

FRONT SIGHT



SCI
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

January 2010, Issue 9



Sunset on the McKenzie Highway
near High Level, Alberta
by Mary Harter

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The Front Sight is the official publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International, keeping club members informed about local club activities, and encouraging and defining good sportsmanship. The Front Sight Magazine is published quarterly: January, April, July and October. Distribution 325+.

Check our own www.midmichigansci.org website for copies of the Front Sight, listing of events, and fundraiser auction items.

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SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Type</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 4, 2010	Board	4:30 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Conference Center
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Conference Center
January 29, 2010	Board	4:30 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Conference Center
	Big Buck Night	5:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Conference Center
	Big Buck Night	7:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Conference Center
	Dinner		
February 26, 2010	Hunter's Convention	2 - 10:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Casino
February 27, 2010	Hunter's Convention	10:00 a.m. - close	Soaring Eagle Casino
April 5, 2010	Board	4:30 p.m.	To be announced
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	To be announced
May 3, 2010	Board	4:30 p.m.	To be announced
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	To be announced
June 7, 2010	Board	4:30 p.m.	To be announced
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	To be announced

Reservations required. Please call and leave a message at 989-944-5140

Message from your President

Don Harter, President

Deer season is now over and I hope many of you have been successful in your efforts to harvest your deer, either for that big rack or just for the excellent venison you can enjoy in 2010 around the dinner table. If you were successful getting a nice set of antlers remember "Big Buck Night" is coming up Friday, January 29th at the Soaring Eagle Inn. We moved the event to a Friday night so more youth hunters could attend. Be sure to bring your children and grandchildren. Seating is limited to 300 so get your reservations in early. See the ad in this issue.

Also coming up quickly is our 31st Annual Hunter's Convention at the Soaring Eagle Casino, February 26th and 27th. We are planning an exciting event with many great hunts to auction off. Mark your calendars now so you won't miss this event.

For me the best thing about these events is they give us a chance to get together with our friends and talk about past and future hunting adventures.

Hunt Often, Hunt Safe,

Don Harter



Don Harter with his Servil shot in the Free States, South Africa

The Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International lives up to its reputation of recognizing and honoring our veterans.

As board member Brad Eldred accepts a certificate of appreciation to The Wildlife Gallery of Michigan and Texas from Past Department Commander of Disabled Veterans of America Ben Benzeng for their dedication and commitment to our communities disabled veterans. On behalf of two million + disabled vets, a real heartfelt thanks to Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International and Brad Eldred, president and CEO of The Wildlife Gallery.



From left to right: Taxidermy Studio General Manager Dan Catlin, Receptionist Bri Richardson, Brad Eldred, and Ben Benzeng.



Roger Card presenting his brother, Jack Card, with his Vietnam Veteran Award at the Mid-Michigan Chapter SCI fundraiser.



Mary Harter with her darted rhino, Nick.

Editor's Comments

I was busy in my kitchen a couple of weeks ago baking ahead for company and putting it in the freezer when in the background I heard a comment on TV on the "Judge Judy" show that "guns can have no sentimental value". I hadn't really been listening but those words caught my attention so I listened to what was being discussed. Someone had a gun that someone else wanted because it had belonged to his father and he wanted it "for sentimental value". Judge Judy was saying that a gun is just

an object and could have no sentimental value. She certainly doesn't understand the feelings of most of you who will be reading this magazine.

Those of us who hunt, own guns for target practice, or just have guns for the beauty of them certainly have our favorites and some with sentimental value. When our son was born, he was given a gun by my father before he even left the hospital. That gun certainly has sentimental value as does the gun my father faithfully took deer hunting for over 80 years. Our favorite guns that we have depended on for many shots have sentimental value and even when we buy a newer, larger, or more accurate gun, that old one sometimes cannot be traded in because of sentimental value.

I can remember my father making a tool out of an old screwdriver and carefully hand checking a couple of his guns for several evenings on our kitchen table. I watched him labor for many hours measuring, drawing,

and then cutting in the lines on some of his favorite guns. If you ever go to a gun show you can find many guns with beautiful engraving and even inlays of ivory and/or gold. Many hours are spent making the stocks by hand sometimes with very expensive wood and these guns certainly have sentimental value for the time spent on them.

I talked to a friend who is a nonhunter but appreciated when her father would go out to hunt especially during the depression because then they might have meat for dinner. How times have changed but hunters do put a lot of meat on the table with their efforts. Some of our ancestors depended on their guns to eat, and to defend themselves and their families. Guns were so important to our founding fathers that they gave us the second amendment. Let's hope we never loose it.

Tell me your stories,

Mary J. Harter

**Mid Michigan Chapter of
Safari Club International**

presents

Big Buck
Night

Open to the Public

Friday, January 29th

*Soaring Eagle Inn Conference Center
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Adults \$22 • Kids 12 and under \$17 • Under 5 yrs. FREE

*Bring your rack that you shot in 2009 and get it professionally
scored plus get in the FREE gun raffle with your scored rack.*

Other special events planned.

White tail and Mule deer

All tickets are pre-sold. Must have ticket prior to event.

Registration starts at 5 pm

Dinner at 7 pm

*Dinner includes two entree buffet, salad bar and dessert table
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Almond Duck/Pheasant/ Goose or Almond Quack/Cackle/Honk from Maryanne Belyea

- 1 or 2 duck, pheasant or goose breasts (depending on size)
- 1 large green pepper
- 1 medium onion
- 1/2 cup canned bamboo shoots
- 2 T. almonds (I use more)

Meat marinade:

- 2 T. soy sauce
- 1 t. sugar
- 1 t. sherry or rice wine
- 2 t. cornstarch

Seasoning sauce:

- 2 t. soy sauce
- 1 t. salt
- 2 t. sesame oil
- 1 t. ground ginger
- 1 T. cornstarch
- 2 T. water
- 1/2 t. MSG (optional)

1. Cut meat into 1" cubes and marinate for 15 to 30 minutes.
2. Clean vegetables and cut green pepper and onion into 1" pieces.
3. Cut bamboo shoots into 1" slices. (If you use sliced bamboo shoots, cut each slice in half.)



4. Heat 2 T. oil in wok or skillet and toast almonds. Remove and drain.
5. In same skillet with 2 T. oil, stir fry onions for 1 minute, then add green pepper for another minute. Remove from wok.
6. Drain off any excess marinade from meat. Then in same skillet, heat 3 T. oil and stir fry the meat until it changes color. (Do not overcook if using duck or goose.) Add the precooked vegetables, bamboo shoots, and seasoning sauce. Stir quickly over high heat until mixed well. Remove to a platter.
7. Sprinkle the almonds on top. Serve over rice.

We took a Chinese cooking class years ago and this recipe was originally intended for chicken but it is a favorite of ours for duck, pheasant, and goose.

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Don't Miss It! **31th Annual** **Awards & Hunter's** **Convention**



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Mid-Michigan Chapter

Friday, February 26, 2010

2:00 - 10:00 p.m. • \$5.00 Admission
Outfitters, Exhibitors, Awards and Auction

Saturday, February 27, 2010

Outfitters, Exhibitors, Banquet and Auction

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Dinner (reservations required)

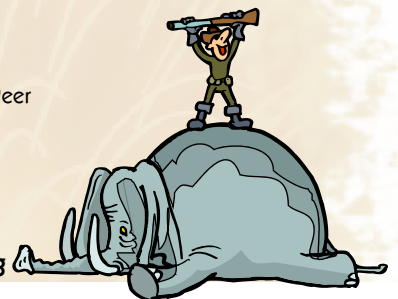
6:00 - Close Live Auction

For more information, contact Tim Hauck: (989) 772-5494

Partial list of live auction items:

