

# FRONT SIGHT



**SCI**  
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

July - Sept 2011, Issue 15

*Picture by Dave King  
Don Harter, Ivan Carter, and  
Mary Harter in Botswana*



**Voted Best Overall Publication In Safari Club International**





# 2010 MONTANA



**JEFF CHADD**

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## In This Issue - July 2011

- 2 Chapter Officers and Board Members
- 2 Meeting Schedule
- 3 Message from your President
- 3 Editor's Comments
- 3 Membership Application
- 4 Book Review by Josh Christensen,  
"Close Calls and Hunting Adventures"  
by J. Alain Smith
- 5 Mid-Michigan Chapter Awards Pictures
- 6 Mid-Michigan Convention Pictures  
and Thank Yous
- 10 Alaska Brown Bear Hunt  
by Joanne Witte
- 16 My Grizzly by Cindy Cotter
- 19 Great Pheasant Memories  
by Jason Lange
- 20 Conservation Affairs  
by Larry Witte
- 21 Hunting Muskox and Caribou on Victoria Island  
by Paul Conner
- 26 Botswana Bulls X 2  
by Mary Harter
- 33 Sportsmen Against Hunger
- 34 Confessions of a Meat Hunter  
by Michael Ritchie D.C.
- 42 Looking Ahead

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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 400+.

Check our own [www.midmichigansci.org](http://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

\* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

DATE	MEETING TYPE	TIME	LOCATION
August 1, 2011	Board only	4:30 p.m.	Harters
September 12, 2011	Board Membership		Camp Misery
October 3, 2011	Board only	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
November 7, 2011	Board only	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
December 5, 2011	Board only	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
January 6, 2012	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
"Big Buck Night"	Membership	5:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn
February 1 - 4, 2012	SCI Convention	Las Vegas	Mandalay Bay
February 24, 2012	Mid-Michigan SCI Convention	2 - 10:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagle Casino
February 25, 2012	Mid-Michigan SCI Convention	10:00 a.m. - close	Soaring Eagle Casino

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



Brian Simpson,  
Wittrock Outfitters,  
with Roger Froling



Ed Spinazzola, Ultimate  
Land Management

At our April Membership meeting held in Bay City at the Doubletree Hotel, Ed Spinazzola was our guest speaker on Ultimate Land Management for whitetails. Brian Simpson of Wittrock Outfitters in Alaska, also spoke and showed slides of his many clients.



## Meet Your New President



New Chapter President,  
Kevin Unger

Meet your new Chapter President, Kevin Unger

Kevin has been chapter vice president for the past three years and is now assuming the role of your chapter president. Kevin has been very active as chairman of "Big Buck Night" and working on our annual fundraiser as well as on several other committees. Kevin attended SCI workshops in Tucson and Jackson Hole, Wyoming learning the ropes of the SCI establishment.

Kevin owns and operates The Empty Keg party store in Mt. Pleasant and is engaged to Carolyn Wacker. Kevin has two sons and you probably have met Chad, who works in The Empty Keg and has helped at various SCI events. Kevin is an avid rabbit hunter and looks forward to that season as well as our Michigan deer season. Kevin is also a Harley Man.

Please welcome our new chapter president, Kevin Unger.

## Editor's Comments

We recently returned from a trip to Mexico with Larry and Joanne Witte where we hunted Ocellated Turkey and Brocket Deer and had a great time except it was very hot. Our Mayan guides spoke little English so we tried to use all of the Spanish we could think of. We wanted everything "Muy Grande," of course and searched through the cobwebs for "Buenos Dias", "Buenas Tardes", and "Buenas Noches" and the necessary "Banos" and "Agua".

One thing we all understand no matter where we hunt is the language of hunting. A few pictures from our hunts sparked great interest from our guides and they knew we were serious. Pictures speak in all languages and help to bond us. I also took along our latest magazine to show how we would share our experiences and they happily posed for us.

I have left copies of our magazine all over the world to help entertain and inform others in the hunting community. Please help me share your experiences.

