creek that day.

As we approached the bottom, something caught our eye. A blacktail doe was wading upstream, immersed to her chest in the frigid water. She had a

patch of hair missing from her flank; it appeared something unusual was playing out here. The doe continued wading until she came to the fallen trees we would have used to cross. These impeded her progress, so she bounded up the bank and vanished into the forest.

"Let's just sit tight here," I whispered. "Something is going to happen, I'm sure of it." Within five minutes a

wolf appeared on the opposite bank, barely 30 yards from our position. He moved onto the gravel bar and looked downstream and away from us. The doe's ruse had worked; the wolf had lost the trail. After a few moments, he continued along the creek bottom, never knowing we were there.

I said, "Can you believe it? Man, this has to be a once-in-a-lifetime



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experience." No reply. I turned to where my wife had been and she was gone! A movement in the direction of the truck attracted my attention. So much for that day's outing.

You don't need much to go stump shooting—a bow, a few arrows, the odd leather accessory, a bit of land, and some imagination. I usually use the bow I hunt with. Arrows can be new or from the "Old Warrior" bin. Field points will do, but I find Judo points or rubber blunts the best choice. Both are hard to lose and will take a pounding. I also like to take a small white garbage bag. I occasionally find a can or cigarette pack or other item someone has "lost." I'd love to find these people so I could return their stuff.

There's no dress code—full hunting gear or jeans and a tee-shirt will do equally well. And you don't really need stumps. A clump of dirt, a rotten log, a leaf or plant, your partner's arrow, anything is fair game. Woodland shots tend to be relatively short unless the trees are widely spaced and the forest floor is clear of underbrush. Longer shots can be the order of the day in more open country. There are really only two rules—shoot safely and have fun.

Today, we were going somewhere new. "C'mon Jock, Let's go to the woods," I hollered. I had my bow in my hand and my little buddy didn't need any extra persuasion. Jock is a West-Highland Terrier and my shooting companion. His full name is Jock Whisky McEason, and one day I'm going to train him to find lost arrows, but that's another story. I packed lunch and a thermos of coffee for me, and a few goodies for Jock.

I knew of an abandoned logging road that had been partially reopened and I thought Jock and I might explore some new country. I parked the truck and Jock and I started to hike; not 10 minutes later we came to a small lake I'd been unaware of! We continued along the road for another hundred yards or so until it tapered down to a trail. Then it dawned on me that the trail was a portage on the canoe route that paddles its way through the region's lakes. Usually I'd leave the area as I'm apprehensive about shooting when there are



**Memorial to a monarch. This massive red cedar stump shows the holes used for springboards by fallers many years ago.**

people around, but since it was late October and canoeists were scarce, we continued.

Jock and I followed the trail beside a small stream. Soon we spotted a fine buck. He was busy feeding and hadn't seen us. I waited until his foreleg came forward, picked a spot, and in that one fluid motion we all know so well, drew and released the arrow. If that spot were a dime, I'd have center punched it. "Not bad, eh Jock?" I said. "Too bad it's just a stump." I retrieved the arrow and

we continued on the trail, me in search of more "game" and Jock looking for doggy things. We hadn't gone much further when we ran into a herd of Roosevelt Elk—real elk, not stumps. Roosevelt Elk are native to the island and there are several healthy herds in this area. They can be hunted but only with a limited-entry tag. Today wasn't my turn, but it's always a thrill to see them.

The day passed pleasantly with Jock sticking his nose into everything and me enjoying the excitement of exploring new country and the quiet peace of the forest. We shared lunch by the lake at the far end of the trail and hunted the mighty "moose" on our way back. It's at times like these that I think I must have been a hero in a former life, to be rewarded with the gift of spending time in so beautiful a place with my bow and a good friend.

It's early November as I write this. The high winds and heavy rain that announce the arrival of Fall have blown away the Indian Summer of recent weeks. And that's good. The rivers on the island have been low too long and the rain will bring high water. The salmon are crowding lower reaches of the rivers, waiting for them to rise so they can make their final journey and complete the circle of life. The circle of life. That thought strikes a cord; I think I'll go hunting tomorrow.



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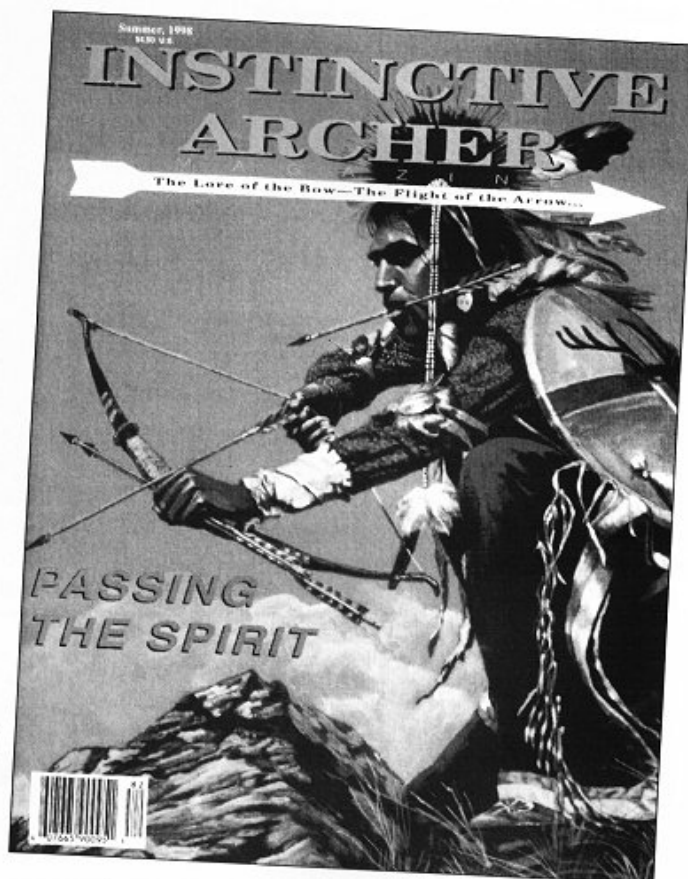
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**LORE: A BODY OF WISDOM OR KNOWLEDGE ... ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS OF A TRADITIONAL NATURE.**



# *Archers Improve Tactical Ability*





**On the grounds of an obscure country mansion, the author adds a silent weapon to the arsenal of a highly trained member of the British military. (Among the world's elite military forces, Gurkhas have earned an almost legendary reputation for courage, skill—and stealth.)**

I strongly suspected some kind of practical joke when Tony Harcourt, the founder of the Duke of Beaufort's Foresters, phoned to ask if I could attend an archery display which was part of a Royal Gurkha Rifles parade at Miserden Park on Sunday, 23rd May, 1999. For a start, where the hell was, and what was, Miserden Park?

Tony was also very vague about the purpose of the event and, after all, Gurkha warriors from Nepal in the Himalayas and primitive archers like ourselves from the local lush flatlands of England didn't really seem to go together. Also, I was totally unable to see the remotest connection between a general purpose machine gun and a longbow, or between an armour piercing round and a flu flu, or between a kukri and an arrow rake.

Anyway, albeit of a very frightening appearance when raking for lost arrows in dense thickets, Tony is a good looking and trustworthy chap. So, with fingers crossed as a precaution, an archer called Harefoot Matthews and I set off for Miserden Park. Eventually, with rear-

view mirrors trailing twigs and straw, and valances dripping mud and manure, we found ourselves gently scrunching to a gravelled halt outside a quite superb mansion, set in very remote countryside.

We felt rather apprehensive, not least because my ancient Ford car didn't quite match the magnificent surroundings, including the coat of arms over a splendid seasoned oak main door. The motto on the arms read "Virtue Vinces" (by virtue, thou shalt conquer) and so the word "virtue" slightly reassured us that perhaps a hasty stringing of bows combined with a hasty retreat was unnecessary.

A well-dressed man emerged from the doorway and, eyeing the Duke of Beaufort's portcullis badge on our shirts, politely enquired of our business. We informed him, and were directed to park our vehicle under the trees further down the drive and then proceed to the back of the house on foot. House? I could have more than comfortably lived in any one of the place's numerous porches. I enquired as to whom the custody of the estate was entrusted and he replied that it

was a Major Tom Wills, Brigade of Guards (another elite part of the British Army).

On arrival at the back of the "house" (which, despite its grandeur, was not that easily defendable) we were greeted by about a half acre of finely cut lawn from which one overlooked a deep wooded valley dressed in the finest of spring's colours. To our right, an enormous marquee failed to blot out a vast expanse of immaculate stepped gardens in which every plant, bush, and shrub had a definite military appearance. Wow!

Definitely of an un-military appearance were members of the Duke of Beaufort's Foresters bent about various parts of the lawn rigging archery targets, the sight of whom afforded us great relief. Tony came up to greet us and at last made the reason for our presence clear, explaining that this was an event to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Many eminent people had been invited to attend and our part was to extract a small fee from any guest who wanted to shoot in a bow, the fee then passed to the Trust.

I use the term "un-military" guardedly, since it occurred to me that Major Tom Wills must have been totally unaware of who he had let loose on his back lawn. . . that those respectably dressed Foresters going quietly about their tasks, in polite conversation and polite smiles, were a bunch of absolute ruffians, many of whom were expert archers. Why, if the year had been 1399 and they had fancied their beautiful surroundings, then they could have captured the mansion in five minutes and the rest of the estate in two.

Towards noon, guests and Gurkhas began arriving, the latter mainly comprising two regimental bands, one a silver band, and the other a pipe (bagpipe) band. We too were guests and hence allocated a lunch table in the marquee. When we had finished preparing the archery course, I strolled up to the marquee and looked at the seating plan. . . Sir A and Lady on Table B, General C on Table D, the Duchess of E on Table F, and so on. And I was very proud to see "The Duke of Beaufort's Foresters on Table G"—actually Table 28 which indi-

cates a rather large guest list. The places to which our love of the bow takes us!

We lunched on curry of course. The Gurkhas had brought a selection of their curries with them, and lunch was served on a buffet basis, the Gurkhas in attendance to help with the choosing and serving. I've never seen "waiters" in camouflage combat gear before, and got the distinct feeling that if one had complained about, say, either the plates being too cold or the curry being too hot, one would have had an ear lopped off, or in the case of complaining about both, then both ears lopped off, and pro rata.

However, the lunch was excellent and we dined to an equally excellent rendition of various melodies soothingly played by the Gurkha silver band. After lunch, I asked a Gurkha captain about the purpose of the notch at the base of the kukri blade. He said it was to catch blood and hence prevented the handle becoming slippery "with enemy blood," which made me glad that there had not been a selection of meats on the menu as I presume, whilst in England, they must encounter social pests the same as we do, car thieves and road repair gangs immediately coming to mind. I also presume that ex-Gurkha soldiers living in Nepal are not inconvenienced by problems like being owed money or troublesome neighbours.

The archery event proved a huge success, but, surprisingly, the majority of our "customers" were the Gurkhas themselves. They really took to shooting in a bow, several coming back for further "goes." These small (average height 5' 4"), simple and delightful warrior pupils, all of whom had never shot in a bow before, were delighted with their new found weapon—and they learnt extremely quickly.

Their shooting was accompanied by shouts of delight from their comrades when the shooter's arrow feathered the mark, and I noticed they always shot for the eye on the field targets. Apparently the eye is of great significance in their culture. I also noticed that each first drew the bow exactly as depicted in ancient pictures of Ghengis Khan's mounted Mongol archers. Not too surprising as the Gurkha peoples are of part Mongol extract.



**SOLDIERS IN CIVVIES—Tony Harcourt**  
instructing Gurkha soldiers in the supreme art.

Unfortunately, there was one social gaff. It occurred when Major Wills drew a bow for the first time. He had difficulty in hitting the target (as many of us do on our millionth time) and, even more unfortunately, the said Harefoot was lolling nearby. Now there has ever been a friendly animosity betwixt the Coldstream Guards and the Grenadier Guards (separate regiments within the Brigade of Guards), of which Harefoot was well aware. Thinking that Major Wills was a Grenadier, Harefoot suggested to the Major that in order to hit the target it would help if he imagined it to

be a "Coldstreamer." "But I am a Coldstreamer," replied the Major. Oh dear!

The finale of this very grand day was the combined Gurkha bands "beating the retreat," and I found it a most emotional experience. Towards the end, a group of Gurkhas in national costume gave a dance display involving much intricate brandishing of their kukris.

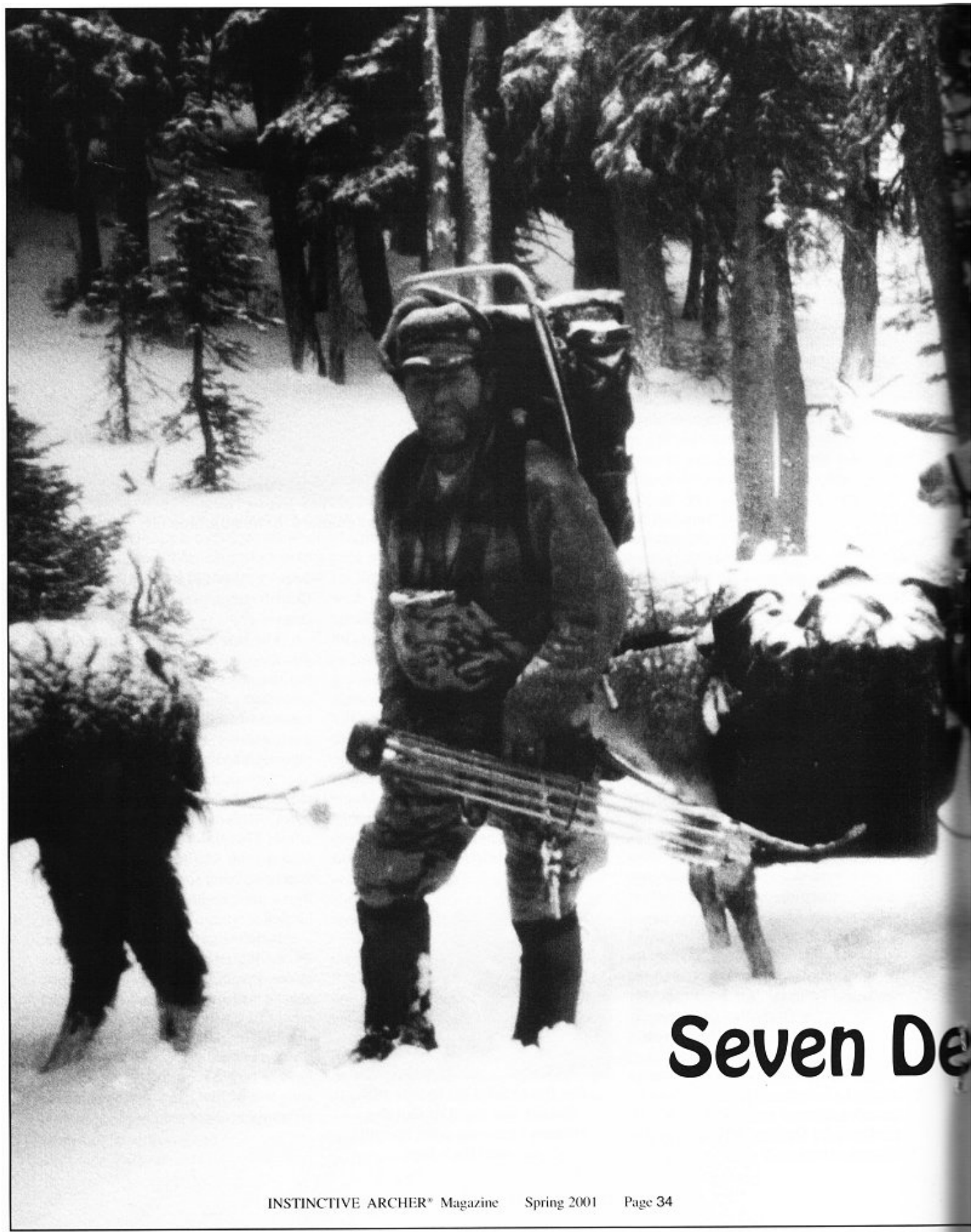
"I think there's a serious message there somewhere," a female Scottish voice quietly remarked as the dance finished. The maiden had been intently studying the whirling blades and as she was none other than Tony's wife Jean, then I think he had better watch out for himself.

It didn't quite end there, as some weeks later I saw a Gurkha warrior again—one of the pipe band in fact—he was in full combat gear, playing the pipes to a passing armoured column. He stood at the entrance to a road tunnel in Kosovo at the height of the invasion of Kosovo by NATO forces. Now did I see what looked like a few fletches protruding above his right shoulder?