Wycon Safaris - Wynn Condict - Antelope Hunt in Wyoming
Wycon Safaris - Wynn Condict - Prairie Dog Hunt in Wyoming
Dan Kirschner Wild Spirit Guide Service - Bob Cat Hunt with Hounds
Roger Froling's Buffalo Ranch - Buffalo Hunt
Brian Simpson, Wittrock Outfitters in Alaska - Caribou Hunt
Jeff Chadd - Colorado Rocky Mountains - Mule Deer or Elk
Shane Quinn, Alpine Hunting, New Zealand - Silver Medal Fallow Deer
Jim and Adonna Stahl - Mustang Outfitters - Nevada - Mule Deer
Jim and Adonna Stahl - Mustang Outfitters - Nevada - Mountain Lion
Larry and Joanne DeVuest - Texas Whitetail Hunt
Lee Livingston - Wyoming - Mule Deer
Ken and Jeff Harrison - Lake Michigan Fishing Trip
Mike Cowan - Missouri Deer Hunt and Alaskan Brown Bear
Toquero Hunting Services - Fallow Deer Hunt in Spain
Sam Fejes - Tsiu River Lodge - Alaskan Goat Hunt
Johan Pieterese Safaris - South Africa - Plainsgame
Johan Pieterese Safaris - South Africa - Plainsgame
R & R Outfitter, Ronnie Davis from Myrtle Point, Oregon - Roosevelt Bull Elk and Steelhead Fishing Trip
Mike McCrave Hunting, Ltd. - Scottish Highlands - Red Stag
Mike Carlson, Larsen Bay Lodge - Kodiak Island - Sitka Black Tail Deer Hunt
San Juan River Outfitters - British Columbia Mule Deer Hunt
Jack Cassidy - Colorado Mule Deer, Elk, and Black Bear
Kruipers - Saskatchewan - Whitetail Deer Hunt
North Star Outfitting - Neil Johnson - Alberta or Saskatchewan Whitetail Deer
Raphael Tagliacozzo - Argentine Expeditions - Axis Deer and Dove Hunt
Joe O'Bannon - Florida - Alligator Hunt
Don McMillan - Belding, Michigan - Ducks, Geese, Turkey Hunts
Racks and Tracks Outfitters, Eric and Holly Merritt - Nevada Mule Deer
Mike Hubbard, Hubbard's Yellowstone Adventure - Montana Elk
Cascade Fur Salon - Fur Coat
Dave Hutson - Shadow Hunter Blind
Neil Johnson, North Star Outfitting, Alberta - Saskatchewan - Whitetail Deer
Jack and Ken Tippmann, Tippmann Outfitters, Quebec - Black Bear
Hepburn Lake Lodge, Arlee Thideman, Saskatchewan - Black Bear
Hickory Creek Outfitters, Kansas - Whitetail Deer
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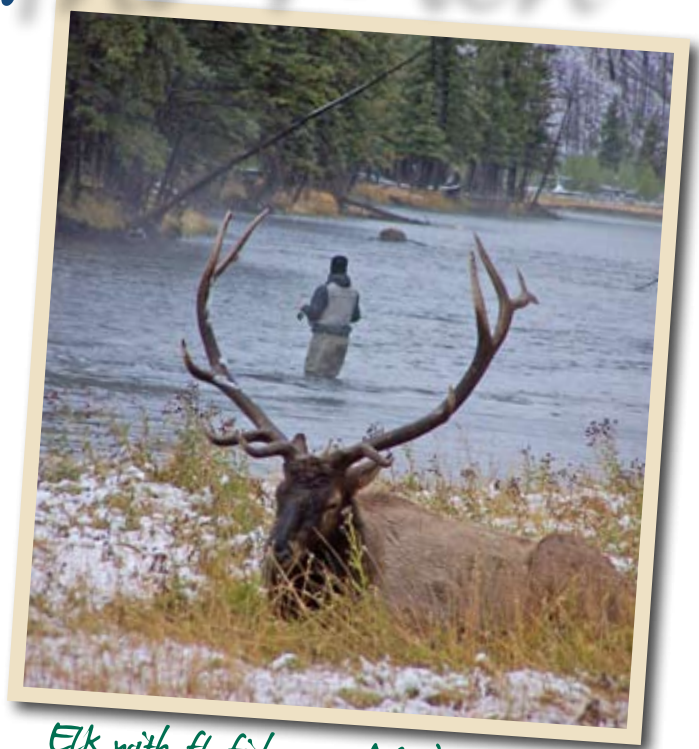
Of Moose And Men

by Dr. Michael Ritchie

The adrenaline was overwhelming to the rookie moose hunter, and even from the top of a ridge overlooking the dense willow swamp, I could see Dave shaking like a leaf. As the moose approached, I remember telling him "Don't worry about locating the bull—just rattle the brush and he will find you!" It didn't take minutes, but only seconds for the bull to leave his cow and challenge the would-be interloper. Even though he was only 2.5 years old, the Shiras moose was enormous to this avid Michigan whitetail hunter.

The trip began when friend and colleague Dr. David Riffel drew a western Wyoming moose tag with less than maximum preference points. Some might call it luck, but the two doctors had divine appointments to make. As we were making the 30+ hour trip to Dave's first Wyoming adventure, the "Welcome to Wyoming" sign was before us. "Do you know what, Dave?" I asked. "What?" he replied. "I love Wyoming!" This was to be my fourth trip to Wyoming and my first moose hunt. God had always blessed our hunts in the cowboy state with a freezer full of game and great memories. This trip would be no exception.

Besides being a well-respected Doctor of Chiropractic, Dave is also a strong believer in Jesus Christ. He was my doctor during my high school football days, and was a great example of a successful Christian man. This three-fold connection—Christian, Chiropractor and crazy (about hunting) made for a great team!



Elk with flyfisher on Madison River

hunting locations, camping, and methods of hunting. I acquired a copy of audio tapes of Alex Gouthro's moose calling techniques and we began to practice our calling. Our wives had to suffer through our practice sessions for weeks. Our hunt was coming together. Our plan was to hunt the last five days of bow season, and first five days of gun season, if necessary. If the Lord blessed us with a moose early, we had four doe antelope tags in our pockets for eastern plains on our way home.

Our first few days of the hunt consisted of checking likely areas and doing call setups. It seemed that the bulls would always circle around behind us in the dark timber, wind us and disappear. It was beginning to remind me of elk hunting; many setups, but always getting busted. Somewhat discouraged, we decided to go to town and do some laundry and take a hot shower. We were getting ready to leave and an old Ford sedan pulled up. The car seemed to be held together by rust and was loaded with laundry and kids. Divine appointment number one. The Lord touched our hearts and we immediately looked at how we could help these people. The first thing we thought of was the boxes and boxes of food that we had brought with us. Even if we had stayed a month, we could not have consumed all that food. Dave said, "Ma'am, I wonder if you could help us out? We have brought way too much food and wondered if you knew someone that could use it?" To



Mike with moose

Before this trip, we agreed that if one drew a tag, the other would serve as guide and caller. Thus, I was the designated guide for this trip, doing all the research on



see her face, you would think she had seen a ghost. "Well, my husband has been laid off work, and we could really use the food," she said with amazement. While loading the food into her vehicle, we noticed she was washing her clothes, but not drying them. "What do you know; we have a bunch of quarters we don't need. You can have them if you would like to dry your clothes." I said. We gave her son a Gospel tract and said goodbye, feeling we were for once that week in the right place at the right time.

The next day we had a decision to make. We had two days left of bow-hunting, but no real hot spots. Dave thought we should go back to the place where we had seen the only two moose of the trip. I thought we should go to a spot a friend had successfully hunted in the past. "Dave, I'm the guide on this trip, trust me. I've done my research. You will see moose tonight!"

We decided to split up. He would go north and I would go south around this large willow swamp. I hadn't glassed for five minutes, when the unmistakable black silhouette of a cow moose appeared in the willows in front of me. She was being followed by a young 2.5 year old bull that I spoke of earlier. After getting Dave and returning to the hillside from which I had spotted the moose, we used hand signals to get him close to the moose (as it was impossible to see more than 10 yards in the 10 foot willows). I could see Dave and I could see the moose, but they couldn't see each other. Remembering what I said about the bull coming to him, Dave used an old sun-bleached shoulder blade to rattle the willows. Within seconds the irritated moose closed the distance to ten yards, grunting and rocking his massive head and shoulders, ready for a fight. Watching this happen from the safety of the hillside was one of the most exciting and hilarious experiences I

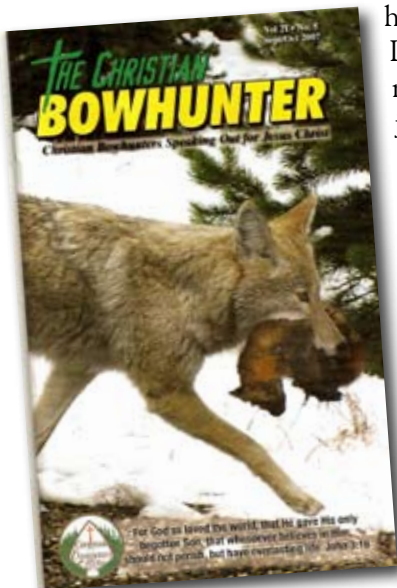
have had in the outdoors. Dave was facing a bull moose at ten yards with just a stick and a string. To his credit, he didn't lose his composure, even though he was shaking uncontrollably.

I was trying to film this encounter, and I was so excited that I couldn't keep the camera steady. After ten minutes, I finally put the camera down and enjoyed the show through my binocu-



lars. Finally, the bull appeared to remember that his cow needed him and he turned to leave. My partner stood calmly, drew back and shot over the bull's back. Later, under intense cross-examination, Dave realized that he used his 45 yard pin, instead of his 20 yard pin, hence the outcome. The next day, in the same spot, we saw a 40+ inch bull following a cow moving in our direction. This encounter ended abruptly when the cow spotted us and took her suitor with her.