Thanks so much,

*Mary J. Harter*

Mary Harter



Mary Harter with  
her Michigan Turkey

## MID - MICHIGAN CHAPTER SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL MIDMICHIGANSCI.ORG APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby apply for membership \_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

Fill out both mailing addresses as well as email. Please indicate by placing a X in the appropriate box where you would like to receive club correspondence.  
If at all possible we would like to utilize your email address for this purpose. ☐

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### MEMBERSHIP DUES (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE)

18 +	1 Year	\$ 65 National Dues	\$ 20 Local Dues	= \$ 85
	3 Years	\$ 150 National Dues	\$ 60 Local Dues	= \$ 210
	Life	\$1500 National Dues	\$200 Local Dues	= \$ 1,700
	Over 60	\$1250 National Dues	\$200 Local Dues	= \$ 1,450

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# Book Review

by Josh Christensen

**Title:** Close Calls And Hunting Adventures; Short Stories From Around The World

**Author:** J. Alain Smith

**Publisher:** Blue Ribbon Publishers

**Copyright:** 2004

**List Price:** \$27.95

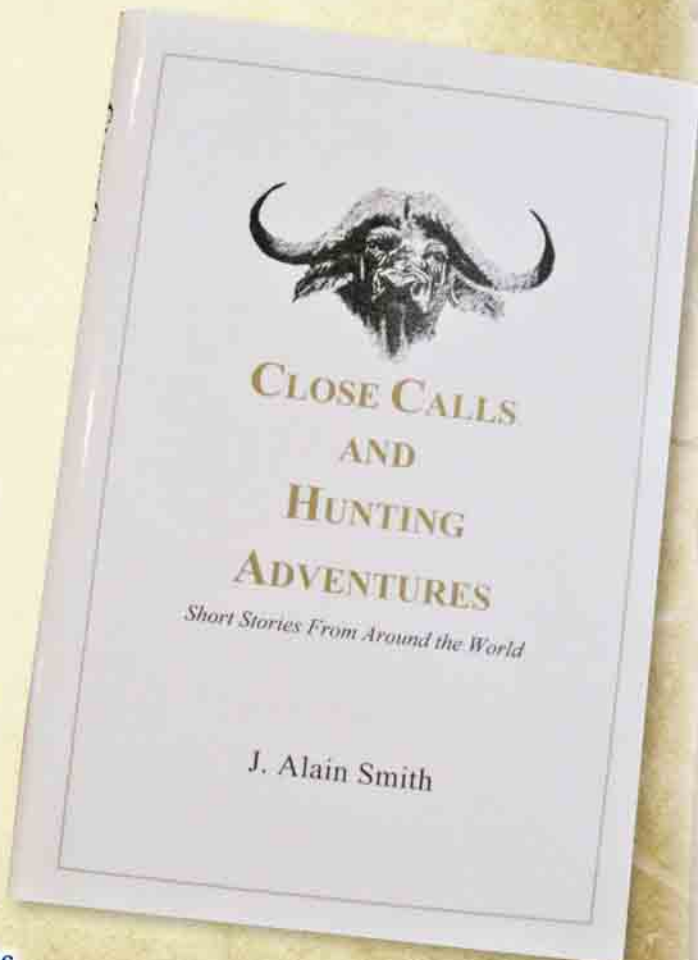


J. Alain Smith is a man who has ventured to the far ends of the planet in search of hunting experiences. He conveys some of his travels in *Close Calls and Hunting Adventures*. Smith keeps the reader engaged throughout this book with vivid details. Through his adventures he does more than explain his hunts; he gives extra information about each location he visits, whether it is about the geography or history of the place and the people there.

Alain not only writes about some of his many hunting adventures, he also shares some of the "close calls" he's had, including plane crashes on two different continents, encounters with scorpions and a "black mamba" in Africa (the "black mamba" encounter is quite entertaining), and an encounter with a banded cobra in Turkmenistan.

*Close Calls and Hunting Adventures* was a spectacular read from cover to cover. I enjoyed reading about the hunts and the far off lands that I will probably never get the opportunity to go. I also enjoyed that Smith magnified the fact that hunting isn't always easy and fun. Some of the difficulties he describes include 31 hunting days and four different trips to three different countries in Africa to finally collect the elusive leopard and the physicality of sheep hunts, including one instance where temperatures dropped so low that his rifle wouldn't fire.