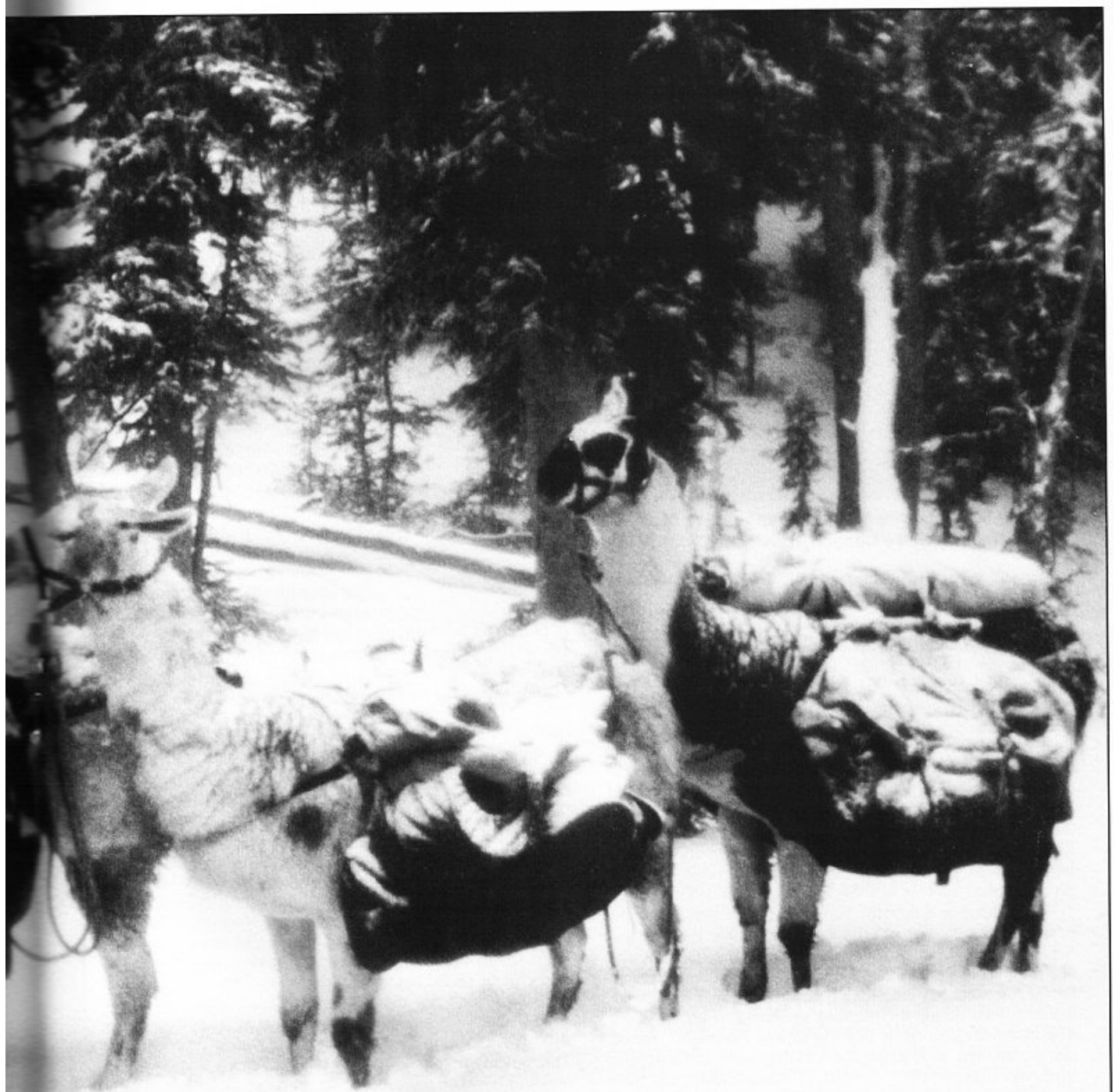


**For those who go to war with Britain, the sight of Gurkha rifleman coming over the hill is often their last.**









# evils—Third Time's a Charm

*By Mike Schlegel*



**Idaho's Seven Devils mountain range rises high above the mighty Snake River in Hell's Canyon, the deepest gorge in North America.**

**T**his would be my third try for a mountain goat in Idaho. My initial hunt occurred in 1973 when bowhunting mountain goats was still a general season. I came close to bagging a real trophy billy on that hunt but no cigars.

My next opportunity was in 1989. By then the number of bowhunters hunting mountain goats and the harvest had increased greatly. In addition, most of the goat populations throughout Idaho were declining. General bowhunting was terminated and controlled hunts were initiated. Since I could only apply for one of the three trophy species in Idaho (bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose) per year I opted to try for bighorn sheep first. Between 1971 and 1987 I applied for a bighorn sheep, finally drawing a tag in 1987. I began applying for a mountain goat tag in 1988, drawing one in 1989.

The area I drew my permit had three stratified hunts in the same hunt area, one in early September through late September, one from late September through late October and one from late October through mid November. I decided to go for the last hunt. My reasoning was antelope, deer and elk are easier to hunt during the rut, thus so should mountain goats. The mountain goat rut is in early to mid November. I soon discovered there were major flaws in my rationale. First, prior to the rut mature billies normally distance themselves from the nanny/kid groups therefore they are easier to stalk. During the rut they join and/or are in close proximity to the nanny/kid groups, making stalking very difficult. In fact, I was much more impressed with the eyesight of mountain goats than that of the bighorn sheep. Secondly, to avoid deep snow, mountain goats seek out cliff areas because they "shed" the snow. In many cases it was impossible to hunt the goats because they could not be approached. For example my hunting partner Ron Sherer and I found five places we could get into the cliff area that most of the goats retreated to but could only come back down in two places. Also, due to the snow and ice, it was

dangerous getting around in the cliffs. In addition, the probability of shooting a goat and not being able to retrieve it was very great. After hunting six days I decided to call it quits before either Ron or I got hurt. All in all it was a great hunt. We learned a lot about mountain goat rut behavior, saw some real trophy class billies, plus the scenery was outstanding.

Since I did not harvest a mountain goat, I had to wait two years before I could apply for another permit. I had two unsuccessful attempts for moose before trying for another goat permit. In 1997 I again drew another mountain goat permit. I was doing some contract work and was away from home most of June. During a phone call with my wife she informed me I received a refund check from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. I assumed it was a rejection notice for the mountain goat permit as the permit money is sent in with the application. You

can imagine my surprise when I discovered it was actually a permit. The hunt area I selected this time was the Seven Devils area of Hells Canyon on the Oregon/Idaho border. The hunt season was August 30 through November 12. Since one of the trophy values of a mountain goat is a winter coat, I planned to wait until early October to begin hunting. Also, my hunting partner Ron Sherer was guiding grizzly bear bowhunters in Alaska until October 1 and I wanted to wait for him to accompany me on the hunt.

After much packing, arranging, repacking and rearranging we finally headed out on October 5. I rented two llamas for the hunt to go along with the two I owned. By the time we drove to the trailhead, packed the llamas and hit the trail we knew it would be close to dark before we arrived at the spring where we planned to set up camp. The distance to our campsite was 6-7 miles with an 800-foot and 1400 foot elevation drop, plus a 700 and 600-foot elevation gain. Soon after we left the trailhead we began having trouble with the packs on the rented llamas. The packs were not complete; thus we had to "jerry rig" them. Also, the llamas were not in very good shape. Therefore, we spent the night at the bottom of the 1400-foot elevation drop along the West Fork of Sheep Creek. This was my first major trip with llamas and it was obvious I was way down on the learning curve.

We loaded up the next morning and made it to our campsite by mid morning. We set up our four-person dome tent, cut some wood, assembled a rustic lean too and had the llamas staked out before noon. Prior to the trip I checked the long-range weather forecast. According to the reports a high-pressure system was in place and projected to remain for at least a week. Since this was more or less a scouting hunt, we did not plan to stay more than four to five days. Also, because of the weather forecast and the meadow where we camp I did not bring feed for the llamas. They are much like goats in their feeding behavior and will eat just about anything.

We went separate ways to scout during the afternoon. I checked around Basin Lake and Ron checked the Shelf Lake/Sheep Lake area. Neither of us found sign or saw goats. By the time we returned to camp later in the day it was snowing. It snowed all night and was still snowing at daylight. Due to the snow and fog we decided it would be a waste of time to hunt. The wind picked up during the day and for the next 24 hours we were only out of the tent about 2 hours. During the 2-hour break in the weather we did spot some goat tracks on a distant ridge. Weather permitting we planned to hunt that ridge the next day. If nothing else, we could track the goat in the snow.

The morning weather had moderated somewhat. However, the threat of more snow was still in the air. Also, the llamas were not happy campers. Unlike horses, they do not paw through the snow to feed. Therefore, before heading out to hunt, Ron and I "pawed" the snow for them.

It took us a couple of hours to get to the ridge where we spotted the tracks. The sign suggested the animal was alone and probably a billy. We worked out the tracks only to discover the goat left the ridge via a steep rocky cliff that we could not negotiate. We returned to the trail and decided to hike to Dry Diggins Lookout. Goats were known to frequent the lookout during the summer months. Also, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game used the site to capture goats for transplant purposes. While traveling to the lookout we encountered goat tracks on the trail. The tracks suggested a nanny/kid group. We followed the tracks until we determined the goats were headed to an area we could glass later from the trail.

We continued to the lookout, as it was a good vantage point. It was quite windy and cold when we arrived at the lookout. We climbed to the catwalk and began glassing. The wind had blown the shutter open on the windows of the west side of the lookout. In addition, one of the windows had come loose and snow was piling up inside the lookout. Ron and I climbed through the open window to get out of the wind. Since we were out of the wind we decided to eat lunch. Visibility was poor and we did not see any goats. Prior to leaving we removed as much of the snow as possible from inside the lookout, plus put the window and shutter back in place.



**According to the reports, a high-pressure system was in place and projected to remain for at least a week. Ha!**

The trail system we were on allowed us to make a loop to get back to camp. We did not see any goats or goat sign on our return trip. By the time we got to camp it was snowing again.

The next morning we hiked north of camp on the Dry Diggins trail. The weather was marginal for hunting goats, as it was snowing, foggy and windy. Also, I was beginning to get concerned as there was now about 12 inches of snow at our camp and we had to climb about 800 feet higher to get back to the vehicle. Therefore, we decided to leave the next morning.

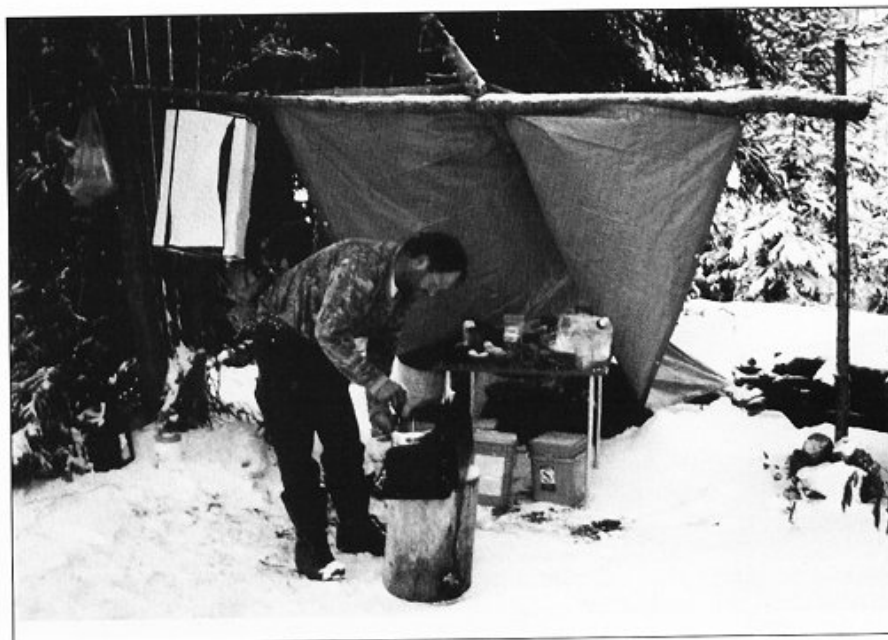
It was a good decision since it was snowing again the next morning. On the way out we met a local outfitter with a pack string headed to his camp beyond where we had camped. The snow was drifting so bad that shortly after leaving him, we could not see his track in the trail. Also, there were places where the llama packs were dragging in the snow. Ron and I took turns breaking trail. All in all, it was a grueling trip to the trailhead.

A few days after returning home, the weather warmed up and much of the snow melted. We decided to pack in again. This time I borrowed three llamas from friend Doug Chase. In addition I took llama feed, a new 'spike' tent and a wood stove. Also, being a high tech kind of guy, I took a cell phone so I could call out and get weather reports from my wife. We drove to the trailhead, hiked in and set up camp in one day. Unfortunately it began snowing again,

however this time we were better prepared.

Even though the weather was marginal for spotting goats, we decided to explore some country on the eastside of Dry Diggins Ridge. We followed the rim of the ridge, looking into as many of the nooks and crannies as possible. While exploring a spur ridge we cut a fresh goat track. Since it was a single and judging from the size we assumed it was a billy. Also, because it was snowing and there was no snow in the track we knew it was very fresh. I began slowly following the track. Initially the goat went down hill, however he soon began contouring upstream. I followed the tracks to a ledge. While trying to determine where the goat left the ledge, I looked down and saw the billy bedded about 25 yards below me. It was straight down! Fortunately his head was screened from view. It took me three tries to find a way to draw my longbow at that angle. After finding a shooting position I prepared for the shot. Unfortunately, I began reasoning with myself rather than shooting instinctively. Because of the sharp downward angle I told myself to "think" a little low. Well you guessed it, I didn't shoot over him! The arrow stuck in the ground at the edge of his bed. He jumped up, looked around and soon began to feed. This allowed me to get further out on the ledge for a better shooting angle. Unfortunately, most of the time he was facing me. After a bit he walked over to





**There's nothing like the coziness of the camp kitchen.**

the arrow and sniffed it at ground level. Again, all I had was a frontal shot. He then turned and began walking straight away. Suddenly he stopped, turned and walked back to the arrow, smelling the fletching, the nock and the shaft. This time when he left he was walking broad-side to me. Again, I felt compelled to coach myself on the up coming shot. I remember telling myself, "You shot low last time, don't shoot low this time." Sure enough, I did not shoot low - I shot right over his back! In fact, there were a couple of white hairs sticking to the fletching. So much for instinctive shooting!

Ron and I returned the next day and tracked the billy for a while, but he headed to the bottom and we decided not to follow. We continued hunting the rim of the ridge to the north and found more goats. A lone billy was bedded down just below the rim. We plotted a stalk on him. By the time we stalked into position he had moved out of range for a shot. After assessing the situation, I decided to go into the cliffs to his elevation and try to stalk him on the contour. Ron was to stay on top and keep the goat in sight. I was doing good and getting close to where I figured the billy should be when I came to a place I could not negotiate. Nor could I see Ron to know if the goat was still bedded. I backtracked and returned to Ron's location. He informed me the billy got up and began to feed, providing him with

numerous shot opportunities. I tried stalking around where Ron last saw the goat but could not locate him. The slope was so steep there was simply too much area under me that couldn't be seen.

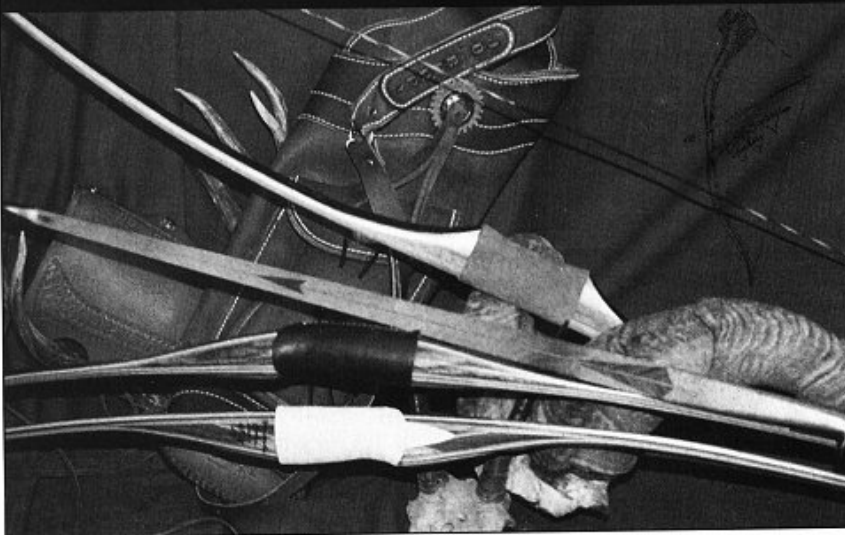
We spent the rest of the day exploring new country to the north. We saw more goats but none in stalkable locations. It began snowing during our hike back to camp and snowed most of

the night. There was a knob near camp where I could get out on the cell phone. My wife said the forecast was for more snow.

The next morning didn't look too bad so we decided to go back and look for the billy I had stalked earlier. However during the two-mile hike to where we had last seen the billy it really began to snow and blow. In fact Ron and I were completely covered with snow and the visibility was zero. I called my wife again and she confirmed a major snowstorm was settling in the area for a few days. Since we were camped at 7,600 feet and had to climb to 8,400 feet to get back to the vehicle Ron and I decided to pack up and leave ASAP. In retrospect it was a good decision. By the time we reached the summit, the llama packs were dragging in the snow.

Within a few days I was again plotting how to get goat. This time we decided to drive to the trailhead, set up a wall tent and day-hunt from there. We saw no goats nor any sign on the east side of the Seven Devil mountain range. We then tried hunting the west side toward where we had camped during the previous two trips, stopping at the summit of the 1,400-foot drop into the West Fork of Sheep Creek. We saw goats but they were always across the canyon and there was no way to get to them on a day hunt. After three days we decided we

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were spinning our wheels and went home.

We got another break in the weather, loaded up the llamas and headed to our original campsite on November 5th. A warm front had reduced the snow depths and the long range forecast was looking good. I knew this was my last chance for a mountain goat considering my chances for drawing another tag in Idaho were real slim. By this time the llamas were in real good shape and the trip in was a breeze.

The first morning we headed to the basin where I had tried a stalk on the bedded billy. We found the billy with a nanny. The nanny had tremendous horn length. There were also two other nannies and a kid in the general area. We watched the goats until I thought I knew where they were going to bed. Ron stayed to keep track of the goats and give me hand signals while I did a blind approach to the bedding area. Just as I was beginning my decent I made one last visual contact with Ron. He was waving me off, got up and began walking toward me. Something had spooked all the goats into the bottom of the canyon. Later we found fresh mountain lion tracks going into the basin.

Ron and I decided to continue hunting the rim of the ridge to the north. We encountered a billy at very close range but he heard or saw us and bolted just as we saw him. Eventually we made our way to a great overlook we found during a previous hunt. Unfortunately, fog moved into the canyon and it began to snow lightly. It was a good spot to have lunch. The fog was drifting in and out, giving us some opportunity to glass. We spotted a goat too far away for a stalk. I had just stood to reposition my therm-a-rest chair when Ron said: "Don't move there is a big billy watching us." I slowly returned to a sitting position. Ron told me the goat was about 1/2 mile to our left, standing on a pile of rocks looking in our direction. I saw another goat farther away behind some conifers. After 20 to 30 minutes I noticed the goat began licking its lips and appeared to be relaxed. All of the sudden it began walking along the rim toward us. When the goat was out of sight, I moved about 50 yards toward it and found a good ambush site. Ron stayed where the goat could see him. The billy continued in our direction, stopping periodically to look in our direction. When it was about 100 yards



**Out of curiosity I dropped a large rock off into the fog.  
We never heard it hit!**

from me the goat dropped off the rim to the first ledge. By standing I was able to determine it was still headed in our direction.