Opening day of gun season found some Wyoming natives that we had dinner with the night before standing in the exact spot we told them we would be hunting. Having felt that we had already been blessed beyond what we could pray for, we left them with our hillside glassing spot and headed for the dark timber. Cresting the top of a butte, we began to find "moosy-smelling" urination pits. They were 1.5 feet deep and 3 feet long and two feet wide and looked like super-sized buck scrapes. We began to set up for a calling sequence and the 3.5 year old 33" bull was right on time for appointment #2. Dave took the bull with a 165 grain sierra bullet out of his 300 Winchester Mag rifle. After the pictures and celebrating were over, the reality began to set in that this moose hunting was going to be a lot of work. With me packing and Dave butchering, our



David Riffel cover picture



first bull moose that was shot at 10 a.m. was finally in the truck by 4 p.m.

Our moose hunt was finished early and our pronghorn hunt didn't start for 3 days, so we decided to bring the bull to the processor. Then we would spend two days at Yellowstone and watch the elk rut and buffalo roam. Now to say that Dave was a camera buff, is to put it mildly. During our stay at Yellowstone, his digital camera went off 1,100 times. Why not? We were not in a hurry, so we watched fly fishermen on the Madison river and my camera-clicking friend caught a picture you could only get in Yellowstone. Cresting the hill to take a picture of the fly fisherman on a foggy morning, he finds a bull elk lying on the shore in front of the fisherman. The picture with the angler framed between the heavy beams of the elk's rack is one a photographer lives for. We decided to spend the night in luxury, instead of camping out, we went to the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel to spend the night. Pulling into the parking lot, we were greeted by the famous Number 6, a bull elk that is known for taking out his rut-frustration on cars and people. The clerk at the registration desk said that Number 6 had his antlers cut off two weeks ago after mauling someone that got too close with his camera. The clerk also said that the power was out in the entire area because of heavy snow. With no power, and no shower, we grabbed a bite to eat and hung out in the huge ballroom with many other guests. Everyone was holding candles, but as hunters we were wearing headlights, which brought a lot of comments from the jovial crowd. Someone asked if I was a miner and I replied, "No, I'm over 21, but thanks for the compliment."

Besides his many other talents, Dave is an accomplished pianist. Seeing a baby grand piano in the corner,

he sat down and began to play. With nothing else to do, people began to congregate near us, a few singing along. The night passed quickly and the concierge asked us to stop playing as 10 p.m. was quiet time. People dispersed to their rooms, and Dave and I talked about what an amazing day the Lord had given us. I then noticed a woman who had not left the room. I was a little uncomfortable, but I asked her "What's going on?" She began to share why she stuck around. "You guys seemed to be enjoying yourselves so much, I wondered why you were so happy." She told us that Mammoth Springs was a special place to her and when her world came apart recently, she came to get away from it all. The scripture came to my mind to "be ready to give reason for the hope that is in you." We shared Jesus Christ with her that night and gave her a New Testament. God is always at work and His timing is perfect. I just know that was another divine appointment number 3.

The next day we visited Old Faithful and just before our turn, I noticed a coyote on the side of the road carrying something. "Dave, get that picture!" Dave took a beautiful picture of the coyote carrying a pine marten, which made the cover of Christian Bowhunting Magazine.

Enroute south from Yellowstone we passed Jackson Hole's airport which is ringed by mountains. Dave, a private pilot, couldn't resist and he rented an airplane for an hour and took us on a scenic flight, viewing spectacular mountain and lake scenery as viewed from "God's perspective". We picked up our moose on the way East to fill our antelope tags with our cups full from the experiences of the past 8 days. God had one more appointment for us as we filled up at a gas station. The clerk asked us if we were hunters and if we had seen anything.

"Well, we have seen tons of pronghorn on private land, but very little on state land. Unfortunately, we don't have permission on any private land." I said. "How would you like to hunt 30,000 acres of private land?" she asked. "Where do we sign up?" She had noticed that I had a decal on my truck that I was a chiropractor. She said that her back was killing her. Needless to say, the next day we were hunting 30k of private land and filled all four tags and were on our way home with another full freezer and a lot of good memories. The Bible says, "We are created to do good works which God has planned for us ahead of time." In other words, "Divine appointments!" I hope you see your hunting adventures as opportunities to share the love of the Savior with someone. Dave was driving through a long, boring stretch of Iowa and said, "Mike, you know what?" "What?" I replied. "I love Wyoming," he said. Me too!



ALBERTA *Bison*

by Mary Harter

On the recommendation of Dave Petrella, a past president and member of our chapter, we booked this hunt with Eric Grinnell in Alberta, Canada.

We flew in to Edmonton, Alberta and then drove eight hours north on the McKenzie Highway to High Level which was halfway to Yellowknife in the Northwest Territory. There were many free-ranging herds of bison or buffalo in this area. In the cold February weather, their coats would be prime. This is the same strain of woodland bison that is being restocked in Alaska.

This area was booming with the gas and oil business. The oil sands of Fort MacMurray is one of the largest in the world. The roads were very good but covered with sand to prevent slipping on the ice so all cars and the many, many trucks were pretty much all the same color - the color of mud. On the way we saw a few moose and several deer.

We overnighted in High Level and met Eric Grinnell who drove us the 120 miles out to camp which was in the middle of a huge logging operation. Mennonites were doing the work and they operated 24 x 6 taking Sunday off. They can only log during the winter when the roads are frozen. They actually spray water on the dirt logging roads, let it freeze, and then go over them with a piece of equipment that grooves them for better traction.



We were warm in our suits with fur edged hoods



Our home away from home

We unloaded to snowmachines in a parking area and then snowmobiled in to camp. Eric's nephew, Corey, was the camp assistant and an excellent cook.

That evening we enjoyed a lunar eclipse. We snowmobiled out to a clearing and watched as the earth rotated between the moon and the sun. There were no city lights or lights of any kind to interfere.

After a cozy night in our own private tent, complete with a wooden floor, and a wood stove, we were off on the snowmachines after bison. We usually were out for over eight hours and many miles and what beautiful scenery on clear, sunny days. We saw many animal tracks of lynx, wolverines, wolves, rabbits, and ptarmagin.

Eric had a map of the seismic cut lines and these we traveled daily plus some of the logging roads and frozen

rivers. These were not groomed trails and I think I know what it must feel like to be in a blender. Eric and Corey had cut brush along some of the most used trails but on many we cut brush as we went.

On the second day we crossed many lakes and saw old sign of buffalo. Eric and Don split from Corey and me to be able to cover more territory. Corey and I drove across one lake and could see a beaver house that had an open hole in front of it. We drove closer and got off our machines to take a closer look and could see open water in the hole. As we were looking just a couple of feet from the hole, a beaver came up over the top of the house and went down into the hole right in front of us. He had been chewing on a tree limb behind his home. Towards evening, Corey and I went back to camp and Eric and Don went to check another lake and found fresh buffalo tracks but no buffalo.

During the next few days we had beautiful weather and cut buffalo tracks several times. Once we followed them on foot for about one and one half hours but the wind changed and we could see where they had turned and looked at us. Then they were taking longer steps trying to get away from us.

We cut in a lot of new trails by machine and Corey and Eric cut a lot of brush. Corey built a bridge across a small stream and we checked out new areas. Corey built a second bridge to even more seismic cuts and occasionally we could cross old trails and find places along lakes where



Don Harter with his Alberta bison

the buffalo had fed. The buffalo like the tall grasses found on the edges of lakes and remove the snow by brushing back and forth with their nose. We found many areas where they had eaten.

On the sixth day, a snowmobile broke down (they already had two broken down) so on day seven, Corey rode double with Eric. On day eight, Corey and I stayed in camp because it was just too uncomfortable for Corey to ride double for the length of time it took to drive to some of the newer areas.

At about 11:30 a.m., Don and Eric cut fresh buffalo tracks and got off to follow them. It was about -20 degrees as it was on most days, the wind was blowing, and it was snowing hard. They were tracking two buffalo and found warm

droppings so they knew the buffalo weren't too far away. They continued tracking in the powdery, knee-deep snow for four and one half hours finally coming to a lake Eric knew was there but had never visited. They made a small circle to get the wind in their faces and found the buffalo grazing the grasses just off the edge of the lake. They slowly approached through the white spruce trees and both Eric and Don were pretty well covered with snow so were well camouflaged. Don knelt by the last spruce tree between them and the buffalo. Both buffalo were mature bulls but one was much larger than the other. Don removed one glove and waited for the biggest buffalo to turn and give him a decent shot. Don thought his fingers were going to freeze. Don was using my .338 Christensen Arms rifle with a 225 grain Federal Premium trophy bonded Bear Claw shell.