If you are interested in purchasing this book, and I recommend you do, the best place to find it is on Mr. Smith's website, [www.jalainsmith.com](http://www.jalainsmith.com), where the \$27.95 includes shipment to your door.



*This book gets 10 out of 10 bull's eyes*





# Mid-Michigan

# Chapter Awards

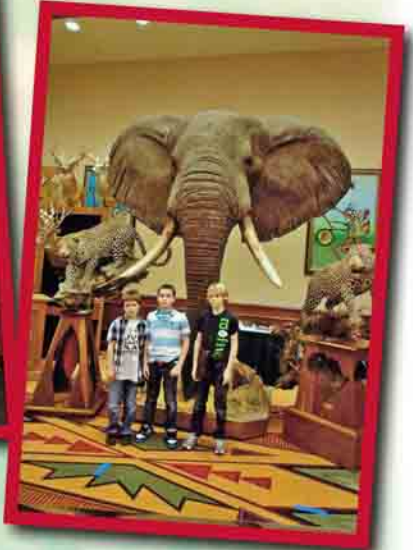


## *Hunter's of the Year* Larry Witte and Maryanne Belyea





# Mid-Michigan *Hunter's Convention*





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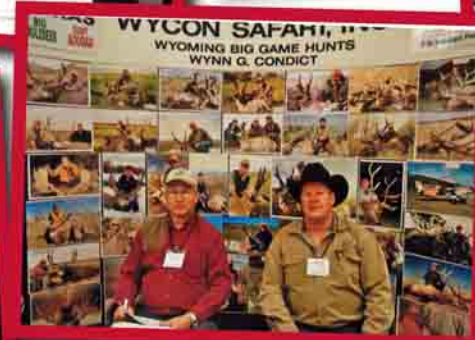
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Many thanks to the members/businesses who donated funds that went directly to help defray the costs of this event.











# Alaska

by Joanne Witte

## Brown Bear Hunt

Our Alaska Brown bear hunt was a big success! Two bears in two days! Not only did we both shoot bears but we managed to live comfortably in a tent camp that we thought we should have experienced when we were 20 years younger. Mike Cowan, our guide and owner of Cross-hairs of Alaska, was very solicitous of two apprehensive hunters.

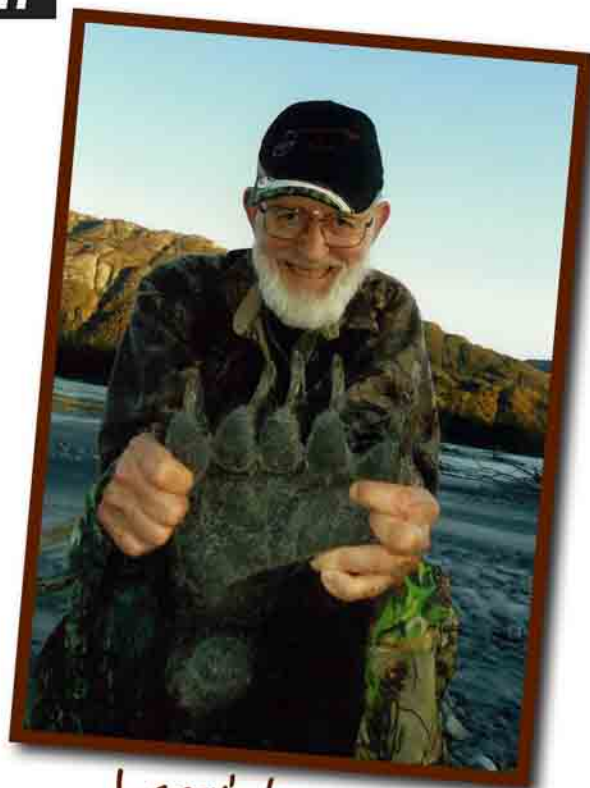
This was our first hunt in a tent camp in the bush with no amenities. We've been in tent camps in Africa but those don't really count because they have lots of amenities. We were concerned about having to cross streams wearing chest waders or hip boots. Being limited to luggage weighing 50 pounds apiece including our rifles and soft gun cases for a ten-day hunt was a challenge. We packed, unpacked, took things out, added other things, tried to keep the necessities, and finally just closed up the duffel bags. We purchased this hunt at our Fundraiser in 2008 so we had lots of time to plan.