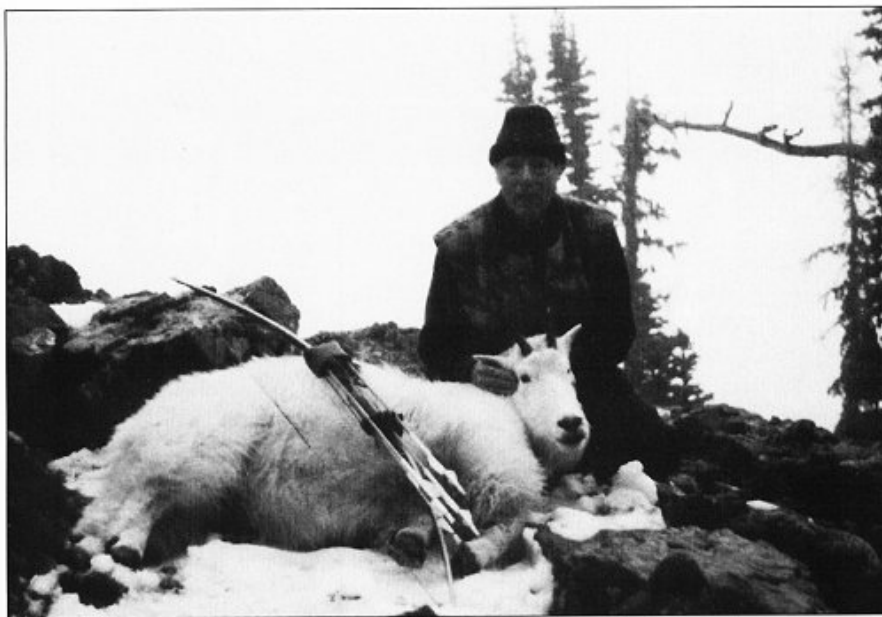
As the goat continued his travel, it passed under the rocks I was standing on. I needed to know if he was going to continue along the ledge or come up between Ron and I. Just as I started to move forward to peek over the rocks the goat came straight up over the rocks in front of me and stopped about 10-15 yards from me. Obviously it spotted me and stopped, facing me. I sat down behind a shrub, waiting for his next move. The goat continued to stand facing me, occasionally looking in Ron's direction. Eventually it turned broadside but still seemed to be on the alert. Soon, however, it began licking its lips and had a relaxed appearance.

I decided it was now or never, took a deep breath and told myself to stand up and shoot. Well, that's exactly what I did! Not picking a spot I shot right over the billy's back and it was gone. Again, I retrieved an arrow with white goat hair stuck on the fletching! Words can't describe my feelings. I had committed the cardinal sin of bowhunting. I did not pick a spot! After a long talk with myself I walked over to Ron. He had witnessed the whole event. It's real special to have your best friend witness your miss. You can't fabricate a real hunting story to rationalize your miss.

I decided to try tracking the billy since he seemed so easy going. Ron was to stay on the rim, looking out ahead for the billy while I tracked him in the snow. I had tracked the billy about 75 yards when I heard Ron trying to get my attention. After locating the billy, he indicated there were goats coming up behind me. I spotted two adult nannies on the same ledge I was on, feeding toward me. Ron had time to get to me before the goats came into view. Soon they were 10-15 yards from us with no clue we were in the country.

I had to make a decision real quick. Obviously I wanted a mature billy. I knew there was one close by but would he let me approach him again? It was snowing. The season closed in five days. There were two adult nannies within 15 yards of me. My chances of drawing another permit in Idaho during my lifetime were not very good. What to do!

Within a split second, an arrow from my 64-lb takedown Robertson takedown longbow was on its way. The hit was higher than I wanted. The goat took off downhill and to my right, stopping behind a screen of trees and looking in my direction. I knocked another arrow, waiting for it to make a move. Suddenly the goat began running uphill toward the trail the billy used. I came to full draw, the Zwickie 4-blade Eskimo broadhead tight against the arrow shelf.



**The author with his goal of many years and many trips into Idaho's rugged goat country (see photo below). That's the goat in the center of the photo, five feet from the edge of the precipice.**



As the goat cleared the trees and before it turned away from me I released the arrow. This time the shot was perfect. It buried to the fletch in the rib cage. Both goats disappeared over a rocky outcrop. Ron kept telling me what a great shot the second arrow was and that the goat was probably already down. Almost as suddenly as they disappeared, one of the them came running back toward us.

We soon discovered the goat had turned up hill because of a deep ice-filled ravine which blocked the path down. In fact, the upper end of this ravine almost discouraged Ron and I

from following the goat's path. Only by taking off our packs and handing them across did we feel comfortable crossing.

As we crested the rocky outcropping I spotted the goat lying dead on a ledge. Had the goat traveled another four to five feet it would have gone off the ledge. Fog had moved into the cliffs, thus we could not see anything below us. As we admired the goat, took pictures and began field dressing Ron kept asking, "Do you know where you are?" He informed me he was asking that question so I would remember we were on the very edge of a ledge. Out of curiosity I

dropped a large rock off into the fog. We never heard it hit!

Unfortunately there was no good place to move the goat for field dressing. It was too late in the day for proper skinning, so after field dressing we headed back to camp. During the field dressing we discovered the second arrow had passed through both lungs, severed the top of the heart and stopped against a leg bone on the off side.

While admiring the goat I noticed a yellow ear tag in the left ear. Later, when I reported the tag color and number, I was informed the only record of a female mountain goat with a yellow ear tag and black number "187" was from a mountain goat transplanted from the Olympic Mountains in Washington to the Eagle Cap Mountains south of Enterprise, Oregon in the early 1980s. The estimated age of the goat was 17, based upon its age when it was transplanted.

The next morning Ron and I led two llamas as close as we could to the goat. We then skinned and boned the goat, packed the hide and meat to the llamas and returned to camp. Since it was snowing again we decided to break camp and head out.

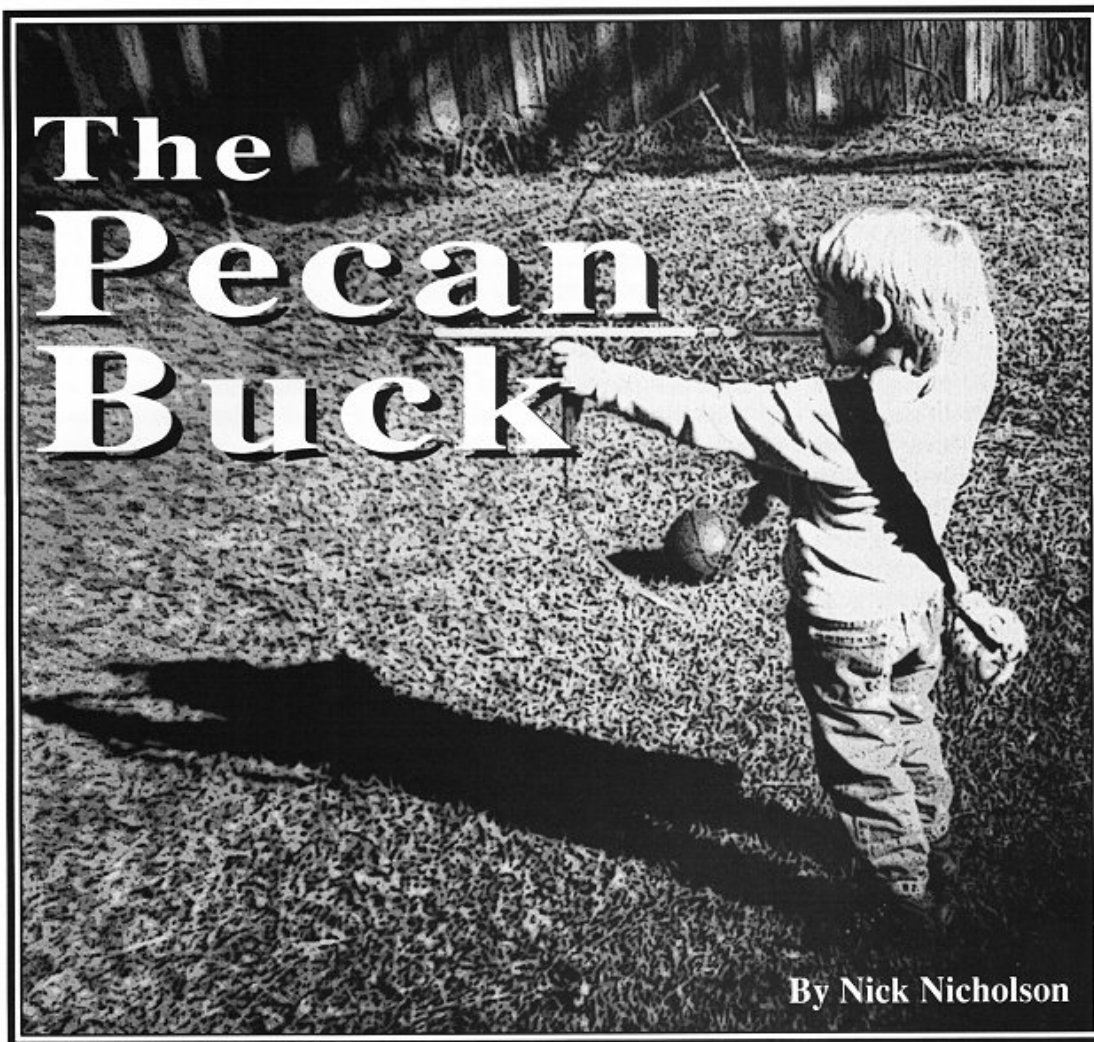
I am frequently asked, "How much weight can a llama pack?" On the trip out, I had one loaded with 110 pounds, one with 90 and three with 80. Since this was their third trip into the area in month they were in good condition. In fact they did not want to take a break during the 1,400-foot grunt.

During our hike to the trailhead the snow changed to a freezing mist and light rain. By the time we reached the trailhead it was nearly dark and we had not noticed the ice build-up. However, when we remove our packs and the packs from the llamas we discovered they were coated by a thick layer of ice. The ice also made the trip from the trailhead to the highway very hazardous. Fortunately, due to Ron's mountain lion outfitting business he is experienced driving on those kinds of road conditions and we made the trip without incident.

Although the horns failed to meet the Pope and Young Club minimum score, this mountain goat is a trophy in my book. My philosophy is that any animal taken with a bow and arrow, under the rules of fair chase, is a trophy; some are just bigger than others.







**T**he entire trip was specifically designed to introduce my four-year-old son to the spirit of the wild that had enhanced my life, and made it abundantly clear to what my life's purpose was on earth. After a bit of shock value and near arguments, I had befriended a female co-worker who was less than impressed with me being an outdoorsman and a proud and boisterous steward of the hunting community. Daddy always said there are two things you never talk about at work—God and politics. I find it un-nerving that hunting and taking part in outdoor activities, be it hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, or even bird watching, has become classed as Politics. However, I find it even harder to bite my tongue when I hear others debating over a subject I consider

myself to be an expert in, politics notwithstanding, hunting is my LIFE!

I had listened for many minutes as these two (non-hunting) co-workers worked each other into a fury over what was right or un-just, and when I could take no more, I jumped in and articulately pontificated the truth as to what I have learned in my twenty plus years in the hardwoods of Georgia and Alabama. I was about ten minutes into this defense of our lifestyle when Dayna, (the anti-hunter) stated that she'd never heard this type of argument, and wanted to learn more about what I and other hunters like me thought about the antis, and moreover to learn about OUR way of life.

I have written for many years, mainly for a journal. I figured that when my now four-year-old son got older he

may want to look over some of my ramblings and learn through my experiences on paper, and maybe, just maybe, he'd be able to use this type of information for his travels, and relate it towards his type of chosen game, further enhancing his mind, body, spirit, and of course his game bag.

I had taken this information and e-mailed it to Dayna so she could read over my best rendition of truth-serum ala' Nikk. I was very happy to hear that the articles, plus the fact that she joined some of my distant cyber-hunting-chat buddies that night as well had made her see the light. Dayna joined me for breakfast the next morning along with several of the management staff from our company and was excited to talk to me about some of my writings.

The day before she had told me about the family land that had been in her family for many years. I jokingly stated that now I could come and hunt her land due to her recent change of heart in relation to my hunting lifestyle. Chuckles arose from the breakfast tables and then some choking and gags as she said "Sure, name the time and we'll be glad to have you over." I could barely swallow my grits, as I said, "How's December sound?"

Seven months passed, and many e-mails talking over all the details. I told Dayna that I had to bring my son, Ullrich, with me. It was time to take him with dad, and since I had been on the road for over 20 weeks, bonding time was needed between us. The hard time was convincing Momma that everything would be fine with the both of us. Of course I was reminded of the numerous trips to the emergency room, broken bones, lacerations, stitches, antibiotics, and the crow I have eaten in our illustrious nine years of marriage. After a little thought and conversation she agreed that this may be the best thing we teach Uli', and supported our trip together.

Now just getting ready to go on a 12-hour trip to hunt in another state has many logistics, but for you single guys and gals out there, compound those by TEN! We had to have no less than three different juices, potato chips, gummy bears, fruit roll ups, cookies, peanuts, jerky, every Power Ranger movie and action figure he owns, his bow, arrows, camouflage, night slippers, medicine, coloring books, musical tapes, and that was just to support the trip out there!

We loaded up everything the day before our trip and the next morning I awoke, carried my still sleeping baby to his safety belted bed in the back of my four-door pick-up, and by five a.m. we were west-bound!

As luck would have it he slept for the first five hours of the trip. This allowed me to get into that travel zone and get my thoughts right and focused on just how to conduct this mini Boy Scout field trip.

I stopped at the first down-home mom-and-pop restaurant we came to and Ullrich awoke with that ever

familiar statement, "Daddy, I'm hungry." We ate and discussed everything from the sights that awaited us to the rules of camp. I was a proud dad indeed. After breakfast we loaded back up and ended our trip at Miss Dayna's suburban home outside of San Antonio Texas, here we would recharge our batteries, pick up my new longbow that was shipped there by Red Chavez Owner/Bowyer of Bitterroot Longbows, in Lolo, Montana. I caressed its exotic woods of coco bolo, mopane, bubinga, and purple heart, then strung its 64" badness and practice-drew it to 29 inches, feeling the 65-pound power of the stick that beckoned to be in the woods of Texas. Just for good measure I had brought my other Bitterroot with me, a stout little 60" TSDB (Tree Stand Doe Bow) Red had made a few years earlier.

After some stump-shooting practice, we had dinner, talked of sleeping arrangements and the conditions of the camp after it's 28-day deluge and floodwater remnants.

#### 07:00 DAY TWO

A morning is never as good as one that meets you with fresh coffee, grits, bacon, eggs, and English muffins cooking and filling the air with smells of pure goodness.

By noon we arrived at camp, and were off on the first survey of the land via four-wheelers. During this time we sighted several sheep, turkey, white-tail, red squirrel, rock squirrel, and wild birds. The land was littered with wild life, but lacking was the sighting of our intended game animals, axis deer and hogs.

We got back to camp, settled in, and I left for my first vigil stalking through the pecan field with my baby boy tagging along side. The first time for many things was accentuated by my son pulling on my overcoat to get my attention and saying, "Here daddy, keep this with you, it's good luck, you can have it," handing me a tattered pecan still in it's hull. Little would I know of its role in this entire trip but I placed it in my coat pocket and I still have it.

We had walked for about 30 minutes and Uli' was ready to get back and hang out at the camp with Dayna's child. I decided to return to the woods to

gain some recon on my newly found hunt grounds. Being my cocky self, I told Dayna there was supper to get, and she said that I would probably not get a shot opportunity for a couple days. I laughed and headed for the woods.

I had barely walked into the mesquite brush when I noticed several does fading onto a trail leading towards the water behind me. One plump doe stopped a mere 20 yards broadside in front of me and just froze. I guess I have gotten more patient in my old age, and just stood there taking it all in. After watching for several moments I remembered the fact that the whitetails were growing in record numbers and I had been requested to take my limit in does while on my stay.

I reached back for an arrow out of my back quiver and slipped it onto my string, all the while keeping my eye on the wary doe. Before I knew it I had reached full draw and released my white dipped and crested Gold Tip XT 75/95 tipped with a 125 grain Magnus twin blade broadhead passing right through



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high in the chest and severing the bottom of her spinal column dropping her dead in her tracks. I whooped my war cry, and held my bow high in the air feeling the Indian spirit that inhabits this land rush through me filling my mind and soul along with my freezer with healthy venison.

### DAY THREE, COMING OF A WARRIOR

Now I know some snipers out there will criticize this entire subject. But I will tell every traditionalist, dyed in wool bowhunter out there that this part is real good medicine. For it served its purpose in two parts. One—the teaching of gun safety, and Two—the teaching of cause and effect to a child who is my calling, my responsibility, and my HERO. That being said; keep an open mind, and remember I am a trained professional, and I am consumed with SAFETY, SAFETY, and SAFETY. There is no reason to make mistakes out there, you have to be on top of things, this is too much fun to taint with ignorance and fatal mishaps.

The weekend before the Texas trip we visited our local range and gun shop and purchased a .308 NEF Handi Rifle, and topped it with a Leupold 4x12-40mm Vari-X II scope. I did this specifically to teach my son of both the

potential dangers of firearms, and to gain a respect for the quarry I love so much to pursue with tenacity every year.

We sighted and shot it many times utilizing hearing and eye protection, and ultimately had a grand time doing so.

We spent many an hour and many boxes of ammo developing a communication amongst ourselves, in the hopes of developing a plan to implement in our time afield.