*After returning from the successful hunt.
Don's jacket was frozen solid.*

Don pulled the trigger and the rifle just went "click". Don slowly took that shell out, handed it back to Eric, and slowly racked a second shell in the chamber. It was so cold outside that the oil in the gun had frozen. It is a good idea when hunting in very cold conditions to wipe out your gun thoroughly before hunting. The buffalo had moved and after what seemed like an eternity of only 5 to 10 minutes, the buffalo turned and gave Don a good shoulder shot at about 50 yards. This time "BOOM" and the buffalo faltered and almost went down. He took off and Eric said, "Good Shot!" They waited a couple of minutes and started tracking him through the heavy spruce. They finally found a spot of blood and figured he was blowing blood out of his nose. It was a good sign. After tracking another 20 yards they could see the buffalo laying in front of them.

After many smiles, congratulations, and picture taking, Eric decided to go out and get a snowmachine and sled in to where they were. It was 4:00 p.m. and would be dark by 6:30 p.m. Don said he would start to cape out the buffalo and Eric said it would be long after dark before he could return. Was Don OK with that? Don said, "No problem." Eric suggested that Don gather fire wood and build a fire which he did.

When Eric returned to a warm fire, Don had as much of the buffalo caped as he could do alone. They spent the next few hours caping and quartering the buffalo which was no easy job for two people with only two knives and an ax.

By the time they returned to camp it was midnight. Corey had kept me from worrying by saying they had been successful and it would take a long time to skin and quarter the animal. Don's coat was frozen on his back and stood by itself after he removed it. They had had a very exciting time.

Don and Eric couldn't haul all of the buffalo back with them so Eric and the next hunter were to complete the job. A couple of weeks after we got home we received a call from Tim Salisbury from the Lansing Chapter who we knew and had been the next hunter that helped recover Don's buffalo. Tim was lucky and shot his buffalo the first day of hunting.



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Stalking a Glacial Ram

by Ken Lehman

At age 74 my life has been jammed full of wonderful activities involving family, friends, church, community, business and of course hunting.

Gnawing, scratching and nudging at the back of my mind was that desire to do another sheep hunt. It had been six years and questions of Could I? Should I? and Would I? kept recurring in my thoughts.

Having a very good wife, who I had promised faithfully I would not do another sheep hunt following the experiences of 2003, I did my best to suppress this desire. At a winter Michigan SCI Convention I was confronted with temptation. Mike Colpo, of Lazy J Bar O outfitters, was right there in his booth telling me about a new area on a glacier east of his base camp where he intended to establish an exploratory sheep spike camp hunt during the fall of 2009. There is something I cannot explain, but the mountain does call you back; maybe the sheep call you back, or maybe I was just simply trying to relive a time, that had passed. Whatever it was, I started explaining to Gail the need to do this mountain hunt and why I should book this trip.

On 8 August my rifle, backpack and duffle weighing less than 60 pounds were put on the grass at the airport strip in Healy, Alaska. It was with mixed emotions that I said goodbye to my wife. There also were a number of other hunters who were introducing themselves and flying to the same camp. Mike was using a new flight service from Healy to his outpost camp. The pilot had both a Cessna 180 and a Super-cub; both with tall bulky tundra tires fueled and ready to transport hunters, gear, food, and horse feed the 25 mile trip in to base camp.

I was anxious to get going. Soon we flew over some spectacular country that I had seen two different times before. What was different was that Mike had built a brand new base camp along with a first-class gravel airstrip where we were to land.

The new location was up river about four miles from the original camp. It was nestled in a thick stand of black spruce. The colorful tents were spread out offering privacy to guides, hunters, and the only things that reminded me of the old camp was the constant jingling of horse bells. The camp staff was made up of a cook, wrangler, guides, and a skinner along with the pilot's young son. All met the



View of mountain glacier from base camp

plane as soon as we were on the ground. The supplies were quickly unloaded and put in their proper places. Shortly, Ron returned with another hunter and more gear and this process continued. Included in the crew arriving were John and Latt, TV personalities from Best of the West TV series. They were going to do some filming of sheep, moose and bear hunts.

Late afternoon Mike's lab, Ike, let out a loud bark and there was a calf moose standing in the trail by the cook tent. It made a fast exit, stage left. Moments later the guys talking down by the airstrip saw about a six foot grizzly which had pushed its dinner in through our new camp.

Curt, from Missouri, would be my hunting partner trying the glacier hunt. He was a quiet determined man who had some great hunting experiences to share. The 10th was the "opener". Horses were being saddled and lots of activity was going on in the corral. Mike had hauled up 18 horses and two mules from Montana. It was quite amazing the amount of gear that it takes to support this many animals and hunters.

Mid-morning two hunters, along with the Best of the West crew, and guides, were heading into the Dick Creek watershed area where I had hunted and taken a nice ram on a previous hunt. Heading toward the south side of the Yanert River a father and son from Montana departed with their guides. Curt and I, the two horseless glacial hunters, were restless as wind and rain started to plummet our camp.

Late on the 11th, the second day of season, we got a

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small break in the weather. So, Ron flew Mike in the Super-cub along with a small amount of camp equipment the 19 miles to the spike camp. It was getting darker when he returned, but he told me I was going in and away we went. It was apparent Ron was a seasoned pilot who loved to fly in this wilderness. He wasn't willing to take any changes with the weather.



Alaskan Range- Yanert Glacier bottom of photo

A short distance from take-off we flew over the Yanert River with a tall mountain on each side and there in front to us was a spectacular sight I shall never forget. My first aerial view of a valley filled with glaciers! Black and white lines swayed toward us marking the Yanert Glacier with stone ridges and ice ridges advancing in front of us. The valley floor is about a mile wide in this area. On the right hand side were glaciers emptying into the valley below. About ten miles of this most spectacular scenery and we put down on a short bumpy airstrip. I could see a red tent and then Mike coming as Ron handed me my gear. His little plane disappeared into the fading late evening light. As one gets to know Mike, you admire him. He has a great respect for the land and law, and he considers it a privilege to harvest an animal in this special mountain country.

Our two-man tent was very low, very narrow and very short. It was good for this location because from time to time the wind whipped down through this pass between the mountains. The tents were set up on a grassy meadow inhabited by troublesome ground squirrels. They soon were chewing on leather parts of my duffel. Hungry bears looking for lunch dug out many squirrel dens.

The next morning coffee, oatmeal, and "Let's hit the bricks." The sun was climbing over the high peaks on the east side, and a world of changing colors was occurring on the south side. Each mountain ridge extending into the alley had its own configuration and colors. One mountain across from the tent was primarily of light and dark brown stone with ridges of white and blue ice. I got my Nikon camera out and snapped a few photos and lucky that I did because it was almost the very last sun that we saw for the duration of the hunt.



South view from sheep spike camp

Mike and I started the trek across a long level rock field, the remnants of some ancient glacier. When we came to the first mountain stream, it was swift and looked slippery and wet. No problem! Mike pulled out two pair of sourdough boots. We put our hunting boots right into these and then buckled up around our arches. The top loop went through the belt. We gingerly picked our way across with the assistance of our third leg walking sticks.

On the flight the night before Ron, the pilot, told me he had witnessed a huge rockslide on an earlier occasion. He said some of the boulders were bigger than houses and had broke loose high in the mountain and were crashing and rumbling in the valley below. Several times each day we could hear rock slides on the south range, but we were never able to actually see one. During the time we were in the bush there was an earthquake in Alaska; and one night we listened to a thunderous rock slide that must have lasted at least two or three minutes.

The first part of our morning climb went well traveling through fairly large rocks. It was the first time I had climbed with Mike, and he stopped frequently to let me catch my breath and composure. Some time after lunch we were getting up quite high and Mike suggested he was going on ahead to a grassy knob and I could follow at my leisure.

We were now in a lot of small loose shale, and the terrain was getting steeper by the moment. I shifted my weight and stepped on a solid looking rock which was probably a foot wide.....then Zoom! It let go. I instantly started sliding down the mountain. I probably dropped twenty-five feet or so. I grabbed the side of a larger boulder and shifted to face the slide. I watched as many yards of shale went rumbling down the mountain making a scary sound as it went. It took about a half hour to inch my way back up using my rifle butt for leverage. I finally reached a spot where I could sit on hard rock. Anyone that has ever hunted in the high country can identify with this kind of



take your breath away rush. This could have been my slip to eternity.

Mike was coming back and he only saw four sickle horned rams. We started our descent along the same route we had taken going up. The farther we got away from the shale slide, the happier this hunter was.

At one grassy knob we could glass back up a canyon toward the blunt end of a receding glacier, and as the wind blew and the rain came we kept watching for animal activity to no avail. A great opportunity popped up to break out the camera again as Mike, my leader, had assumed the fetal position and was fast asleep in this harsh environment. If the photo would turn out I might be able to trade my camera card for maybe a free hunting trip with Mike!

It was nearly dark when we got back to spike camp and Roger, my good friend from Iowa, and Curt were there to meet us and start making plans for the next day. A tall red fox was checking out our encampment.

We climbed and glassed a lot during the next two days. We saw some sheep and caribou, but no "shooter" rams. Good water was some distance from camp. So Roger carried a collapsible water jug to fill. On the second day as we were heading toward camp I could see Roger ahead of me on a ridge outcropping. He was down on all four foraging like a bear wildly picking blueberries with both hands. It was the driest summer on record in central Alaska and berries were scarce. Having said that, the rains were now coming full force.

Following a lot of rain, the first class \$600 tent that Mike and I were using seemed to be wetter inside than outside, and it was tough eating your breakfast and Mountain House suppers sitting on a rock out in the rain.

Just before dark on the night of the 15th, Roger and Curt were out talking in the rain when they spotted a band of rams coming off the mountain where Mike and I had been the first day. They were too far away to judge, however, the good thing about seeing them was that the rams were beginning to move.

Morning came and Roger and I were sent to the right side of the mountain. Mike and Curt were going to check out the opposite side and planned to go way up in the valley that day.

Roger and I started our climb and decided to leave our packs because this was only to be an exploratory climb.

Half way up we spotted about twelve rams and the two farthest up the mountain may have both been "shooters," but they were too far to judge.

We continued climbing when sometime later we saw a speck of white some distance below where we had seen the sheep. I was always good at spotting white rocks. I take pride in this ability...or maybe it was snow. After Roger put the spotting scope up he said the spot was definitely a sheep. We stayed out of sight and climbed on the side of the ridge for maybe an hour and at one time we saw the ram stand up. We knew if we could get higher we would be able to get a better look. At 260 yards from the ram, as determined by Roger's range-finding binoculars, we were hunkered down waiting to see what would happen. The ram was high above us on the other side of the canyon. As it stood up, Roger counted rings and observed a full curl and said, "Ken that's a shooter!" Through the course of the next hour the ram stood up, stretched, and lay back down. We observed the small ram a little distance behind it.

I struggled to find a spot for a firm rifle rest, in the chance I might get a shot. I put my rifle on a flat rock with my wool cap under the rifle forearm and two of Mike's wool gloves were put under the butt. I dug holes in the rocks with my shoe toes to keep me from sliding down. We lay there awhile, and then Roger reported, "The ram is up."

It was facing directly at us. It knew we were there. Where the ram was located I didn't think that I would get a broadside shot and if it took a couple steps away it would be out of sight. So, holding as careful as possible I squeezed off the first round. It hit a rock just to the right of the ram, and the animal spun around and my second shot hit high and back on the animal.

Roger reported the ram was hit as the animal came out of the small basin where it had been resting. It now was moving slowly and level away, but my next two shots missed. I stood up and reloaded with just two shells knowing that shortly the ram would be out of sight. I then dropped back down to try to find another rest. By this time the ram was still moving and Roger said, "Range 380." My fifth shot hit high and in the motor room, and I saw the impact. The white ram stopped, stood still for a moment, and then started tumbling down. At one spot it dropped off the edge and had a freefall of probably 40 feet before it landed on rocks below. There it kept tumbling and finally hung up on a rock in this funnel-shaped steep canyon. My R93 Blaser rifle chambered in Remington 7MM had again performed well.



Roger and I climbed up higher on the ridge and then crossed to the other side in the direction of the ram which was still high above us. Roger went ahead climbing toward the sheep, and I was slowly picking my way



Very happy white sheep stalker

up sending more than one boulder bouncing down to the floor. Roger shouted, "Shall I bring it down?" I could certainly agree to that. It tumbled and one time the ram got away from him, but soon was hung up in the rocks again. When we reached a place where there was big saddle of ice and frozen snow, we slid the sheep onto it. This was a great spot of photos, caping, and butchering. There is no way to describe the jubilation when you are with a very good friend and together you get the job done. I took a long sit and rest in the snow as Roger went almost to the bottom of the mountain to retrieve backpacks, camera, and other gear.

I was not looking for a world record sheep. I was looking for a legal ram that was not all broomed off. And, this beautiful animal, met my every expectation. I knew that we were being watched over, and not everything that happened this day was of our making. We were extremely thankful for our good fortune and for this special place and moment in time.

Roger, still full of energy and enthusiasm, returned from low on the mountain with backpack, equipment, and camera. The happy hunter and smiling guide posed for a few photographs with the magnificent dall sheep on a carpet of frozen snow.

A tall strong man would be expected to take out a four- -inch blade hunting knife and start caping out and cutting up the animal. To my surprise, he took out a little wimpy scalpel with a 1-½ inch blade and handled the process like a skilled surgeon. He said, "Waste not, want not." I could visualize an angry grizzly on the scene later discovering that there was not a scrap of meat left.

The backpack was loaded to the top with meat and the horns and cape were tied to the outside. The pack was very heavy and even a determined Roger struggled a little bit to get to his feet. I said, "Don't wait for me," and then the load was being transported down toward spike camp. From time to time Roger would find a resting rock and stop briefly. Then with a burst of renewed energy, guided with his walking stick, he continued down through the slippery rocks of the mountain.

On one occasion I slipped and fell on Roger's spotting scope and tripod that I had tied to the side of my pack. But the equipment was checked and still operational. We arrived at spike camp the same time as Mike and Curt. All were pleased with our good fortune. This was my third time hunting with Mike Colpo, and again I know he did everything possible to help me have a successful hunt. With that said, I also understand there is a list of variables that can affect one's success. The weather in Alaska is very unpredictable and can be troublesome. Another variable is the hunter's own physical and mental condition along with having good shooting ability. Last, and maybe most important is that a little good luck can sure help on a hunt. On the 18th of August Ron's Super-Cub arrived, and I was flown back to base camp. By this day of the hunt, in spite of a lot of bad weather, four of the five base camp horse-back hunters had been successful.



Mike Colpo, outfitter - middle of photo with dog, Ike. Entire camp showed up to bid me fond farewell!

Later the same day I was once again flying, this time in the Cessna 180 over some familiar country sadly realizing my high country adventure was drawing to a close. As the tundra tires were touching down on the grass at the Healy Airport I could see Mike's horse trailers, trucks and other equipment. Right beside them was my wife, Gail, waving and cheerfully greeting this unshaven bushman. One of the many loves of my life, sheep hunting, would now be a memory and a great story to tell thanks to the very special efforts of many dedicated people.



California Gold

by Tim Torpey

This past March at the Lansing Chapter Fundraiser I met Alfred Luis the owner of Central Coast Outfitters located in California. He told me of a prime property that he hunts in Mendocino County that has giant Columbian black tailed deer. By the end of the night I had written a check and the hunt dates were set for the beginning of October 2009. Little did I know what lay in store for me in those California hills.

On October 1st I was on a plane heading west to Sacramento. From there I drove north to Covelo California where I met Alfred and Nick Tacito. After hellos I followed them out to the camp, and met the rest of the crew, Frank Sunseri, Ricky Escover, Eddie Valadeo and Dave Madsen. Dave would be my guide and the other five guys would be out glassing big bucks for me. This would prove to be very helpful in the days ahead.

After my gear was put away, Dave and I headed out to make sure my gun was still on and then started looking for a big buck. The property was very beautiful mountainous terrain with a variety of flora including scrub oak, pin oak and pine. Dave has hunted this property for many years and has several favorite spots for sitting and glassing. His favorite spot is called "Big Twin". It is a rock outcropping that overlooks a long valley that is very suitable for glassing. This vegetation has lots of openings or grassy meadows that the deer move through while feeding on acorns. The first evening we glassed several deer and couple of nice bucks but none were close enough for a stalk. Just before dark Dave glassed a big buck just below us feeding out of the pin oak. It was only 200 yards away but we could not clearly make out the number of points he had. Back at camp while eating grilled Elk steak we compared notes on what was seen and the plan for the next day. The total number of bucks seen the first day was fourteen, a very good day.

Morning came early and very cold. I was surprised to see my breath and a heavy frost on the windshield of the jeep. When I think about California I think of warm surf and sand, but at over six thousand feet it can get quite



What a beautiful trophy!!

cold. Even though it was cold my spirits kept me warm with the thoughts of what the day would bring.

Daylight found us back on "Big Twin" glassing, glassing and more glassing. We spotted a lot of game including deer, bobcat, coyote and bear. The highlight was watching a boar black bear, estimated at 400 pounds; stand on his rear legs eating acorns off pin oak trees. He was coco brown with a very light brown nose and gave us a show for over an hour. At 10:30 we headed back to camp for a quick bite to eat and compared notes with the rest of the crew. Everyone had seen many bucks in the morning, and we set the afternoon plans.

Dave and I first went to the high end of the property where we sat and glassed a meadow of scrub oak that were just loaded with acorns. After a couple of hours of not seeing any deer, we moved to "Little Twin". This is another rock outcropping that overlooks the opposite side of "Big Twin". We only saw one buck within a couple of hours so we were off again to "Big Twin".