The thing we all have to realize—and I have stated many times before in my articles of years past—is that the ENCOUNTER is the utmost importance in the entire time a field. However, kids (male & female) mirror that of those they love and admire. Therefore, an encounter that turns into a harvest of the precious renewable resource we all spend such time and money investing in was the ultimate goal. My son wants to be like daddy, and to take part in the majestic first hunt soul, mind, and body cleansing experience!!

As luck would have it this all came in handy on this day of the hunt, as this was to be Uli's first hunt, and a chance to let him see first hand what a firearm can and will do to people or animals. I was proud to have my son sitting on my lap playing Tic, Tack, Toe, and generally spending quality time bonding.

There were many rock squirrel, red squirrel, and these crazy black little birds with crazy long tail feathers

that frolicked on the grounds before us. It was all that I could do to keep my newly found hunting partner occupied to avoid the words "I'm tired Daddy. Let's go back to the camp and play," when three fine does walked in and started feeding on the pecan orchard that bordered the hide.

I immediately grabbed my binoculars to glass their position of 110 yards to our left and closing. One, two, three, counted my son, then explaining that they were momma deer, and he wanted a MONKA-BUK, as he so lovingly calls them. I quickly explained that we had to sit motionless, and that it was time to don our glasses and muffs, so we could possibly take a Monka-Buk if and when he came out. My son asked me if he could take the shot, and when I whispered back that we had to let them get closer he exclaimed "YES!"

Oh no, I thought as I looked out at the does, all three of them were in defense mode, and glaring in our general direction. Just when I thought we had been busted the lead doe flicked her tail, and I grunted softly towards them. Giggles were turning into an infectious laugh deep in my little boy's tummy.

I removed one of his ear protection muffs and explained to him to be as still as possible, so the deer would not get scared and flee the scene. This was my proudest moment—he just looked and smiled as he watched the does walk closer and closer.

I knew the .308 would knock them down at the 80 yards position that they now held for the past five minutes,

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but I needed some more insurance, and I knew at a closer range of 50 to 60 yards any movement of me shouldering the rifle, and Ullrich looking through the scope and squeezing the trigger we would certainly have a better chance. I sighted, Uli looked, I re-sighted, and asked, "Where is she?" Uli would look and say "She's not there," I re-sighted again, and then finally he saw her and said, "She won't stop moving Daddy." Worrying about the possible position of the eye relief I spent several minutes having him tell me if there was a black circle, or a clear optic. He explained, "I see clear daddy but the plus ain't on the deer."

I had decided that maybe, just maybe, some of my critics were right, maybe I was starting him too young, maybe this wasn't going to happen, maybe I should just let him watch. Uli said, "Daddy, shoot it!" I explained to him that we couldn't unless he could see her. This made him upset, and he asked if he could try again. Uli repositioned himself on my left leg, and I moved the rifle in the direction of the deer, Uli now wrapped his right arm around the gun and rested his hand on the hand that was covering the trigger, I sighted, and grunted with my own voice and the doe stood steady at around 60 yards.

Uli looked through the scope and said that he saw the plus in the middle of the deer, I pulled the rifle snug into the pocket of my right shoulder, and told him to do just like at the range, a half of a second later, BOOM! The doe literally did a half cartwheel, and hit the ground, kicked twice, and simply went to sleep. Carlos Hathcock would have been proud! My son sat there in utter amazement as all this happened.

I watched as another 20 deer exploded from the woods all around us, and when the dust cleared our present of fresh backstraps and sausage galore laid still, waiting to be recovered. I let out an Indian war cry, and lifted my son off my knee, remembering the way my actions were at the tender age of 10 when my dad first took me into the hunt woods of southwest Georgia.

I exclaimed, "You got her buddy, you got her!" Uli said, "No Daddy she ran away!" I then showed

him our doe, and we departed the hide to go say our prayer of thanks to God, blessing Ma' nature, and the great spirit of the wild for blessing us with this harvest. After a moment of silence and a few tears of happiness shed by me, we went to get the ATV so we could fill the ice chest.

Back at the cleaning post I answered all kinds of questions from my son. From life and death, to cause and effect, to ballistic capabilities, to my favorite Power Ranger, which of course is the Green Ranger! After all Pink would stand out too much in the deer woods.

Throughout all of this I did not hear one question as to why we had to kill the deer, confused questions towards the use of the chosen weapon, or how gross the skinning process was. He just seemed to get it. He has always shot the archery tournaments with me, watched countless hours worth of prime time hunting videos, and now I believe his dream had come true. There was a turning point in my life as I introduced my young boy to the spirit of the wild, and one for me that brought seas of emotion to the soul of my boy who had been baptized into the role of a man, and thus following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfathers.

As we walked back to the camp I held my little boy's hand on the right and rubbed the pecan in my left coat pocket, hearing the distant calls of axis deer and feeling at one with the inner peace that every man, woman, and child, should experience.

#### DAY FOUR: CACTUS DOE

I rode the ATV canvassing the area for the axis buck of a lifetime, looking for that perfect point of ambush that would put an end to my impatient persona. It was not in the cards, I was as shaky and a ball of nerves as I explored the incredible terra flora, cactus sage, mesquite, pecan grove, hills, water, smells, and landscape of the mountain range home of the mountain lion, sheep, and Russian boar that run free on this part of the 4,300 acre free ranging land.

An Indian mound was a mere 20 yards in front of me, and I could feel a special feeling, almost guided by the presence of Indian braves before me, showing me the sacred grounds as if on a

tour. I felt at home, alive, free, peaceful, and fulfilled. No heebee geebees, just full of the spirit of the wild, and totally in touch with my predator-ship role in this land.

The axis deer is an incredibly interesting animal, my research revealed some key information to which I implemented on my hunt.

The species "Axis" Axis Deer, Order Artiodactyla, Family Cervidae, *Cervus Axis*, (Erxleben) is a native of India. The Axis is also called chital deer or spotted Indian deer. Axis deer were introduced to Texas in the 1930s and are now the most numerous and widespread of the introduced deer and antelope.

A Texas Parks and Wildlife Department survey in 1988 estimated that there were 39,040 axis deer in Texas. To our knowledge, they can be found in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois, New York, Oklahoma, New Jersey, Michigan, California, Hawaii, Florida, and in zoos in most states. With Texas, Hawaii, and Florida recognized as having the largest herd populations.

The axis deer is often considered the most beautiful in the family cervidae. Both male and female have striking reddish-brown coats marked by white spots arranged in undisciplined rows along their sides. They have a black dorsal stripe and white bib on their neck, white inner legs, stomach, and under-tail.

Heights range from 29 to 39.5 inches. Mature weight is from 145 pounds to 250 pounds. Males have antlers which they shed annually. Males have darker facial markings with a more pronounced "scowling" expression the older they get.

Bucks are larger bodied than does with thicker necks and broader chests. Axis deer eat mostly grass. They will eat some weeds and acorns when available. Like Texas lambs and calves, axis do well on winter wheat fields and put on harvestable lean meat weight gain. Axis will drink from troughs and tanks.

They need to have a reliable supply of fresh water at all times. Axis deer are considered good swimmers. In a taste test compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Cary Mungall, Axis venison scored as the top tasting meat out of 22 native and exotic

wild meats. Axis is low in fat, calories, and cholesterol. Per ounce, an uncooked axis steak has .06 grams of fat, 26 calories, and 13.9 mg cholesterol. Axis has no "gamey" taste like whitetail can have, probably because they are grass eaters like cattle.

The reproductive pattern in axis deer is similar to that in domestic cattle. In the wild, bucks with hardened antlers and in rutting condition may be found throughout the year.

Each buck seems to have a reproductive cycle of its own which may not be synchronized with that of other bucks in the herd.

Consequently, when some bucks are coming into rut, others are going out or are in a non-breeding condition, with no antlers and with their testes quiescent. Likewise, females experience estrous cycles throughout the year with each cycle lasting about three weeks. Gravid females may be found throughout the year, but the major breeding season lasts from mid-May through August with a June-July peak in activity.

The bucks make no attempt to collect or retain harems of does, but instead they seek out and service the does in each herd as they become receptive. Axis bucks can be in hard horn any time of the year.

They grow and shed antlers on their own clock so in one herd there may be a newly shed buck, a hard-horn buck and a buck in the velvet. Usual antlers are 22 to 27 inches. Trophies range from 30 to 36 inches, and have a typical antler structure of three points on each side consisting of a main beam, one secondary point halfway up the beam, and a

brow tine. Four points on a side are not uncommon.

#### DAY 4: AXIS HUNT

I encountered several deer while at the ranch, but up to the fourth day the axis were nocturnal. This was disheartening, and at 8:00 p.m. on day three through the early morning hours of day four, I experienced the calls of the feeding axis all around our camp, best to be described as "haunting screams," running chills up the spine of a newly indoctrinated hunter of this fascinating beast.

I had hunted the morning alone, as Dayna and the boys went into "town" for some necessary subsistence. Around noon I had returned to camp and was glassing the neighboring land's 165 class B&C four and five year old bucks play, spar, scrap, and rub the pucker-brush and humus. I had placed my tree stand high in a pecan tree.

Suddenly I spotted a nice axis doe walking 20 yards in front of my stand. Scanning the area I watched as the land where the deer and the antelope play earned its name. One axis turned into four, four to eight, eight to twenty! I was sitting, mouth gaping, tongue hanging, eating my heart out as axis after axis unfolded in rank and file, all now 100 yards in front of me, way out of ethical bow range.

As I continued to glass and gasp, I noticed out by one of the fallen pecan trees in the grove what I thought (out loud) to myself was, "Man if I didn't know better I would swear that was a set of antlers behind that tree. Couldn't be, because that tree is at least 33" to the top of its fallen side."

As God as my witness, and no sooner did I get that out of my mouth when those limb-like antlers turned and he stepped in full view of my spotting scope. I almost collapsed right there.

As I repositioned myself as to follow him out, I knocked the lens cap off of the table

and it hit the metal frame of the window, and the buck swung his head in my direction 100 yards in front of him! I am daily reminded that God has never made a defenseless animal. It is uncanny!

I froze and turned to further study this monarch of this western land, and just as quickly as he came he was gone in a cloud of dust. I wish my truck could move like that, it was Cheetah fast! Now I had my recon as I watched the entire herd move quietly towards the waters of the Neuces River.

I waited painful hours for all to calm down, so as to return to my stand for an afternoon vigil. At 2:00 p.m. I had entered my stand and climbed to my customary 15 feet height.

I fastened myself using a four-point harness, and just waited the return of the axis. The funny thing about Texas is that there seems to be an absence of good trees to climb.

Along with that, at least in my observations, many of the species there do not bother to look up, rather equating the danger on a level playing field aground. I took this as an advantage, a rather cocky one, and often times before tried to push the envelope a little by moving my bow, practice drawing on yearlings, and other mature bucks and does, just to see how used to tree ambush maneuvers they were.

Less than an hour had passed and I had two nice size whitetail does run in to feed below me, as I was enjoying the dances and body language at a mere ten yards, I heard in the distance two young bucks and a doe come in around 100 yards in front of me, only they were driving a Toyota, and joyously singing a song that closely resembled my favorite Dave Mathews tune, as close as I could discern. As the Toy came to a stop and two little kids piled out screaming and running towards the house I couldn't help but laugh as they turned in my general direction and yelled; "Get em' Nikk!" and "Bring me some supper daddy!!" Naturally the does made a hasty departure, and as I sat camouflaged to the hilt, I had to say that was the cutest thing I had ever witnessed on stand. The woods seem to close back around me. It was like that total quiet that comes down like a thick veil of



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silence. I committed to a short nap, later awakened by my own cognizance of the wild unfolding around me.

I opened my eyes to discover thirteen whitetails frolicking in the field adjacent to me slightly to my left. It was like a gift! Now there was not a shot to be found, all ranging 80 yards or more, a little farther than my longbow and I were comfortable shooting at. I just sat and watched, as they came one after another to the pecan grove to feed and play.

I had started my regimental scan of the area, when all of the sudden axis galore emptying from the bottom into which they had eagerly disappeared only hours before. Doe after doe came and went past my stand heading for the river bottom, as I waited for that big buck. The weather had went from cold to downright frightful since morning, and I thanked myself for the Columbia raingear I had donned before departing camp.

It was like slow motion, as the axis buck appeared out of nowhere literally chasing a dominant doe I had set my sights on as a viable option to plan "A."

She ran off as to say "Leave me alone, I am taking all my friends and my ball and going home." As she departed I almost let him leave with her when inside my head I heard, "whistle stupid!" As I mustarded up some air from my failing lungs and heart beaten chest, KKAAATCCAALL, pierced the night air stopping the buck in his tracks.

It was like in the movies of my heros. I nearly blew the shot thinking to myself, "Man that always works," drawing to anchor I practiced my words "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, relaxing my hand and loosening an arrow and a solemn AMEN, as I watched the arrow disappear through the top of the axis and exit his brisket. He spun and ran a full-tilt death run towards his entrance to the field, falling mid-stride in a restful position.

Now as everything calmed, a mere 20 minutes had passed when I noticed that I was being infiltrated by the herd of whitetail that were playing in the field well out of range. It was like a territorial unwritten law, as I observed the whitetail and axis did not intermingle



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and segregated themselves virtually avoiding any sort of contact. Now closing in single file the lead doe, the exact same one that was scared off by the arrival of the carload of humans, was now broadside at 15 yards, feeding contently. I had made it a practice to be DEADLY accurate at this range putting more than a dozen arrows in the skull of my 3-D targets at home

When I had reached anchor I loosed a perfect arrow into the doe, dropping her in her tracks, quickly, humanely, and accurately. The grand realization of a double, my first double, and my mind and body were a wreck!

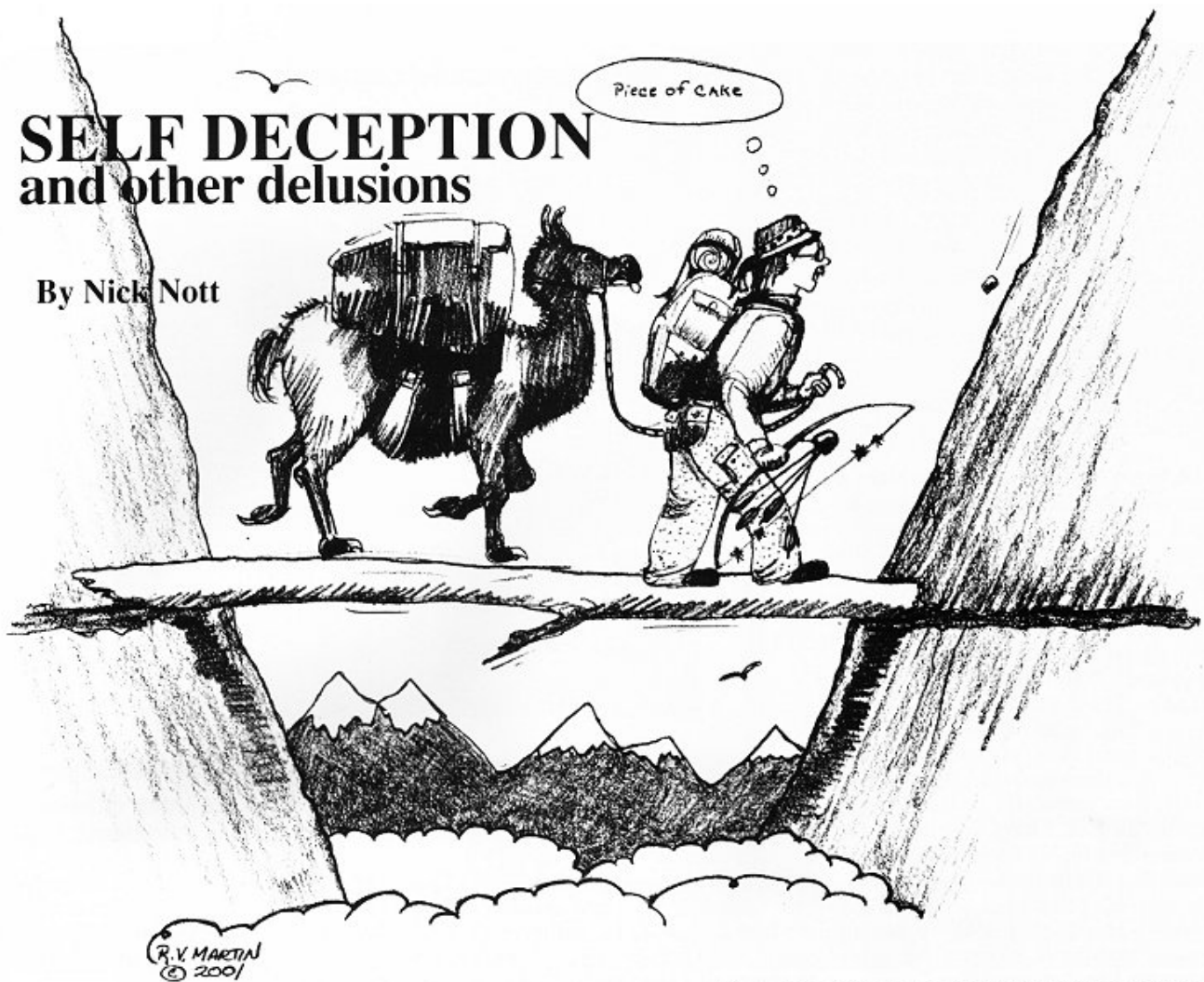
As I approached the axis buck, I couldn't help but kneel beside him, praying a prayer for the wild things, blessing this sacred ground, blessing my wonderful family, blessing Red Chavez and my new longbow that he so perfectly designed, I asked for the blessing of my friend Dayna and her family, and the land that hosted me for an awe-inspiring adventure. Then, as I reached in my pocket, I shed a tear as I heard my son saying "Here daddy, keep this with you, its good luck, you can have it." Once again holding the pecan tight in my pocket, I knew indeed it was.





# SELF DECEPTION and other delusions

By Nick Nott



One day I was hanging around a local sporting goods shop, hoping that in so doing, a sort of mystical osmosis would take place. I thought maybe I would leave as a better fisherman or hunter after spending time there. I really had no other purpose.

I handled a few duck decoys, whipped a fly rod with enough expression on my face to give the impression that I knew what I was doing, and studied a book or two as if I might buy one.

Across the way, a conversation developed. I will call one participant Ivan, because he looked to me like a fine, rugged Viking; and the other, Jacques, for his beak-nose and wiry features. I tried to appear nonchalant as I listened in.

"How'd you do yesterday?" asked Jacques.

"Oh, we caught a few trout. How was your trip last weekend?" "We did all right," Ivan picked up a creel and opened it, as if to see if a trout was in it.

"Any big ones?" "No state records, but we got into some nice ones," Jacques was fiercely sucking on his pipe, trying to get a fire going.

The conversation ricocheted from fishing to gardening, international foreign policy to pickup trucks, but never back to fishing. I was puzzled and disappointed. Nothing useful was shared. Neither Ivan nor Jacques had disclosed a thing to the other, or to me.

Since that tiny event, I have paid particular attention to the dialogues of fishermen and fellow bowhunters, and have come to several conclusions about the smug reserve with which most conduct themselves.

Sure, lots of bragging does go on. Every sporting goods store has its picture board tacked to the gills with snapshots of limits of lunkers and big bulls and bucks. But when it comes to the nitty-gritty of talking about where those fish and animals were taken, well, that information is guarded closely with elusive answers, smug looks, and aloofness. Vagueness, cautious looks, tiny smiles that say, "I'm not about to tell you the truth"—these qualities exist in epidemic proportions. Ivans and Jacques are everywhere.

Why is this? Why all this secretiveness? Why won't the Ivans and Jacques talk? I can only conjecture, but here are a few guesses.

First, it may very well be that Ivan and Jacques really do not have much to tell, or their fishing or hunting experience is too poor to talk about. Rather than saying, "In seven hours of fishing, I had on one four-and-a-half-incher," they say, "Didn't do too well," or, "Oh, we caught a few." They want to give the impression that they are guarding hot information, when really they have nothing to share.

On the other hand, maybe they think they know too much to tell. They do not wish to divulge priceless secrets for fear that scores of their friends will go to those riffles and ridges and ruin them. There may be some validity to these concerns, but I suspect that most fishers and hunters do not have the crowd-swaying influence that they imagine they have. They have fooled themselves into thinking that everyone is just dying to follow up on their latest hot tip. The young sportsman is particularly prone to this self-deception. So are the middle-aged and the elderly.

Another reason for all of this secretiveness is that your average hunter and fisher just likes to be smug. Whether he has an incredibly rotten day on the stream, or a phenomenal day, the contemporary outdoorsman responds, when questioned, with the same reserved aloofness in either case. Whether he shoots a six point bull or hunts all week without seeing so much as an anemic calf, he maintains smugness. It is not proper to gripe or to get all excited, he has learned.

Rather than a friend running up to me and candidly saying, "Hey, Nick, I shot a great big old bear from my stand up on Eagle Butte last week", he takes a much more subdued approach. I have to drag it out of him.

I ask, "Hey, did you ever fill that bear tag?" "Yup." Silence.

"No kidding? What's the story? Where'd you get it?" "Lungs." "Uh, I mean, uh, where were you?" "Oh, out in the woods." He yawns, and looks around.

"Um, great. Good going." By being cool and aloof, my friend the bear hunter has demonstrated that he has mastered smugness. He is above bragging; but in fact, I have concluded, his aloofness is a highly sophisticated form of boasting. He is thinking to himself, "I've arrived. I don't get excited about no wimpy bear hunt. I'm above getting all emotional. Yeah, us seasoned, great hunters are like that, you know."

We stand in awe. "Wow," we think, "this guy shoots bears and talks about it as if he's telling about brushing his teeth or clipping his fingernails." I had a neighbor once who used to drag home a steelhead now and then. He attributed his success to his special way of curing eggs for bait. Several times I consciously and cleverly tried to coax him into revealing the mysterious recipe.

**Some of the better smuggers have even learned not to smirk or twinkle their eyes at all. They have moved on to the ultimate in aloofdom...**

Each time, his eyes twinkled as if to say, "No way, kid. My great grandpa taught me how to cure eggs, and there ain't no way I'll tell nobody. Geez, I don't want to rivers all fished out!" That's all fine, but I was fascinated by his delusion. I mean, I managed to haul home about as many steelhead as he did by using freezer burned eggs, rusty Steelies, and malfunctioning Hot Shots. His smugness had just gotten out of hand, and he really thought he had found the key to super-steelheading. He was a master of the smirk, achieving just the right amount of twinkle in his eyes to complement the tiny smile on the left side of his mouth.

For whatever reasons, sportspeople in general have become very skilled at being aloof. If you have not learned the basics of smugness, you would be well advised to get with the program. It is now socially unacceptable to say things like, "Hey, Bob, I lim-

ited out on big chinook up at the garbage hole on Eleven-Mile Creek this morning. Yeah, nobody else was there. Go on up and try you luck." You just don't say things like that.

Or, "You know that stand I built last summer up on Rattlesnake Ridge? Got a nice buck there last weekend. Help yourself to give it a try if you like." Reports like that are unheard of, even from friends.

So learn the art of aloofness. Awe your friends by saying nothing. Act like it is a bad year. Never let anyone see your salmon tag. Don't let anyone know where you shot your elk. Bite your tongue instead of telling where you have been seeing some bucks. Some of the better smuggers have even learned not to smirk or twinkle their eyes at all. They have moved on to the ultimate in aloofdom—The Blank Stare.

You might want to practice looking smug in front of a mirror. Better yet, have one of your kids ask, "Where did you shoot that deer?" Turn to them, smirk, and say, "outdoors." When the kid walks away saying, "You're weird, Dad," you can rest assured that deep down in his heart he is thinking, "Oh, wow, my dad is awesome!"



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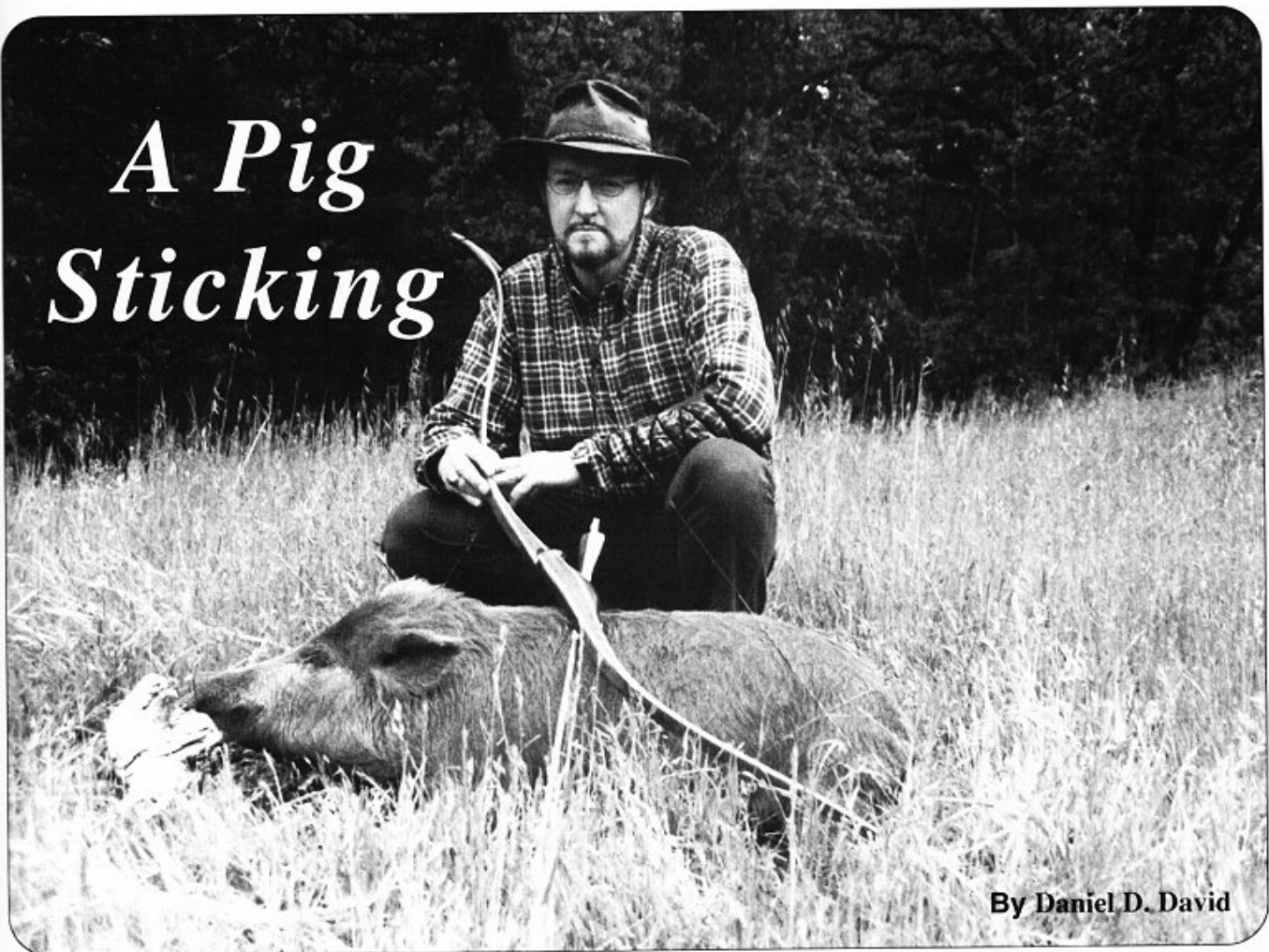
Genesis 1:1

John 3:16

Matthew 5:16



# A Pig Sticking



By Daniel D. David

*I* feel about pig hunting much like Capstick wrote in his book "Death in the Long Grass" concerning leopards. I'll substitute those words needed so the quote fits:

"I *have* always thought of my self as a fairly average Joe until a few years ago. I never put razor blades in the Halloween apples. I was nowhere near My Lai. I hardly knew Martin Bormann. I have a large mortgage and *less than a mediocre* income.

What's more, I did give at the office and only beat my wife occasionally. But, there is something in my past that lurks like the shrunken mummy of the milkman in the cedar closet, a character defect so horrendous that I have been blackballed from spaghetti dinners at the ASPCA and socially snubbed by the recording secretary of the local Audubon chapter. The newsboy knows; he doesn't bring the paper to the door anymore, just throws it into the densest part of the rosebed. I doubt even Cleveland Amory could grant me salvation for, you see, I dearly love to hunt *pigs*."

From *Death in the Long Grass* (with a few word changes) By Peter Hathaway Capstick Chapter 3, page 123 St. Martin's Press, NY, NY 1977 (Italics represent word substitutions)



### A PIG STICKING:

"Go ahead take that one in front—take him!" Jim is spurting in a raspy whisper. There he stands—a much better boar than I expected to see after thirty days in these scrub oaks. Behind him are 15 more, each trying to gut the other for the favors of one of the three sows in heat. Here I am yanking an arrow from my back quiver and fighting back another case of the nerves. Hot "blood lust" is pumping through my veins like passion on prom night.

Now I know Chuck Adams and Fred Asbell never talk about consternation in such confrontations. That's okay. My daddy always said, "Son, ya gotta work hard if you want ta make it in the world, and a haun't'n don't qualify." (My daddy was a crusty old cowboy with a Midwestern accent.) Consequently, I don't make a living at this hunting stuff, as I'm sure many of you don't. For me, chances like this are less frequent than handshakes with honest politicians. Although I don't claim to have kept up with the modern mercenaries of the toxophily, I've hunted a few places myself, a hell of a lot more of them unsuccessfully than successfully. A sampling includes: Kansas corn fields, the badlands of Montana, the backbone of the Bitterroot, and a small piece of real estate along the River Lompopo on the Cape side of Botswana where the border guards would sooner shoot ya than cuff ya. Such pretentious bravado substantiates nothing when I bear down on a warm fuzzy critter with a bent stick and a sharp spike. I'm here to tell you I frequently shake like an oak leaf in the November bluster. If you never do, then you're a better man, or you have lost some the thrill of bowhunting.

Either way, I'm not insulted much. I quit trying to prove myself to others right after my last high school football season.

As I brace and I peer down the shaft, words tumble through my disbelieving mind. "Slow down. What the heck is happening? Just how did I get here?" It all started about eight months ago after returning from the first successful and pleasant hunt I'd had since Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land. I promised myself I would plan a

hunt during my work's "dead season." Unfortunately the dead season comes in mid-May. What the heck can you hunt in mid-May? Wait a minute. I've always wanted a pig, and many places like California welcome pig hunters. There ain't even a season on them. Private ranchers either let assassins like me pay to hunt them or just plain want them exterminated. Oh, what a genius idea! With a few telephone calls and a few messages sent through one of those new-fangled contraptions (what do ya call them, compulators, communicators, well you know, one of those things that types on the TV and sends writin' to someone else's TV), and I had myself a hunt.

Since the books on the previously mentioned hunt weren't completely balanced, I broke this "genius idea" to my wife on the eve of her day off, just after she had won a small amount of cash in the state lotto. The kids were in bed, and she had consumed about 250 milliliters of an excellent Australian pinot noir. After all, why should I tempt kismet. My timing was perfect alright. The dinner she had so delicately prepared missed me by at least a foot, and eating it off the dining room floor was more to my liking than eating it out of the dog's bowl—again.

That out of the way, I began to put my gear together. I fledged some prime aluminum conduit and some of my best cedar stock, threw in a couple of

backup bows and reached for "Ole Kublai" (aka Millennium) a bow built for me by my good friend Doug Kenyon, CEO of Palouse Traditional Archery. This is a high performance recurve with static tips. Although the dynamics are high tech, its form is reminiscent of those weapons with which Genghis Khan's general, Subotai, brought to its knees the entire Russian civilization in the early part of the 13th century. After all, I was going to hunt Russian boar. Wasn't I? I rounded up all the stuff an obsessed string plucker usually puts in his duffel for these outings, piled it all in my truck and started the journey from the beautiful Palouse country of Washington and Idaho to the hill country of Northern California. Eighteen hours and a few wrong turns later I arrived at the outfitter's cabin. After about 30 minutes of hand shakes and instruction on camp etiquette the tall, lean, congenial outfitter and guide grinned and said, "Grab your bow let's take a ride and look around." And that's how I come to be standing here May 7, 2000, looking over a broadhead at this pack of pigs. Loosed, the arrow flies true and strikes just behind the front shoulder. It looks great, but the outfitter explains that it is right in the "gristle plate" formed by the side by side tussling bouts characteristic of sylvan swine skirmishes. "Considering the shot placement, the distance and the moderate power of the

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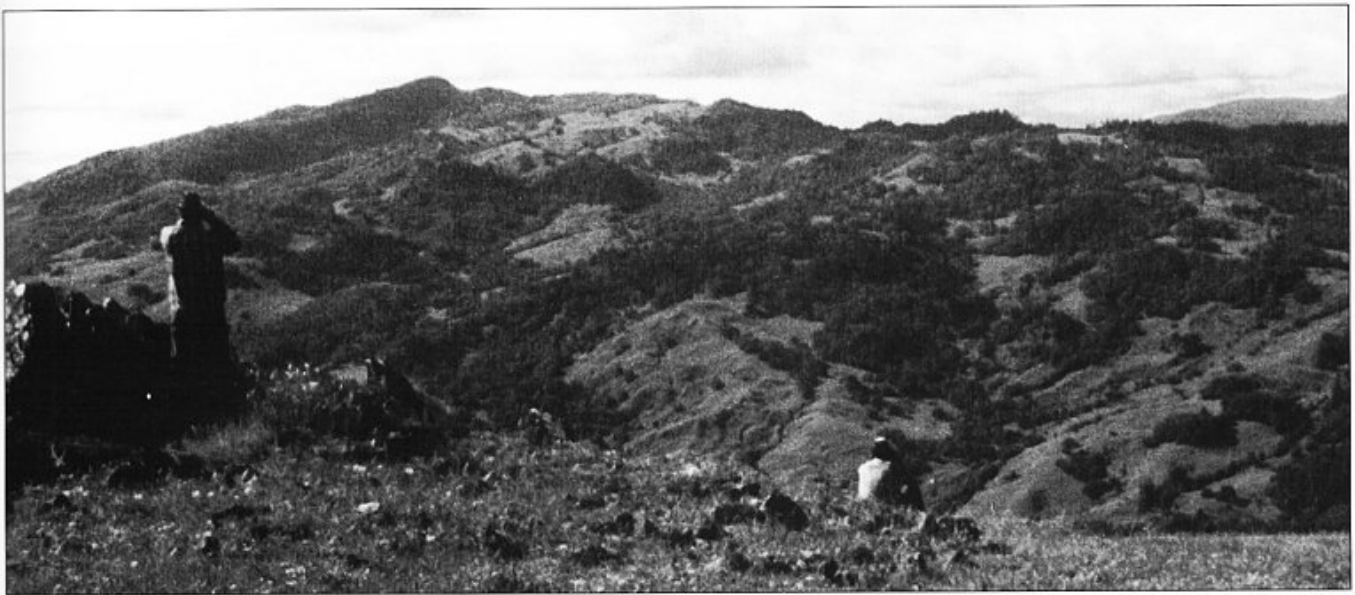
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**First you must find them—then the hunt, and the excitement, begins...**

bow, good penetration is too much to expect," he elaborates. Regardless, the arrow remains inside the pig's mid-section. My next arrow is high, and three hours of following spoor with dogs through heavy poison oak yields nothing.

"Well Jim," I said to the guide, "what's another one going to cost me. Be darned if I'm going home without pork chops." "Jump in. We'll work it out," Jim replied.

The settlers of this beautiful scrub oak, grass and manzanita country brought in hogs as a meat crop 150 years or more ago.

Certainly many of them strayed. Later wild boar came to be mixed with the domestic stock. More recently the ranch introduced hybrid Russian boar stock.

Interestingly the Russian boars on the surface appear dark charcoal, but when they are back lit by the sun they have a deep red cast. Some bunches of boars are very Russian. Some are very domestic, and some are well mixed.