Tim Torpey with his trophy Columbian black tailed deer

The weather had started to change with high wind and darkening skies to the north, but the deer were starting to move. Back on "Big Twin" Dave and I took our positions, he was looking east and I was looking west. The wind was strong and I was really starting to get cold when Dave came running over to where I was, saying "get your gear and lets go, Ricky has spotted a huge buck!" Off the rock and to the jeep we ran. When we got to where Ricky was everyone else was there too. Through the spotting scope Ricky showed us the small patch of trees the three bucks had walked into about 2 miles away. After making a plan for a stalk we were off. With only one hour of daylight left time was not on our side. We drove down a road that got us within 800 yards straight below the bucks. We began the stalk up a draw, and jumped two does that ran the way the bucks were, so we diverted to the left one draw over. As we continued on we suddenly saw two deer right in front of us. Looking through my binoculars I could see they were both bucks and good ones. I instantly got a rest

and found the bucks in my scope. Dave was telling me to shoot the buck in the front, but I wanted to see how good the second buck was first. I thought the second buck was better until the first buck turned his head and I could see the extra points on his right side. That was all I needed to see and I shot. The buck went down and the congratulations started. When we made it to the buck we were both very pleased with what we saw. The sunset made the photos extra special and the drag to the jeep was all downhill. The deer scored 149 7/8 SCI which will rank gold medal in the record book.

I came to California as a client but left as a friend. Central Coast Outfitters offers hunts for predators, black bear, Columbian black tail and tule elk. You can contact Alfred Luis at 805-922-7923, if you need one of these species or just a great hunt. Talk to Alfred and maybe you can also strike California Gold.

What a Hunt

by Peter Bucklin

In the '08 and '09 Lansing Area Chapter Fundraisers, Seth Hootman and Jim Dunigan got top bids on Rod Pedersen's donated Screaming Eagle Outfitters black bear hunt "on the cheap". My son, Jon and I "threw in" with them and we arranged to hunt Saskatchewan bears the second week of June, 2009. Seth, Jim and I had hunted bear with Ron previously and kind of knew the drill.

Jim is a seasoned bear hunter and Jon had tried his luck previously with no luck but it would be the first time with Ron for Jon. I would be a non-hunting observer, as well as a burden and general nuisance. Seth's previous hunt there ended when a bear came into camp and ate one of his car's tires and he broke his toe - Seth not the bear. I don't know if I would have believed that story except Ron verified both as being true.

Jon checked with Tom Nelson as to the best time, and Tom said June. Hummm - seems like it used to be May. But Tom was "right on" as there seemed to be a pretty regular flow of bears to the baits.

The next order of business was travel arrangements. Seth was a separate issue as he was on break from duties as a physiology professor at Michigan State University and had some time. He drove out to Oregon to spend some of it with family, driving to bear camp by way of



*Attempted
"Breaking and Entering"
bear style*

Washington, Montana, Alberta and Saskatchewan to hook up with the rest of us in Buffalo Narrows. He loves to drive and made the most of it by poking along to enjoy the scenery, most of which was postcard beautiful.

The rest of us opted to drive as well, although a little more directly and considerably less scenic. When Jim and I had gone before we did it the more "conven-



Outfitter Ron Pedersen of Screaming Eagle Outfitters and WALLEYE

tional" way with flights to Saskatoon and a rental vehicle the rest of the way. It is only a bit longer driving day-wise and the financial difference was significant, especially with having to rent a good sized vehicle over a car if we flew. Bear hunters can have a lot of gear so almost have to rent a pickup truck or van. And, you end up paying the rental on the vehicle for two half-days of driving and five or six days of it just being parked at camp with "the meter running." Plus, you avoid all the hassle of airports and possible weather delays, missed connections, etc. It can be particularly frustrating when the nice lady at the Saskatoon airport car rental agency who promised you that special vehicle over the phone had already rented it out just before you got there. We all agreed we had a bit more time than money and patience. Since Jon's SUV is almost the size of a small house, we had lots of room for three hunters and gear, including some stuff we probably would have left home if we flew.

The scenery wasn't even close to what Seth experienced, especially southern Saskatchewan. That part of the world has only two claims to fame - D.U.'s vast waterfowl breeding grounds and wheat production that kept the Russian people from starvation during that fifty years of Communism foolishness.



Amazingly, we all four arrived at bear camp within minutes of each other.

The weather was great the whole time and when we asked the best time to go to the stands, the answer was "any time you want. The bears are in and out of the baits all day." They were right! Maybe hunting from mid-afternoon until dark is just a May thing. Besides, this late in the season "dark" isn't until close to midnight. I dunno.



Jim Dunigan's 410 pound bear

Seth scored the first evening with his repro Marlin lever action, model ME in .308 Winchester Cal. A sweet little piece - and with its first kill, that ended Seth's hunt early again but this time with a bear. That carbine, incidentally, might surprise some gun people in that it is chambered for a modern round. This was made possible by a collaboration between Marlin and Hornady that resulted in the .308 rounds being tipped with soft plastic "spire" points that won't set off the rounds in the tubular magazine when the gun is fired. Nice feature!

Jim was the second to fill out on the afternoon of the second day. Obviously, no shortage of action. Both Jim and Jon were bow hunting and Jim watched his bear expire in sight of his tree stand.

All of Ron's baits are within short driving distance from the cabin and the pair of Motorola "radios" (we used to call them walkie-talkies) we brought along came in real handy as we could check with the hunters every hour. That way, if a hunter had a bear down at five or six o'clock in the afternoon, he didn't have to wait in his tree for the prearranged pickup time of nine or ten o'clock. Sweet! Plenty of time for pictures and all the rest of the handling of the kill - all in bright daylight.

All harvested bears are weighed in camp and Jim's came in at 410 pounds. Imagine what it would have been going into hibernation next fall.

The first attempt to get him winched up for weighing and pictures failed as his head and front paws were still on the ground. So down he came to get the rope retied and knotted right at the pulley. Even then he was almost touching the grounds.

Jon's chance next, a "monster" very similar to Jim's but he couldn't get the perfect angle (a real issue with archery equipment) and couldn't close the deal. His next chance came on the next to the last day with both of us in the stand and the whispered conversation went something like this:

"You're going to shoot him, aren't you?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Too small - I want 300 pounds."

"Jon, shoot the damn bear!"

After several seconds of deteriorating resolve, he came to full draw and I kept the video cam rolling (do video cams roll?) With a pass-through shot, the bear loped 30 yards, hesitated as if trying to evaluate his current state of affairs, turned right, made another fifteen or so yards, and expired.

I felt bad about badgering him into taking the shot but after all, this was his third black bear hunt following nary an opportunity on the first two and - with only one more day to hunt, what are the odds of 'Mister Wonderful' coming in on that day?? I dunno - with the five inch tracks we were seeing at all the stands, maybe better than I thought. In any event, the bear weighed in at 195 pounds - not "chopped liver!"

Seth left for home the day before our departure, taking a more direct route on this, his final leg of the over-all trip. His quick calculations of total miles came up at a little under 8,000. Nice little "ride in the park" or over two countries almost from one end to the other!

After gorging on fresh caught walleye and all of the rest of Ron's great cooking, we left a little heavier than when we arrived. We'll probably lose the weight but not the memories.



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Hunting In South Africa

With **DICKIE SLYKHUIS**
MAY 4-20, 2009

By Joanne Witte

We had a great time hunting with Dickie Slykhuis in the Limpopo province in South Africa in May of 2009. This was really Larry's trip (his third) to get a leopard and I was just along for the ride. Even so I ended up shooting some very nice and very unusual animals.

We were met at the Johannesburg airport by Bart Grove, Larry's 22 year old Professional Hunter (PH), and Dennis Viviers, an additional hand in camp. After a long wait to get our rifles and permits, we set out on the 3 ½ hour drive to Faan Van Schalkwyk's (Dickie's friend) camp. We were based there because he has small cats on his farm.

Dickie and Faan have been friends since before they were born. Their mothers went to school together. In fact, the house where Faan and his family live was the boarding



Joanne and Larry at Faan's camp

school their mothers attended in days past. It has been converted to a single family home. It is situated across a river from the camp. If the water is low, as it was when we were there, trucks can be driven across the river to camp.

If the water is too high, vehicles have to be parked by the house and the river is crossed by a suspension bridge. I suffer from vertigo and was glad I didn't have to cross that bridge very often. Of course the staff, the PH's, and their children scampered across the bridge with what to me was reckless abandon.