Some pigs are meaner than Leroy Brown and some remind me of those my dad and I fed tankage in the spring, castrated in the fall, and butchered in the winter.

The ranch is interesting because next to the river the elevation is 400 feet. At the summit it is 4,000 feet, yet it doesn't appear extremely steep nor is it hard to navigate on foot. It looks

like the Scottish Highlands with a few more trees and it's literally crawling with blacktail deer. The ranch is actually a cattle operation run by a very pleasant California cowboy. He's a man of few words, tall, lean, solid and tempered to the ways of a cattle ranch. He's the kind of a guy you could trust with your wife, your sister or your new truck. He has some of the best Angus cattle this old cowboy has ever laid eyes.

Today, May 8, I've put yesterday's mistakes behind me. We hunt hard through the day. About six o'clock we run into a large bunch, and again I'm looking over a broadhead. This compact little boar isn't as large as the one yesterday, but he'll fit into the freezer quite nicely. It's my intention to place the arrow a little further back this time. My shot is true but my aim is poor. In the words of the guide, "You hit him right in the ...explicative deleted...." Interestingly enough this is a much better shot placement than yesterday's.

The arrow from 25 yards penetrates through the left hip bone. It definitely anchors the animal well enough to allow me to terminate him. Exactly how many shots I will not discuss in a journal that might be read by youth, but eventually my aim came to match the performance of my weapon. Ole Kublai drove a cedar shaft completely through the boiler room, and the young boar gave up a mediocre position in the pig pack for a much higher place in the camp locker.

I took an African pig once. I found both pig hunts more than just casually enjoyable. Oh, certainly hunting pigs isn't like hunting leopards which is something about which Wilbur Smith or Peter Capstick might write, but pig hunting is as exciting as you want to make it.

With a stick bow it's up close and personal, but keep in mind that in some places they still hunt them with a knife. You need to consider a back door if the hogs are aggressive, but by no means is every hog a man eater. And, a tree or a rock is all you need for harbor. A large boar wounded and in the dense briar could certainly cause a little dampness under the old hat band on a warm afternoon. It's no place for the timid.

Still, your chances are probably better than at a Detroit stoplight during Friday afternoon rush hour. And, I'd certainly rather be crawling through the manzanita for an injured boar than crawling with a bore through a mound of office paper work.



#### **Author's Notes:**

Bow—51# Millennium Static Recurve  
by Palouse Traditional Archery  
Arrows—28" XX75, 1916

Outfitter—Five Arrows Outfitters -Jim &  
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# The Competitive Edge

by Gary Sentman

## To Compete or Not to Compete

**T**o Compete or Not Compete? With the rebirth of traditional archery I see some of the trends have changed. Even though bow hunting or as it is called today, "traditional archery," was quite simple in the early years, it has become quite complicated these days. Archery tournaments were taken quite seriously back in the 60s and 70s, although the concept has always been to have fun. Yes, there were groups that would laugh and tell jokes on the archery range but I remember there were many who took their score very seriously.

Here on the west coast I believe many competitive events have become too liberal and oftentimes down right sloppy in the way they are carried out. Perhaps the reason for this is because of the many different classes we have in archery today. For instance—we have primitive archery, long-bow, modern longbow, recurve, and freestyle recurve, just to name some of the classes in traditional archery only.

Even the scoring in most events can become quite confusing. There's the 12 -point ring, the ten-point ring, the eight-point ring, and then the body hit. Do we score the horns, the ears, and the hooves? Quite recently I went to a shoot that didn't score the legs. Generally 3-D targets do not have lines between the body and legs or between the ears, horns, and hooves. So it becomes easy for some archers to pick up an extra five or ten points here and there simply because their imaginary lines might be different than the next archers.

### TEAM CAPTAINS

In recent years I have seen the scoring methods become quite lax. Such as a group of archers getting together to shoot a 3-D tournament and turn the score cards and pencil over to someone in the group who has the least experience, or who may have never shot a bow.



Often times it is a girlfriend or wife who will do the scoring and this is the way they are drawn into the sport of archery. Let's look at this perspective in a more serious way. The way I see it, when a group of archers get together to shoot competitively, the person chosen to keep score becomes the team captain. That person decides any discrepancies that may occur. Such as the lines between the ten ring and eight ring, or between legs hooves, ears etc. The team captains make sure everyone touches the stake when shooting. They choose two people who pull the arrows, call the score, and make sure the rest of the group stands back. They are in charge of the safety of the group, such as children staying back when arrows are pulled.

I might add here that in serious competitive events there should be two scorekeepers to a group. There are generally five or six archers in a group and they each shoot one or two arrows at a target. After all have shot they walk to the target and wait for the scorekeeper to call their name. When a name is called that particular archer's arrow is identified and called out to the scorekeeper. If there is a question as to where the arrow is and what the score is, the scorekeeper determines the score. No arrows should be pulled from the target until every arrow has been scored. I have seen a close call distorted by removing an arrow that might be slightly in or out of a higher score ring.

When I shoot with a group of archers in a competitive event, out of courtesy, I ask if there is someone in the group who objects to talking or some other distraction while they are





**Traditional archery events draw arrow flippers of all kinds. Some are there to learn; some are there to enjoy fresh air and fun with fellow archers; and some are there to compete against themselves and others. Event organizers should strive to meet the needs of each of these groups. (If you are not sure which group you fall into, join all three and you will have the most fun of all!) —>Photo by Tom Keller**

shooting. Different archers have different competitive levels. As a team captain one of the first things I do is show the archer whom I have chosen to pull the arrows actually how to pull the arrows.

Wooden arrows, some of which may be as little as 5/16" in diameter can be bent or broken quite easily on a hot day. You should place your hand around the arrow right against the target and the other hand right next to it and pull straight back. If this is not done properly every arrow in that person's quiver may be bent before the shoot is over.

By now some of you have read far enough to think, "Gee, I never want to shoot with this guy, he takes things too seriously." "He can't be having any fun!" But keep in mind, I am talking about an order that is fair for all in a competitive event. The next things that should be considered are the groups that shoot together.

#### **WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?**

For the more than 30 years that I have participated in competitive events I

have seen "masked bandits," so to speak, come late to a shoot, turn in a very high score and ride off into the sunset with the first place trophy. Leaving some good shooters wondering, "who was that masked man that rode in and rode off with the highest score?" They may later find out that he had come with his buddy with whom he had shot and no one else had seen him shooting. I'm not suggesting that everyone is a cheater or should be treated like one. However, I am suggesting that in a competitive event precautions should be taken to keep The Lone Ranger individual from denying everyone at the shoot the opportunity to win. Last year I attended an event, a good sized one I might add, where the winner of one of the classes turned in a score far above the second runner-up. He got up at sunrise and he and his ten-year-old son shot the range together, then turned in the highest score. I'm not saying that everyone has to shoot competitively. However if a club is going to have a competitive event and individual archers sign up to participate in that event for a trophy or

sometimes cash, the event should be structured to give each archer the opportunity to show they are truly the best shot. One way to do this, I have found, is to break up the family teams or the buddy teams. Or at least have a club-assigned scorekeeper be put with the group. If they protest then they should be eliminated from the competition, but still be able to shoot for the fun. If it is a two-day shoot, on the final day the top five or six shooters should be grouped together. This will create an equal environment for the top shooters.

I have just returned from a two-day competitive event in which I participated. The first day I shot with four other traditional archers and experienced considerable target practice on the range. So the next day, since this shoot was considered a smaller event or "crumb shoot" rather than go through the stress and embarrassment of shooting poorly, I chose to shoot with one other archer with whom I was quite at ease. I shot so well I managed to bring my score up to a very close first place in the longbow

competition. This to me points out what I have explained above, that with the buddy system you can generally shoot a much higher score than you can with a group of unknown archers competing with you. When the top five archers compete against each other on the last day no one is going to get a free point and everyone gets a fair chance and a good look at their competition.

### WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Other inconsistencies I have seen is when a club puts on an event and doesn't make the rules clear, or fails to hold steadfast to the rules, or doesn't hold steadfast as to what or what cannot be used for equipment or shooting technique.

String walking is a very sophisticated form of target shooting. The skilled archer can place an arrow in the 10 ring as easy as the pin-shooter simply by taking a different hold on the string below the nock for different yardage. I personally observed one such shooter. On the second day of the event, the top five shooters were to shoot together. I was one of the top five in this event. After watching this one particular archer, who was shooting three-fingers under, "string-walk" on several targets I said to him, "You are string walking." He became quite irate, but didn't string walk for the rest of the event because he knew he was being watched. By the way, this same individual had a 12-inch stabilizer attached to his recurve bow. The club allowed him to slip by using a stabilizer on his bow because the rules

were lax and not being monitored. This individual did win first place in the traditional event because, I feel, he was allowed to have a competitive edge over the rest of the shooters.

Another competitive edge that I see in some shoots is the hosting club's definition of a longbow. From what I have heard The Texas State Longbow Championship is one of the best for giving the contestants fair and equal opportunity. Each bow is examined by an officer of the club and it is either legal for its class or it is not, no exceptions. This is the way I feel it should be done. However, because it is expensive to put on a shoot these days, oftentimes rules are bent to get more participation.

An event that takes place in Oregon is The Pope and Young shoot. The shoot was founded, I believe, in 1935 and is traditionally held in late summer just before the early fall hunting season to prepare archers for the hunt. Recurves and longbows compete equally and arrows equipped with legal broadheads are required.

The Pope and Young shoot has events that will take place over a two day period, which are The Wand, The Clout, and 50 3-D Target Shots. In the past the rules have been bent for this shoot. The clout event traditionally has two flags that are placed 180 yards apart in a big field. Each archer shoots six arrows up and six arrows back for a total

of 36 arrows. Enough archers complained that their bows could not cast an arrow far enough to reach the flag on the other end so they dropped the yardage for the men's class to 160 yards. Last year after the event had taken place the club voted to restore the Clout back to the old traditional distance of 180 yards.

This year the attendance was quite low compared to past events. Perhaps this is because of the steadfast rules that have been applied for years? It seems to me that when you feel you can't compete and accept the agony of defeat and recognize the pride of accomplishment, then you have taken the meat, making the event meaningless for those who wish to excel.

The desire of others to do their best and succeed in a competitive event deserves recognition and an equal opportunity. If you just want to shoot for the fun of it, you can always do so by not turning your score card by or not scoring at all, but don't force others not to compete, let them have their fun too.

Most importantly—whatever your choice, whether it is to compete or just enjoy a day of shooting with your friends, HAVE FUN!



## Howard Hill Auction



Between May 1 and May 18 there will be an auction of two separate Howard Hill items. The first will be an elephant foot from one of the elephants that Howard shot in Africa in 1950. The second item will be a set of framed, signed checks. Throughout their business association together, Howard Hill Archery paid Howard a commission for the use of his name until both he and his wife, Elizabeth, had passed away. So one of the checks being auctioned is made out to Howard, signed by him, and then cashed. The other check is made out to Elizabeth, signed by her, and then cashed. They are mounted in a frame that is clear on both sides so that their signatures are in view.

The auction will be run as a true auction. Anyone can either call or e-mail us at Howard Hill Archery with a bid for either one or both items individually. There will be a minimum bid increase of \$10.00. After May 18th the top five bidders will be notified of the highest bids and will have the opportunity to continue to bid. Once the final bids have been placed for each item, the auction will be over.

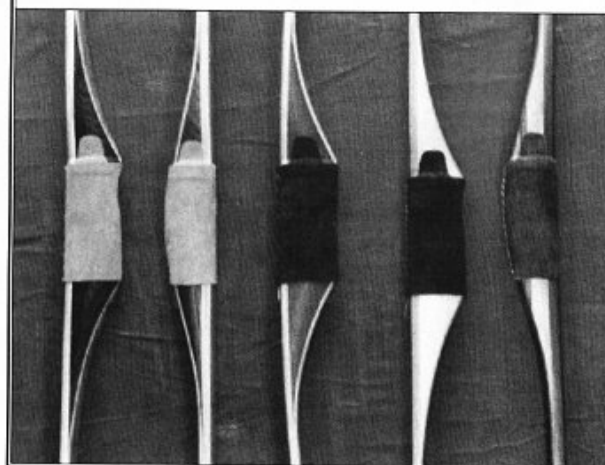
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# Learning from the *ENEMY*

## PART ONE—Lessons from Primitive English Yew Bough-Wood Tillerbows.

By R Middleton

**B**anning crossbows has been a popular hobby among politicians since at least 1139 when Innocent II was Pope, and since these bans had to be repeated (successive generations completely ignoring them) they cannot be said to have been especially effective pieces of legislation.

Venice in the sixteenth century, branching out from the mundane, forbade the exotic with a ban on assassins' crossbows. I have a friend who makes these—tiny, complicated, exquisite exercises in design, and since he is a doctor and hasn't to my knowledge any particular need of an assassin's crossbow, I deduce from the wide variety he invents that it is principally the mechanisms which delight him. He tells me he occasionally shoots telephone directories on the far side of a large room. In these times of political correctness, no group of concerned and earnest people have foregathered to assert the rights of telephone directories and his pleasure is unallayed by those who like to impose upon the rest of us what they fancy is their conscience.

It is exactly this—their mechanical complexity—rather than any ban that for most archers spoils the crossbow. Archers are by nature inclined to reject the use of



machinery to achieve accuracy, and when I am given crossbows, which happens more often than you might think, it is always by people who were disappointed to find that they weren't a sort of silent rifle. If archers want precision shooting, we fix telescope sights and long-rod stabilizers and torque flight compensators to perfectly-laminated carbon-fibre compound bows, and it is hard to see the logic which might stay our throwing the bow away altogether and investing in a heavy-barrelled .22 target rifle, which, after all, offers perfect accuracy yet still requires the challenge of great skill and extreme concentration for every shot.

Nevertheless, from South America to Africa and Asia to Norway, there exists a rural design of crossbow which by its simplicity is attractive even to the longbowman. It is probably this design that in medieval writings is called a tiller-bow. Having no sights, the bow is a split bough of wood, the drawn string

is held in a notch cut across the rear of the tiller, or stock, of the crossbow and the trigger is nothing more than a lever

## The fresh sap has a lovely, bitter tang to it, but like the rest of yew it is probably horribly poisonous.

below the tiller which, pushing a peg up through a hole, dislodges the string and allows it to strike the back of an arrow.

Yew is found in churchyards in England and it is regarded with sacred awe by Anglican ministers, who can't even bear to prune trees enough to avoid wind-damage. Following every winter storm I receive thin, curved, short broken boughs of yew from kindly clergy friends who fondly imagine I can make them into six-foot longbows. Puzzlingly, when one of these clergy friends happened to find a five pound note blown into the churchyard he did not phone me to see if I had a use for it. He managed to deal with the

problem himself. Irritatingly I too am loathe to burn yew, even hopeless yew, as firewood and I constantly snag my head on bough-wood slung from the rafters in my garage.

It eventually struck me that short pieces of these lopped boughs were comparatively free of knots, twists, shakes, and all the other things which writers euphemistically tell us make yew "interesting," and it also struck me that the features which might make a longbowman reject a piece of wood, may be rather desirable for a crossbow. For example, a longbow can be crooked but the handle absolutely must lie in line with both nocks, whereas a short bow with the centre offset to one side can be bound firmly in a tiller and the string, flying free of contact with the arrow groove, gives a greater arrow velocity.

### THE LITTLE TILLER-BOW

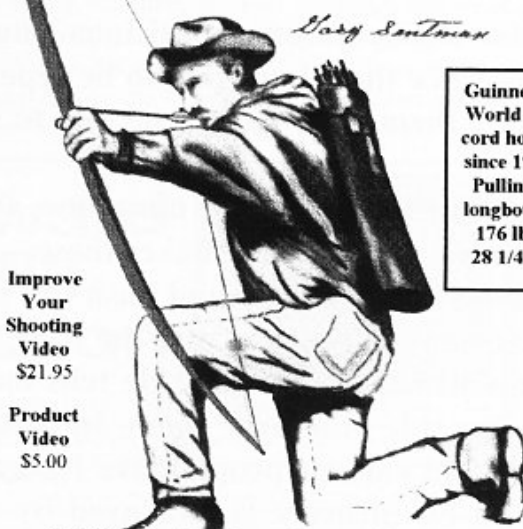
This crossbow has the distinction of being the very first of these all-wood crossbows I made, and it remains my favourite. The bow-lath, which along with many of the others came from Sherwood Forest—I used to live in Nottingham—is just 25 inches long, and in the branch it had a heavy deflex which translates now into a string follow of 2 3/4 inches.

This allowed a draw length of ten inches, though the bracing height means that the string moves only seven inches when it is shot. Such a tiny bow requires very little work to make, and using otherwise valueless material, is an excellent introduction to yew bowery for when a proper piece of yew comes along.

I like to remove bark from freshly cut branches while it is wet, and with this short curved stick I was tempted to work the bow itself immediately as an experiment. The fresh sap has a lovely, bitter tang to it, but like the rest of yew it is probably horribly poisonous. We are all aware that the consequence of chewing leaves or inadvertently swallowing the pips of the berries is sudden death about five minutes afterwards—a good example of an acute illness—but I also know a bowyer who has had to give

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up working with yew altogether from a chronic form of poisoning, and entering a room with untreated yew in it makes his eyes stream and gives him fits of violent sneezing.

In section, the bow has a flat belly, and a slightly curving back which is the intact surface of the sapwood. The thickness varies, being at mid-limb slightly less than half an inch thick in the upper edge, and slightly less than three quarters of an inch in the lower edge. This was determined by the curvature of the wood along its length, but of course it is the exact reverse of what ought to be in a crossbow lath: the upper edge should have been the thicker which would have better resisted bending, and the lower edge would, by bending a tiny bit more, have allowed the string a little less pressure on top of the tiller. Our knowledge progresses by degrees, and is usually more advanced by failures than by success: the fact that this bow has not failed along the more highly stressed, thicker, lower edge, is a triumph of the toughness of yew over the ignorance of its maker.

The bow has sapwood for half its thickness and should really be tough enough unbacked but, having been worked wet, a series of weathering checks appeared along the heartwood belly, and in a fit of nervousness and having read my Saxton Pope (Hunting

with the Bow and Arrow, 1923, p70) I backed it with a strip of vellum. The original draw weight of 60 pounds went up to 65 pounds with the vellum backing, but Dr. Elmer (Target Archery, 1952, pl86) suggests that calfskin, unlike sinew, adds nothing to the cast of a bow.

### PROBLEMS OF MOUNTING

The bow fits into a transverse slot open to the front of the tiller, and is held by four loops of braided nylon cord around each side of the bow, going through the tiller via a hole almost directly beneath the braced string, the four loops being whipped together with both direct whippings and figure-of-eight whippings, in the manner described by Paterson (A guide to the Crossbow, 1990, p71). Despite being fiddly to do, this is a secure mounting and although after a number of shots the bow may move slightly to one side, the fairly brutal treatment of tapping the bow tip on the floor restores its position without harm. I have yet to work out what to do with the two ends of the binding cord and they are tied together at the front of the tiller in rather an untidy knot. It has been suggested to me that a function of the wool bobbles seen on museum crossbows is to conceal such awkwardness.

A problem arose fixing this bow in the tiller, the solution to which may

indicate an explanation for the uneven limb lengths of the four-foot long thirteenth-century yew crossbow lath recovered from the moat of Berkhamsted Castle, about 30 miles northwest of London. When first mounted the braced string of my bow was not at right angles to the tiller, and a series of small wooden wedges had to be put in the bowhousing-slot of the tiller, behind the bow, to ensure the string became square to the tiller.

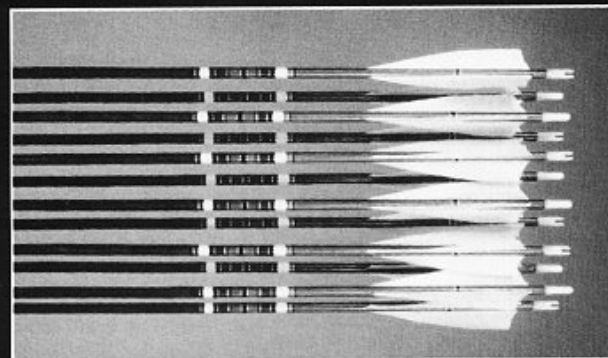
However this meant that the centre of the string was no longer centred in the tiller, and in order to get both the centre of the string to rest immediately above the arrow-groove, and the string to be square to the tiller, I had to offset the bow such that one limb is 5mm longer than the other.

If the bendiness of a bow limb is proportional to the cube of its length, this can be expected to have a significant effect on the relative pull of each limb. A long piece of stout cord was looped around the centre of the braced string and, clamping the crossbow in a vice, the string was drawn back with the long cord. The stronger limb revealed itself by the centre of the string not pulling back squarely to the tiller, but pulling off to one side, and I scraped it with the bow still in situ in the tiller to even out the pull of both limbs, a practice which appears to have been necessary in the



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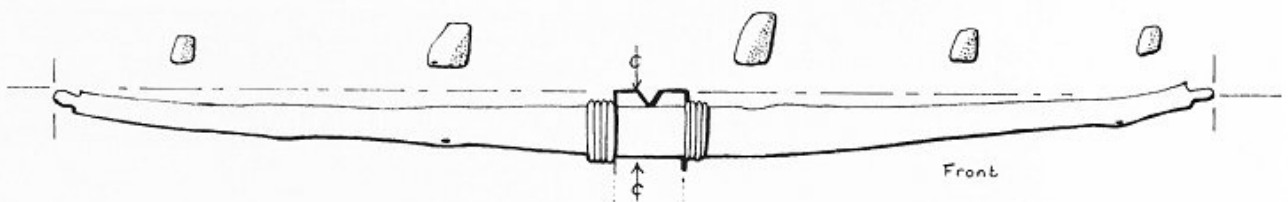
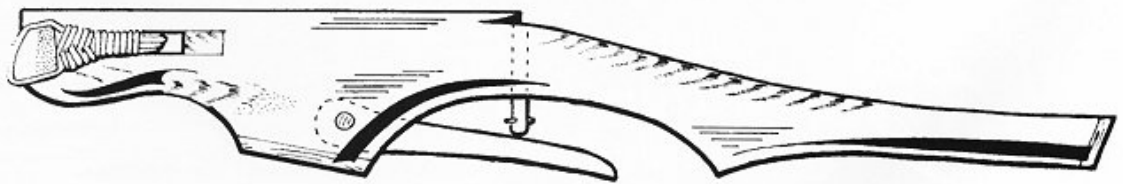
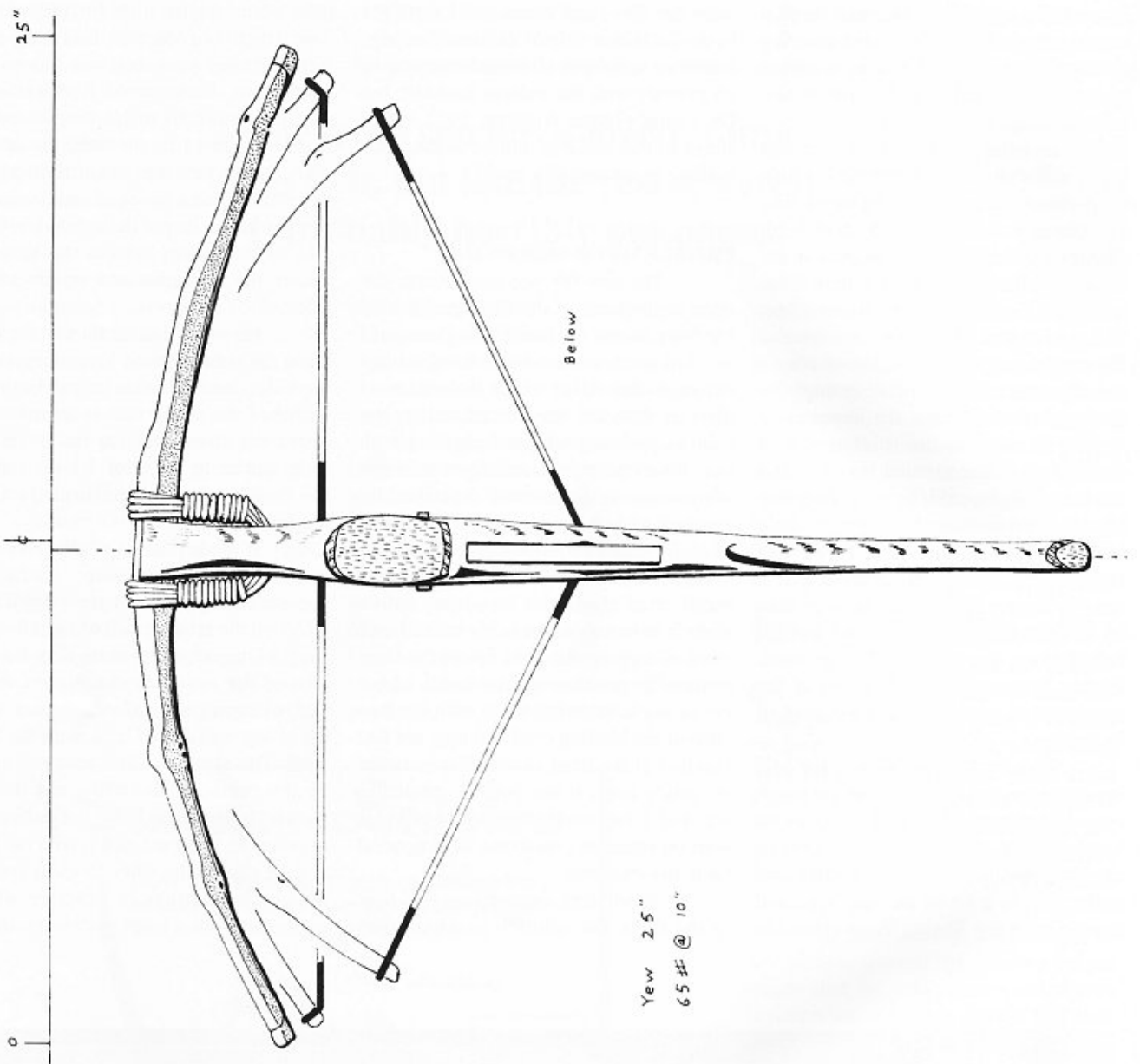


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Berkhamsted bow, where the belly markings show one limb is an inch longer than the other.

The trigger mechanism is a wooden lever pressing upwards upon a wooden peg, dislodging in turn the string from a ledge. The leverage of 2:1 gives a trigger-pull of six pounds, which is certainly adequate for short range accuracy. It is as well, here, to mention that another of these crossbows having this method of retaining the string, shot me in the face, which is one of those things I had always hoped wouldn't happen. The string leapt upwards out of the slot on discharge, and struck the upper portion of the back of the arrow with enough force to flip it over, rather than to drive it towards the target. Jolly hurt, too. Although occurring only once, it demonstrated the need for eye protection at the very least.

I finally came to use the African method for retaining the arrow in its slot on the tiller, that of gluing it down with a small freshly kneaded lump of beeswax located just in front of the feathers. This prevents the arrow being blown off in a crosswind, and also stops it sliding forwards while aim is being taken, but I do not know if it is a certain safeguard against an arrow spinning round in the face. I suppose all experimenters are a little foolhardy, and perhaps the prospect of blinding myself is as good a reason as any to abhor the tiller-bow. Sadly, despite universal advice in favour of eye protection, very few shooters bother to use shooting glasses. For reasons which will become apparent in Part Two, I now wear a lexan-visored, fibreglass motorcycle

crash helmet for shooting these tiller-bows, rather than mere shooting glasses. Our forefathers who used these weapons in earnest, died young anyway and probably held life more cheaply than we do.

It takes approximately ten seconds from spanning the bow, to load the arrow, aim, and shoot it, which must significantly detract from the arrow velocity—flight shooters do not pause even for a second between reaching full draw and releasing their arrows—but I measured speeds of 150 fps with a 150 grain arrow, giving a "muzzle" energy of 71.5 foot-pounds, while a much more tiny, quarter-inch-diameter arrow weighing just 49 grains achieved a speed of 206 fps, a kinetic energy of 41.5 foot-pounds.

The sharp twang of discharge is pleasing to the ear, and at a range of twenty yards the weapon is exceedingly effective at slaying two-litre plastic milk containers which unaccountably inhabit the sand dunes of the north Scottish coast where I retire from the madding crowd each summer. No sights are necessary: the curve of the tiller allows aim to be taken directly down the line of the arrow. Somehow I rebel against sights in archery, even on crossbows, though I am probably wrong. But it seems to me that if First Australians can hit a potato at 20 yards with a spear, we who use a bow which is more easily aimed than a spear, and especially a form of crossbow however primitive, ought to be able to develop the requisite aiming skills without resorting to mechanical aids. (Quite why First Australians want to hit potatoes with spears remains an unsolved mystery.)

I have made two big bows—160 pounds and 196 pounds—out of scrap yew for these tiller-bows—which will be described, along with various excursions and alarums, in Part Two—and over a dozen little ones. A benefit is that short, badly curved pieces of yew-wood can be clamped or bound in a tiller such that they are useable, whereas were they made into hand held bows, any slight sideways cant in the limbs would result in the bow twisting during the draw. And of course short, short draw length bows are difficult to shoot

accurately, a problem obviated by the use of a tiller which requires less skill than making the bow.

This simple idea turns a great deal of otherwise worthless timber, especially bough-wood, into weapon-grade material: and indeed there exist tantalizing fragments in the literature, and of course the Berkhamsted bow, to show that tiller-bows or yew lathed crossbows were once commonplace. Since these bows are of low efficiency, and at a time when the longbow through daily use had phenomenal short-range accuracy, this theory must at least be a contender in explaining the existence of the medieval yew-lathed crossbow. It is hard, otherwise, to see why an uncompetitive, inefficient weapon requiring the additional complexity of making a stock, should have come into being since the simpler and safer longbow is a great deal more effective. However, we are not yet an entirely logical species, and there is no doubt that these weapons have a peculiar appeal of their own which might be the only justification they need. After all, Everest was only climbed because it was there.

And do I actually shoot them? No, 'fraid not. Face the fact, a longbow is more fun.



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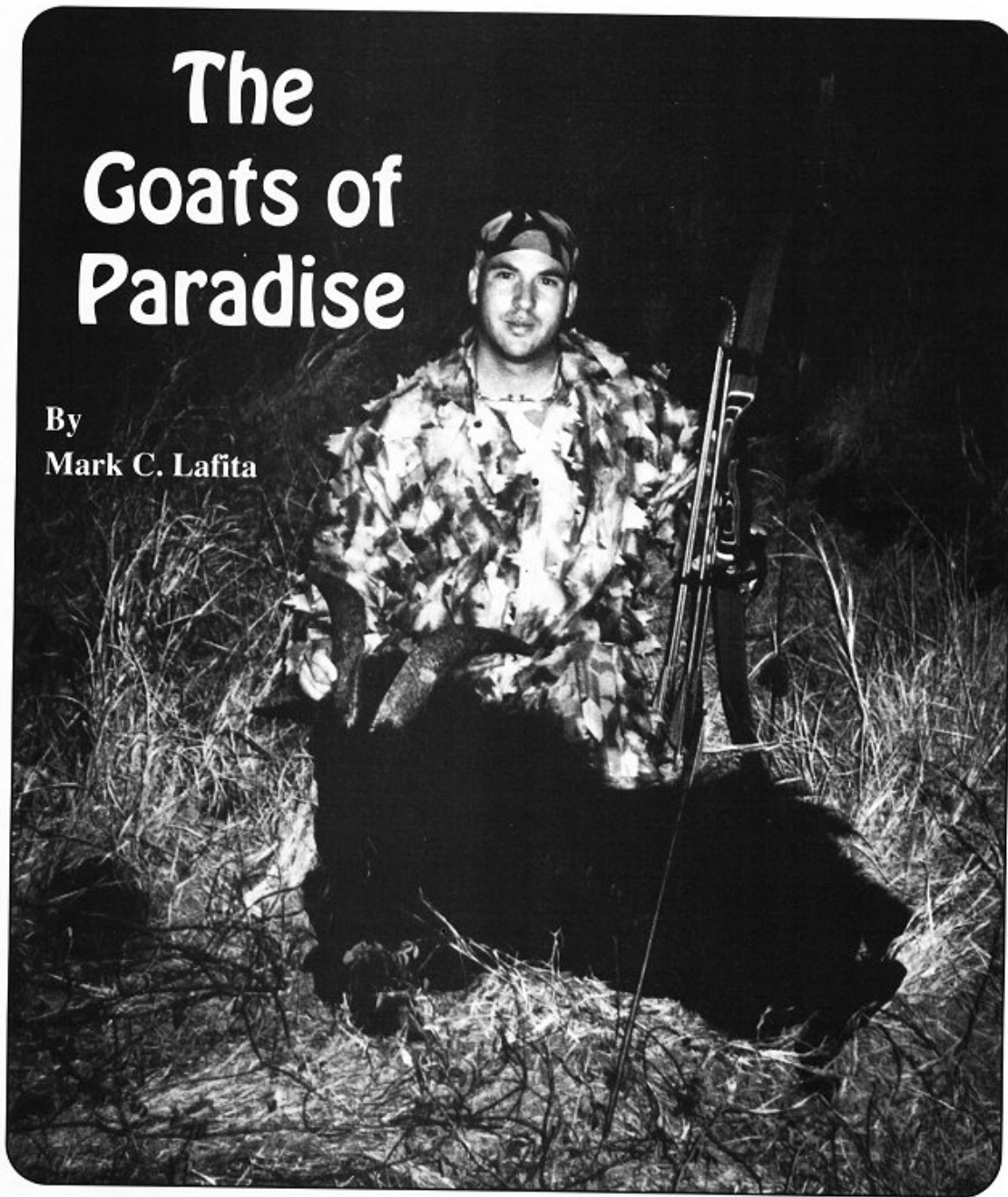
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# The Goats of Paradise

By  
Mark C. Lafita



**T**he excitement of the hunt had kept me up for half the night, so I was lucky that my dad decided to drive. As my uncle recited how he had met the hunting guide we now followed down the Kona coast, I slowly drifted off to sleep as our truck swayed along the winding road. Some time had passed and I was jolted awake by a sudden road change as we turned onto a gravel roadway, leaving the asphalt. I quickly hit the light button on my watch and was surprised to find out that I had dozed for 45 minutes. Needless to say, I stayed up for the rest of the ride, recharged and ready.

We drove down the path, catching glimpses of the area as our headlights revealed the terrain. We stopped at a clearing enclosed on three sides by mounds of A'a lava, a testament to Hawaii's volcanic beginning. A'a is brittle and can be dangerous to walk on. It has a crumbly, jagged appearance

as opposed to Pahoehoe lava that has a smoother, polished look that may resemble the folds of a black curtain. As I sat in the truck, I could see a faint outline of the embankment. The rock was piled so high that you could not see over it except for a small hill just over the rise.

I opened the car door and was immediately struck by a cold ocean breeze and the boom of crashing waves against the shoreline. For a brief moment I actually forgot I was hunting. It's one of the perks of living in Hawaii. You can momentarily shelve your daily annoyances and concerns to contemplate the grandeur of it all. Taking a deep appreciative breath, I turned away and opened the trunk to distribute everyone's gear. Next, I met the guide on top of the hill where we sat, anticipating daylight so we could start glassing. Surrounded by the retreating darkness, I inquired how the goats came to

this area. He told me they were initially brought over by the explorers as food. Later, they were passed on to the ruling Aliti, the Hawaiian royalty, as gifts and they eventually populated the rocky shoreline.

As we patiently waited, we witnessed the beginning of a new day, the subtle change in lighting and temperature as night faded. The first rays of light revealed a labyrinth of cracks and cliffs which started me to wonder how an animal could survive in such harsh conditions. When I started glassing the higher cliffs, our guide instructed me to look toward the lower cliffs, near the coastline. He explained that the animals walked down to feed and drink the salt-water spray that collected into tidal pools. I thought I'd pass this information to my dad and uncle so I made my way down the hill.