Faan's camp



The beautiful waterhole at Sunnyside where I shot the warthog

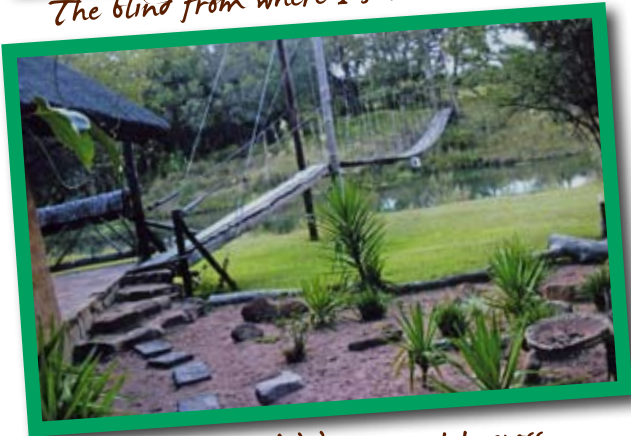
The camp was very nice and very comfortable. As those of you who have been on long plane trips can imagine that first night in a bed is heaven. We slept late (7:00AM) the next day, checked our rifles, and went out hunting.



Dinner at Faan's camp - individual tables



The blind from where I shot small cats



The bridge I did not want to cross

areas for close to a month. The baits were too far apart for one person to check them all in one day so we usually began the day by going in different directions to check baits. Dickie and Faan had trail cameras at two baits and the pictures were fun to look at.

I planned to hunt small cats from a baited blind. I also wanted a waterbuck, a common reedbuck and a mountain reedbuck.

Larry hunted with Bart and Manuel who was acquiring hours to get a dangerous game endorsement on his PH license. Joseph, their driver, also accompanied them. I hunted with Dickie, Faan (also a PH), Dennis, and Fish (Faan's tracker and skinner). Dennis, age 20 and 1.97 meters tall (about 6'5"), was the son of a friend of Dickie's. He was delightful company, very good-natured and very helpful.

Very often I hunted a huge concession about an hour's drive from camp called Sunnyside that was owned by blacks. Dickie and Faan had hunting rights there mostly because they spoke the native dialect—Sotho. This land was previously owned by Andrew Stubbs and was taken from him by the government because the blacks proved their ancestors had settled there. Doc Heeter, one of our Mid-Michigan chapter members, shot our #1 Southern Impala there in 2005 while hunting with Andrew Stubbs.



Brown Hyena

They still have great impala!

I asked Dickie if his farm, New Holland, was in danger of being taken and he said, "No". It had been in his wife's family for several generations and there was no sign of early black settlers.

May 8 I had a very big day! Dickie, Dennis, Faan, Fish and I went to Sunnyside to look for a big impala we had spotted several times before. While stalking impala, I saw a huge snake coiled up between Dickie and me. Dickie had stepped right over it and not even seen it. I nudged it with my foot and said, "What's this?" Dickie yelled, "It's a puff adder—the fastest striking snake in Africa. Why did you kick it?" Of course I had no good answer. I thought maybe it was an empty skin. Luckily it was cold so the snake was lethargic and it slowly slithered away from us. I received a lecture from Dickie about how I should never touch a snake in Africa. He said the puff adder wouldn't kill me but I would surely end up "in hospital".

This is only the second poisonous snake I have seen in 6 trips to Africa. The other one was a small gray snake in Namibia.

After my snake experience we continued our stalk and came upon a very good and very pretty impala just standing there. We both stood looking at it, and then at each



Glassing for Mountain Reedbuck



Joanne's Klipspringer

other. And I shot it. It was not the monster I had hoped for but it was over 23 inches. I have a tendency to shoot first and ask questions later.

Before lunch we went to a farm on the main road between Lephalale (formerly Ellisras) and camp where Dickie had spotted some big klipspringer on previous trips to and from camp. Jan Shoeman and his wife owned the farm and no one had hunted there for 9 years. Dickie called for permission to hunt and was somewhat surprised at the reason Jan gave for allowing us to hunt there. It seems that Dickie's wife, Cecilia, writes articles for the local paper about old times. Jan likes the articles. Cecilia, a lecturer at the local university, has written three published romance novels. We asked if we could read them and she said probably not since they were written in Afrikaans. She said when she gets rich and famous she will have them translated into English.

We walked along the base of the mountain but didn't see anything. I unloaded the rifle, got in the cab of the truck and we headed for the gate. As we neared the gate we spotted a very good klipspringer innocently munching some grass behind the house. I reloaded my rifle, discussed with Dickie how to get a shot without spooking the animal, eased out of the cab, braced the rifle on the window and shot. I had a very nice trophy. Jan came running to see what we had.

After that we headed to a lovely park for BBQ for lunch while Fish skinned the klippie. They are very delicate and must be skinned right away. The hair is hollow, almost like quills. Dickie called his uncle to bring us another ice chest and some ice so we could keep the klippie cool and not have the hair slip while we continued to hunt.

After lunch we headed to Dickie's farm to look for a big waterbuck. They come to the fields right at dark. As

expected they were there. Dickie and I made a short stalk and I shot one at his direction. When we looked at it Dickie said it wasn't the one he wanted. They had been milling around and the wrong one got in the right place. He told me he owed me a bigger one. Faan could mount this one for his camp.

That night Dickie's wife, and his children, Alisha (to be 12 on May 13) and Dian (age 8) came for the weekend. The cook, Nadine, welcomed her husband, Martin, and her two children, Naminda (about 13) and Marchel (about 8) for the weekend also. Karen, Faan's wife came over for dinner.

During our travels from farm to farm we noticed that everyone has dogs, not just one or two but 5 or 6. There were lots of dogs in camp too and each family brought a puppy. One of Faan's dogs was very pregnant and we were hoping we would get to see puppies before we left.

The children were all very personable and lots of fun. It was cool but Dian was barefoot. He told me he never wears shoes. He has to wear a uniform for school, but not shoes.



Honey Badger

The next evening I shot at a Honey Badger with a shotgun and missed, badly. I was having great difficulty figuring out how to shoot small cats out of a blind with the red spotlight. I felt very rushed and shotguns do not come easy for me. After missing the Honey Badger it started to rain so we decided to head back to camp. Dickie said nothing would come back to the blind for two hours so we might as well leave..

The next day I tried shooting the .223 with a scope and we all decided I should use that for the small cats instead of the shotgun. As luck would have it a civit came in but I missed my one shot. Actually I think I looked beside the scope instead of through it when I saw the civit. Dickie said I was the first person to miss a civit.



Small Spotted Genet



The vervet monkey that got real close by the waterhole

On May 11, however, I finally got it right and shot a Honey Badger with the .223. Unfortunately it wasn't dead but we were able to finish it off. At last I was getting the hang of shooting with the red light out of the blind.

May 11 was the day Larry shot his leopard so we had a great celebration when he got back to camp about 7:30pm. We even had champagne. His story was in a previous edition of The Front Sight.

The next morning we slept late. Larry said he didn't sleep much because he kept reliving his leopard kill.

Faan and I sat by a beautiful water hole that day. We saw a large troop of vervet monkeys, some of who got very close to us, nyala, kudu, and warthogs. About 2:30PM a very big warthog came in and I nailed it. When I shot it, it squealed and ran but we found it dead not 30 yards away. Faan said the squeal bothered him because that often means a wounded warthog, not a dead one.

May 13 was another big day for me. Dennis, Faan, Dickie, his family, and I had lunch in town at a very nice restaurant owned by someone who was letting us hunt on his farm. This was Dickie's daughter's 12th birthday.

That night Faan, Dennis, and I sat in a blind for more small cats. Previously we had talked about the many brown hyena tracks we had seen. In fact, every leopard bait had hyena tracks even though there were not always

leopard tracks. There were hyena tracks going down all the roads near the leopard bait too. I said I would like to shoot one even though I knew it could not be imported. Faan wanted a mount for the lodge so we made a deal. About 7:30PM Faan turned on the red light and saw two eyes. I got it in my sights and shot and there it lay stone dead beside the tree. The little .223 did a fine job on that large animal. Faan was very happy because now he would have a brown hyena mount for his Lodge. He is going to put my name on it and I can visit it any time I want to.

On May 15 we had a bit of excitement. Bart took Larry and me and our entourage to a beautiful farm to look for waterbuck and bushbuck. Dickie was checking leopard baits at a sheep farm and they discovered a fresh leopard kill. A sheep had been killed in the road. Dickie called us and Bart and Larry ate a quick lunch and headed to the farm-about an hour away-and built a blind. They heard two leopards nearby that evening but nothing came back to the sheep. They decided that all the commotion in the afternoon had alerted the leopard to stay away from the bait.

That night I shot a genet out of a blind! I realized that I had time to get a good look at the animal and get a careful shot. The red light did not seem to bother the animal. The .223 put a huge hole in the small animal.

The next day Dickie, Faan, Dennis and I went to Dickie's farm to look for a big waterbuck. This time we walked up to the field where they congregate at dark. We saw two standing in the two-track about 200 yards away. Dickie wanted me to wait for a broadside shot and as luck would have it they slipped into the brush without turning broadside.