As soon as I got to the bottom our guide announced that he spotted a herd drinking water. They were farther away than we expected so we had to rush to set up an ambush. We strapped on

our packs and hurried through a break in the lava maze, our crunching footsteps hidden by the pounding surf as we went. Having traversed 400 yards, my dad opted to stay at a spot further up the trail, hoping that the goats would run by after my shot. We continued another 150 yards to a steep slope overlooking the herd. There was no time to set up a proper ambush because the goats started to march back up the cliffs. The quickest way to cut them off was straight down. The landscape was a mixture of A'a and Pahoehoe lava with very little vegetation to grab a hold of. Our guide descended first, followed by my uncle and myself. I tried my best to stay on the Pahoehoe.

About half way down the slope, the unthinkable occurred. I lost my footing and started sliding. I had the foresight to lift my bow above my head to avoid cutting my string. I dug my heels into the loose rock and leaned back hard onto my pack, trying to keep from sliding any further. After coming to a complete stop, the sun shining directly into my eyes, I found that I had slid past my uncle. Squinting, I turned my head to the side and looked back to see exactly how far I had gone.

I heard my uncle's voice asking if I was all right and I informed him



**Opihi, a Hawaiian delicacy, freshly picked off the rocks and ready for the midday meal.**

that I was okay, reminding him to watch his step. This warning was for both his good and mine because if he slid down the incline he would have taken me out like a bowling pin.

We followed a trail that lead us to an open space and the goats quickly reemerged among the rock. We hastily crouched behind another outcropping. I wasn't ready and watched the biggest male in the group saunter by. After several goats passed, there was a lag in the procession that gave me an opportunity to nock an arrow. I raised my 65-pound Fedora recurve into shooting position, anticipating the release. As the next set of goats drew nearer, I watched a brown and black colored male pass me broadside. In my excitement, I plucked the string and sent my arrow further back than I had aimed. I was fortunate to get its vitals and the goat expired about a hundred yards away. After a little celebration I realized I had left my camera in the Blazer so we took the meat and headed back to camp. We picked up my dad where we had left him and he had a

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goat too. This had the makings of a great outing.

Midday was spent relaxing in the shade since I got a mild case of heat exhaustion from not wearing enough cover on my head. After living in Hawaii all of my life, I still tend to underestimate the sun. My uncle picked opihi from the rocky shoreline. They are a Hawaiian delicacy from the limpet family. It has a hard oval shaped shell with a raised center. The meat of the opihi has a slug-like texture with a circular muscle that it uses to grip the jagged cliff face among the breaking waves. In order to get them off the rocks one must slip a flat blade under the edge of the shell and pound them off before they adhere themselves to the rock again. The opihi is shelled, cleaned with salt, rinsed, and eaten raw.

After lunch, we hiked further down the shoreline in search of more goats. Although I still felt a little tired, I kept going, driven by the thrill of the hunt. About a half an hour walk from camp, we stopped to glass at another area overlooking the cliffs. This allowed me to rest up and enjoy the success we were having. We were just about to move on when my dad spotted a small group of goats. Stalking these goats would be one of my most difficult attempts yet.

I quickly ran through a mental checklist of my equipment and reassured myself that everything was ready. My attention focused on the goats as I gauged the length of the open void between us. The three goats were feeding towards an undersized tree on the occasional grass or stunted shrub, oblivious to our silent observation. Other than the low, sparse plant life, there was no ground cover.

Trying to hide four adult hunters was asking for a lot, so it was decided that I would approach alone. I looked at it as an opportunity to test my 3-D ASAT camo since there was a hundred yard stretch that I needed to cross in the open. I also needed to stay downwind of the animals to minimize the chance of alerting them before I could get close enough for a shot. Having surveyed the area I formed a loose plan of approach.

I circled around the embankment that hid us and started the long trek that would bring me in on the high side of the animals. With the wind in my face and the pounding surf below masking the crunching gravel underfoot, I made slow but steady progress toward my target. Each minute passed under an unmerciful sun, forcing me to take a break every 20 to 30 yards.

After 30 minutes, I reached the area that would test my luck and skill. Completely exposed, I crawled along the ground, trying not to make any sudden movements. As time ticked by, I thought, "Just a little closer, just a little longer." Sweat dripped down my back as the frequency of my breaks increased. I'd lie on my stomach, constantly keeping the goats in sight. The heat added another level to the challenge. It was so bad at one point, I thought I was going to pass out, the heat coming off the ground in shimmering waves. Just by chance, I reached a small rise and was greeted by a cooling ocean breeze and the comforting echo of the breaking waves, a short reprieve as I laid on the black rock baking in the sun.

Thirty minutes later, I found myself within 40 yards of the goats. They

had actually helped me by moving closer to my location, cutting the distance by fifteen yards. Thank God for little miracles. They were coming in on my left and I felt I had to make a move soon or run the risk of them either seeing me or me being unable to take the shot.

My energy was beginning to wane from the exertion it took just to get to this point. Testing the ground to see that I would have level footing, I slowly rolled onto my back. Slipping an arrow out of the quiver, I positioned it on the string and tried to relax. Taking a few deep breaths, I raised my bow and pulled it to full draw. Since I never took my eye off the goat I had selected, I took aim and let the arrow fly. It seemed as if the other two goats had split-second recognition of what was about to happen and then it was over. Their comrade was mortally struck as they escaped, bounding along the rocks in a blur of fur. This had been one of my most challenging hunts, but also one of the most satisfying. Just another wonderful day in paradise.



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# Dixie Boars and Longbows

By Dan Shelton

**I** faced the boar as he came through a small opening in the laurels. He had two broadhead arrows in him, but still appeared to have plenty of fight left. Now was the moment of truth! I raised my bow and using indirect aiming, picked my spot and released an arrow as he started toward me;

The day was freezing cold as my friend, Jamie Durham, and I left our homes in Central North Carolina and started towards our destination in the mountains of Virginia. Again we would be guests of Tony Meeks on a guided hunt for wild Russian boars. Thoughts of last year's hunt and its excitement dominated our thoughts and conversation during the two-hour trip. Soon, we had crossed the state line and started our journey into the high country of Virginia. There was no boring scenery here. The majesty of the mountains had been accented by a recent blanket of snow and was truly food for the eyes. Having grandparents that had lived in these mountains made them especially dear to this archer's heart. Perhaps Thomas Wolfe was wrong; maybe you really can go home again. Jamie Durham had also descended from moun-

tain stock. As I looked over at my hunting partner, I saw the contentment in his face. No words need be spoken, we were home.

We stopped for breakfast in the small town of Stuart, Virginia. This little town might better be described as a sleepy hamlet, where friendly faces abounded and southern hospitality was the order of the day. After a good breakfast and fortifying ourselves with plenty of hot coffee to ward off the coming cold, we started to exit the restaurant. As we were exiting, our waitress waved goodbye and called across the room to us, "Ya'll come back now, hear," in that familiar southern drawl. Who could refuse that invitation. Such is the beauty of the southern people.

Jamie cranked up the truck and started the heater as the temperature had rapidly dropped from where we had started earlier in the morning. A local bank's thermometer displayed the reading of zero degrees fahrenheit, with a wind chill factor of seven below. We were in for a warm day!

Thirty minutes later we were pulling into the drive of the Meeks' residence. Tony Meeks met us and invited us into

his basement workshop for coffee and conversation while we awaited the arrival of the third member of our party. While inside, Tony gave us a tour of his taxidermy shop and some of the mounts he had recently completed. Tony Meeks is an accomplished taxidermist. This was apparent as we viewed his work, everything was amazingly lifelike.

Shortly, we were joined by the last member of today's hunt and we were ready to start up the mountain in search of the elusive wild hogs. Tony would have two guides assisting him today, Bobby Lemons and Bill Scott. This would allow for one guide per hunter. The mountain we would hunt today is more than five hundred acres.

As we started our climb, it became immediately obvious how long I had been out of this terrain and how out of shape I am. My legs ached and my lungs burned. After thirty minutes, my body and lungs began to acclimate to the thinner air and the steep terrain and things became a small amount easier—only a small amount though, it was still tough going.

We finally reached the top of the mountain and on its southern exposure, we began to find a substantial amount of hog sign and hoof prints. Tony explained that because of the cold and snow the hogs would probably move up from the valley and use this southern exposure to bed in sunny laurel thickets.

We dispersed into three groups and started following trails into the dense laurel in hopes of finding bedded animals or jumping them and pushing them in the direction of another member of the party. Sneaking through this kind of cover can get your adrenaline up to

the maximum quickly when the laurels explode beside or in front of you and you hear the snapping of teeth and the throaty grunts of wild hogs. I suppose these incidences should appropriately be termed, "heart attack hogs," as that is the immediate feeling one has. At such times, I am amazed at how fast I can actually move for a middle-aged overweight man.

Soon, I heard one of the guides yelling, "They're up; look out;" and then down the mountain to my right, one of the hunters is yelling, "They're gonna run over us," followed by a tremendous amount of scuffling and brush breaking.

I had taken a stand toward the peak of the mountain and was straining to see into the dense brush. Suddenly, I heard grunts and hoof beats headed in my direction. In front of me was a small clearing of about twenty feet and I felt that the hogs might pass there according to the sounds. I ran to get into position in this area. Scant seconds after I arrived, I saw the hog coming through the laurels. I picked my spot on the animal, rolled up my Sentman longbow, estimated my lead and made a solid hit on the hog as he passed in the clearing on a dead run.

The above sequence happened in the blink of an eye. I gave the hog a few minutes and then proceeded to follow its trail. The blood trail was easily picked up in the snow and I soon found the arrow. Jamie and I followed the blood trail to the edge of a dense laurel thicket, then decided to wait on Tony and my guide, Bobby. I wasn't sure that the hog was down and didn't want to crawl through the brush after it just yet.

When Bobby arrived, he informed me that he had seen the hog enter the center of this thicket and it still

looked alert. There was a logging road one hundred yards below the hogs lair and it was decided that I would position myself there as Tony eased into the brush to hopefully push the hog out above me for a shot.

Stalking a wounded boar in the brush is an extremely dangerous task without dogs, however, Tony is a seasoned

professional and knows these animals and the risks. Bobby and I waited anxiously on the logging road, and soon, out came the hog far above us. We hugged the right side of the bank of the road to utilize all the cover we could while stalking within shooting distance. About fifty yards from the hog, I ran out of my cover and the hog spotted me and started to get nervous. In front of the hog was a terrible laurel thicket that led into a swamp at the base of the mountain.

If the hog entered this, we might never recover it. I had to make the decision to shoot or not. I advanced about five more paces, drew myself into the archer's position, mentally went over everything my mentor, Bob Wesley, had taught me, pulled hard into my face and the arrow was on its way to the boar, striking him in the left shoulder.

The hog stumbled, went down, then back up, wheeled around and entered the same thicket from which he had emerged. I cautiously followed the blood trail into the thicket when suddenly, I faced the boar as he came through a small opening in the laurels. He had two broadhead arrows in him, but still appeared to have plenty of fight left. Now was the final moment of truth! I raised my bow, picked my spot and released an arrow as the boar started toward me.

The arrow hit with a solid whack, the boar staggered, then spun and started back down the mountain going only a few steps and went down, this time for good. Such is the excitement of wild boar hunting. At times you're the hunter; at times you're the hunted.

After much hand shaking and pats on the back from my guides and partners, we pulled the hog out of the laurels and into a clearing, then took a few group photographs. Later, Tony stepped off the shot I made in the logging road and found it to be more than forty yards.

As we bid goodbye to our host and his guides, I think back on the words of the waitress that morning at the restaurant, "Ya'll come back now, hear". You can bet we'll be back!



The bow I used on this hunt was a 68 lb. Sentman Classic longbow with 2219 Beman Ranger shafts and Magnus 140 grain broadheads.

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# ARCHERY EVENTS

## CAMAS PRAIRIE 3D SHOOT

May 5th and 6th, 2001. Contact John Burkenbine at (208) 983-0972 or write to 430 W. North 5th St., Grangeville, Id, 83530.

## ELKHORN ARCHERS' 4TH ANNUAL TRADITIONAL GATHERING

June 2 and 3, 2001. Pilcher Creek Elk Feeding Station, North Powder OR. For more information call Chuck Buchanan at (541) 877-2348 or e mail [elfive@con.com](mailto:elfive@con.com) or Terry Everson at (541) 523-5712, or e-mail [severson@oregontrail.net](mailto:severson@oregontrail.net).

## IDAHO TRADITIONAL BOWHUNTERS' FIFTH ANNUAL RENDEZVOUS

June 17, 18, and 19, 2001, in the meadow at High Valley. Contact Chris Tibbetts at (208) 884-1580 or [lnghbows4me@aol.com](mailto:lnghbows4me@aol.com).

## ITB NORTHERN EXPOSURE 3D SHOOT

July 21 and 22, 2001, near Potlatch, Idaho. Contact Doug Kenyon at (208) 875-2301 or [dkenyon@potlatch.com](mailto:dkenyon@potlatch.com).



Deep in the forest, two figures huddle over a dim light in the grey shadow of a frost-covered wall tent, in a place called elk camp. The two men speak little as they go about their business. Short sounds, hints of words, sighs and groans as they methodically work on the task before them. The temperature hovers in the low 20s. Metal utensils clink in the dark. The hiss of the lantern and it's glow dominate the scene and exaggerate all the activity as it projects the bigger-than-life shadows onto the tent walls. It's very dark outside beyond the confines of their small canvas world. The sky is overcast and blanketed with rolling webs of ragged clouds.

Cold and nearly numb hands fumble with the work. Motivation provided by desperation is tempered with the deliberation of discipline and experience. Many times the scene has been rehearsed as desperately the priorities of survival dominate the men's thoughts and activities. The men shiver in their efforts to stay warm in their cold and clammy clothing. Hypothermia is waiting in the shadows or just ahead, should a mistake or unlucky event befall them.

Pangs of hunger also take a toll on the two men as they endeavor to persevere in their efforts. Gradually a stove is coaxed to life and items are retrieved from the shadows. The rhythmic beating of a dull muffled thumping, like the beating of some ancient drum is played out by one of the figures as he deftly works with his accouterments. This goes on but a short time and the two stare transfixed for a moment into the center of their work to insure the task has reached it's critical apex.

The two figures are rough-cut fellows, bewiskered and disheveled in appearance. The scene is primordial in essence. These are hunters, no strangers to the raw edge of survival.

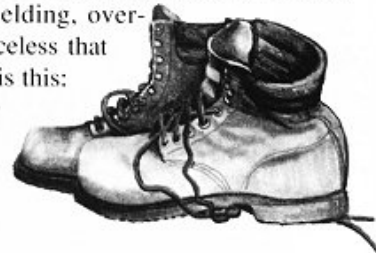
A thick poultice is smeared across the hissing iron and a small sigh of anticipation escapes from one of the men. The state of the poultice meets with approval and water is boiled quickly for immediate use in the operation.

One of the fellows produces a long flattened object and turns his attention to the poultice which now has bubbled into a lunar-like surface resembling the harvest moon unseen overhead. Quickly now, with the obvious finesse of experience the poultice is flung 180 degrees and the lunar-like surface of the poultice is slammed into the sizzling heat of fossil fuel. Energy from a time so far in the past that all memory of it is gone from us, a time of giants and mystery.

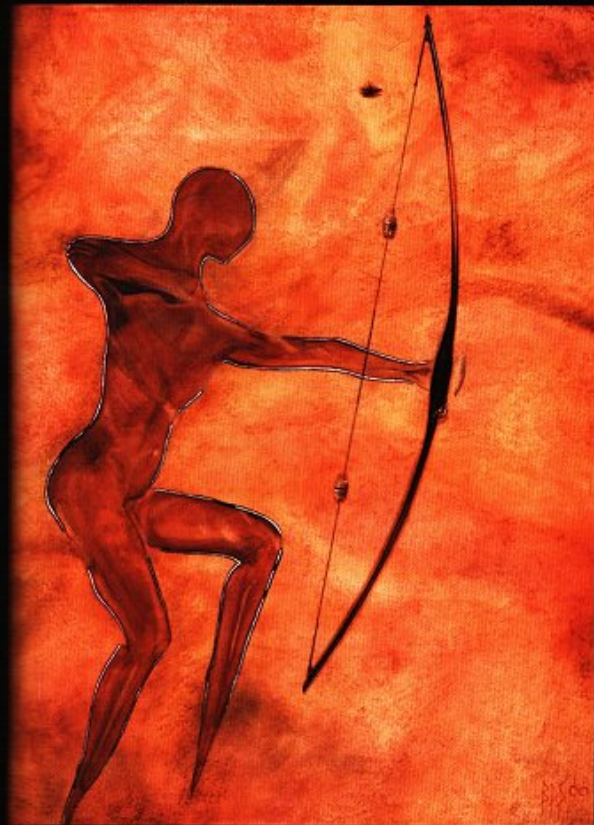
The hot water is ready and poured into the containers. Unwavering, the figure closest to the stove now takes careful aim and flings the now golden disc at his companion's awaiting enameled plate. Ahhhhhhh! A "slam cake" has been brought forth in all it's steaming, golden glory! Quickly, hot water has transformed the metal cups into miniature saunas of hot brown nectar. The aroma of the "slammers" mingle with the smells of maple syrup, coffee, and tea.

Yes, that is how it happens. Hunters, and they truly are hunters, struggle to keep their fires lit and their tents warm. They hold the secret of the Golden Orbs. Many have tried to emulate this small taste of heaven, but don't be fooled. Don't be taken in by the charlatans. The secret is not for sale, yet it may be obtained freely by any soul hearty enough to endeavor to persevere in the task. This utopian food which has comforted sourdoughs and woodsmen for time immemorial has one unyielding, overwhelming, and unreplaceable ingredient—an ingredient so rare and priceless that men have traveled the length and breadth of the earth to obtain it, and it is this:

*Deep in the forest, two figures huddle over a dim light in the grey shadow of a frost-covered wall tent, in a place called elk camp. . .*







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