Joanne's Waterbuck

This was our last day of hunting in this province so I thought my hopes for a big waterbuck would be unfulfilled. We headed back to Dickie's lodge to pick up our gear and head home. As we rounded a corner Dickie spotted a herd of waterbuck with a really big bull. Dennis drove hell bent



Warthog

for leather down the road to get into position for a shot. Just then the buck took off across the field. We raced around the field with me hanging on for dear life with both hands and Dickie holding my rifle. Once we got there the bull turned and headed back to his original spot. Off we went again! We stopped and the buck was silhouetted between two trees. He was not at all aware of us; he was interested in the cows with him.



Larry's Black Wildebeest

That was his downfall. It was almost dark but I got a bead on him, squeezed the trigger, and he dropped. This was Dickie's second biggest waterbuck ever and the biggest he had seen in 6 years. It all happened at last light of the last day of our hunt in this area. I told Dennis his driving equaled the harrowing ride Larry and I had while hunting in Argentina.

Our next stop was Dullstroom in Mpumalanga province to hunt for mountain reedbuck, common reedbuck, and black wildebeest. This was a beautiful place. It is a trout fishing, catch and release, resort and is very picturesque. It reminded us of Saugatuck or Traverse City with its excellent restaurants and many art and craft shops. We stayed in a beautiful condo on what they called "the dam".

Unfortunately it was too windy for us to hunt that evening. We had hoped to look for bushpigs but the weather was too bad. We consoled ourselves by having a drink beside the fireplace and going to bed early.



Dickie and Joanne with Common Reedbuck

The next morning it was 24 degrees when we got up. We went to a farm to look for common reedbuck for me and black wildebeest for Larry. Around and around the pastures we went in the truck but all the reedbuck were too small.

We decided to look for a black wildebeest for Larry and after several abortive diesel stalks, we finally spotted a big one. It was very old and had very large bosses. Larry dropped it handily. That's hunting! You can look and look and then in 2 seconds it is all over.

We had a good lunch in town and then went to a different farm to look for a mountain reedbuck for me. The scenery was gorgeous—deep revines, waterfalls, and lush vegetation. If I shot one on the other side of the mountain I wondered how they would get it. I was assured that if I shot one they would figure out how to get it.

As we were all glassing across the revine, one was spotted on the side of the hill where we were standing. I dropped it and we all admired it.

Then it was back to the first farm for the elusive common reedbuck. Once again we drove around and around and all I heard was. "That one isn't big enough". Three of the men walked through the tall grass and reedbuck sprouted up from everywhere but they were still all too small. We were ready to call it quits and Dickie yelled, "There he is on top of that hill. I got him in my sights and shot. He dropped and once again we had pictures at dark. For the second time I had an animal at last light on the last day of our hunt.

The next day we headed for the airport in Johannesburg and home. This time we easily got bulkhead seats to accommodate Larry and had an uneventful flight home. We had a wonderful time. It was so much fun! We had so many good laughs and shot quality animals. We hope to go back to hunt with Dickie again.



*Background Image:
As the sun sets over the Chukchi Sea
near Arctic Camp*

Alaskan Muskox

by Mary Harter

In late January, 2009, we traveled to Shishmaref, AK to hunt muskox with Brian Simpson of Whittrock Outfitters and Clifford Weyiouanna who is the chief in this Eskimo village. Shishmaref is on an island above the Bering Straits and is 80 miles from Russia.

This was the third year of allowing nonresidents to hunt muskox in this area after applying for a tag and being one of only 20 drawn yearly. My tag was number one and Don did not receive one.

We flew from Detroit to Seattle, to Anchorage, to Nome where we spent the night, and then on to Shishmaref the next morning stopping in Teller and Bravac on the way. There is a nice airport waiting area in Nome but we were to be



Don and Mary Harter in Shishmaref

with the heat of being inside. Wash water was placed in pails and removed daily along with the pail from the bathroom. Handiwipes were very handy.

That evening, Brian and Clifford returned with their two hunters and a caribou. As the hunters also wanted muskox, they made plans to go out with them the next day and we would stay in, watch the Super Bowl, and go out the next day.

About 9:00 p.m., Clifford and Brian with their two successful muskox hunters returned. They brought the head and hides inside on a blue tarp to thaw and be prepared to send to a taxidermist. The two muskox trophies were very nice with black tips on their horns signifying they were old males.

Clifford joked with us about polar and grizzly bears being safe for him because they preferred white meat. Clifford was the chief of this village set on an island in the Chukchi Sea. He was also president of the school board and on the finance committee for the district of several schools. Everyone in town knew him and several of his children and many of his grandchildren attended or worked at the local school.

During dinner they described that on December 20 the sun rises at 1:30 p.m. and sets at 3:00 p.m. It doesn't take long to work from daylight until dark. On June 7, the sun would come up and set again on July 9, over a month



One of Clifford's granddaughters and a friend

prepared to wait outside in -20 to -30 degree weather in Shishmaref until our ride arrived. There is no place to wait inside there. We were picked up by a snowmachine hauling a freight sled similar to a wooden dog sled and taken right to Clifford's house where we stayed.

Clifford and Brian were out hunting caribou with two clients and Dennis, the cook, welcomed us and settled us in. We slept upstairs on a double mattress on the floor and were warm and comfortable.

There was no running water in the house until it would thaw in the spring and warmer weather. Their drinking water was melted ice from an inland lake 15 miles away. Ice was placed in a large plastic garbage can and melted





Our "TAXI"

later. The first week of February, when we were there, they were gaining eight minutes of daylight each day.

On February 2, we set out on our muskox hunt. It was -24 degrees and the winds were blowing about five knots. The only thing that would have stopped us from hunting would have been a white out, heavy snow with a strong wind. Before we left, Don loaded my muzzleloader with powder and a bullet. He was afraid in such cold conditions the gun might ice up and he wouldn't be able to load it later. We snowmobiled through town and then out on the ocean on the snow road which is marked every 50 to 75 yards with 2 x 2 triangles four to six feet high with reflector tape. We could have driven all the way to Nome but about 22 miles out we veered off and headed out to Clifford's Arctic Camp which was about 3 1/2 miles further. They also had a Serpentine Camp, 18 Mile Camp, and Igloo Camp.



Clifford Weyiouanna, Brian Simpson, and Mary Harter with her muskox

At Arctic Camp the temperature was still about -24 degrees but the winds had picked up to about 15 knots giving us a wind chill of about -40 degrees. We were warm with our hunting suits which were warmer than snowmobile suits, seal skin mitts and hat, face masks, and goggles. Clifford had gone out earlier to find one of the herds of muskox and turn on the oil stove at camp. We warmed up and went out to find Clifford. Soon we spotted him and drove to where he was. He wore no face mask or goggles. He sure is tough. He had found the herd and picked out the biggest bull just for me. The herd had about 50 muskox and we had learned that one of the hardest parts about hunting them was getting a shot that didn't endanger any of the other muskox. I got on the back of Brian's snowmachine with my Thompson Center Omega loaded with a 209 primer and we were off. At about 50 yards from the bull, Brian stopped, we got off, and I leaned over the back of the machine. When the bull turned broadside with no others in the way, I pulled the trigger. The bull stood a minute, took a few steps, and slowly fell on his side, all four feet off the ground. He was bleeding profusely from his nose.

After much cheering and picture taking, they rolled him in a sled and took him back to Arctic Camp where they skinned and quartered him up for the trip back to Cliffords.

Muskox fur is the warmest there is and a scarf knitted of the yarn is worth over \$200. The meat is also delicious. We brought home the loins and backstraps but left the rest for the village. They were thankful for the meat as their supplies were low and not many caribou had moved into the area. I had not realized how delicious the meat of muskox was until we got home and tried it. We ate the tenderloins grilled over charcoal and the backstraps in the crockpot with mushroom soup.

We will enjoy this muskox over and over until the meat is gone and then for the rest of our lives, with our pictures, the mount, and the memories.

Thank you Brian and Clifford!!

*Background Image:
Scene out the plane window*



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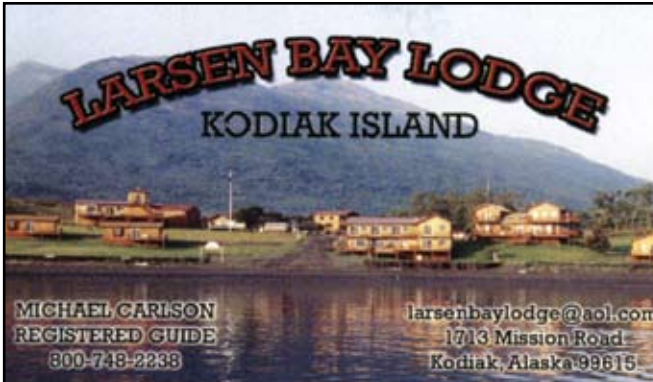
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