Alaska West Air where we got the Super Cub



Mike (tall guy) and Bernie (pilot) picking us up to go back to Kenai



Larry's bear paw

Our adventure began on Tues. September 14, 2010, with an overnight stay in Grand Rapids so we could catch an early morning flight to Anchorage via Minneapolis. The next morning we had an uneventful flight to Minneapolis but our plane to Anchorage was full and the seats—six across with an aisle in the middle--were small. It was not a comfortable trip.

When we got to Anchorage, one hour late, we had to get our luggage to check in at Era Airlines for the flight to Kenai. It was a long hike in the airport to find the right ticketing agent, get boarding passes, and get our luggage checked in. We ate a quick sandwich and boarded the small plane. The flight was supposed to take about 25 minutes but we were in the air for one hour and 45 minutes at which time the pilot said we were going back to Anchorage. He could not land in Kenai due to the fog. Larry counted 9 passes over the airport and one aborted landing attempt. We rebooked for the 10:30am flight the next day.

That meant finding a hotel in Anchorage. The hotel we had a number for was full so they directed us to the Comfort Suites. We had to handle our luggage for the third time that day.

As we were getting on the shuttle for the hotel, Larry called Mike and told him what had happened. He said he would be delivering hunters to the Anchorage airport the next morning so he would pick us up at the hotel at 6:00am and drive us to Kenai. We were lucky that we had our luggage!



We got a credit certificate for the tickets that did not get us to Kenai, but they are not transferable so it looks like they will not get used. No other trips to Alaska are planned in the near future.

Mike picked us up at 6:00am on Thursday, September 16, and we had about a 3 ½ hour drive to Kenai in heavy fog. It has been foggy there every morning for over a week. We had a good lunch at the Uptown Motel and then went to The Loony Bin Bed and Breakfast to get ready for the trip to the hunting camp. The proprietor, Vicky, is Mike's assistant in Kenai. After putting on our hunting clothes and boots, we repacked our duffel bags and left one there along with our hard gun case. We were very limited in the amount of gear we could take due to the small plane.

Our next stop was Alaska West Air (AWA) for the charter flight to the hunting camp. That was a very attractive and busy place. Due to the fog, planes were backed up and pilots were making as many trips as possible to get hunters in and out and get meat transported.

Our pilot was Bernie. He brought in a huge load of moose meat before picking us up. Then he had to make three trips to get our gear and us to the camping site. We had to take in everything we would need. We displayed all our gear for Bernie and he moaned and said, "This is too much. You don't need this!" whereupon he threw a baggie with three rolls of toilet paper off to the side. When he wasn't looking I grabbed it and secreted it in my duffel bag. I decided we surely needed that.

Mike went in first with the tents and some cooking supplies. I went next with my things and more camp gear. Larry was to go last. Mike had made arrangements for Larry to drive his vehicle back to Vicky's house and stay there overnight if the fog was so bad that he couldn't get to camp. As Bernie and I left on the plane, I told Larry I loved him and I hoped to see him in camp soon.

This was my first time in a small aircraft! Just getting in and out of the Super Cub was a chore. There was no back seat so the passenger perched on a bench and leaned on the luggage. There was just enough room for feet on either side of a hump behind the pilot. At first I held on tight and kept my eyes closed. Finally I relaxed and enjoyed the trip. The plane flew at about 80 miles an hour while aloft and it felt like we were barely moving. Bernie pointed out a huge brown bear sunning itself on a grassy patch in the midst of the swamp.

Occasionally there was a house or camp perched on the side of a lake. I wondered how people ever got there. I didn't see any roads.



*Larry's bear and Mike where he shot it*

Once out of the plane some small bugs attacked me. Mike said they were little gnats. He suggested I get my head net. They turned out to be black flies and they plagued me the entire time. I had some nasty bites, the worst of which were in my right ear. The temperature was in the fifties but those flies buzzed around my head net the whole time we were there.

Finally at about 7:00pm Larry arrived and was extricated from the plane. I was very relieved. Bernie said the fog was closing in and he hoped he could get back to AWA. If not, he would be returning to spend the night with us.

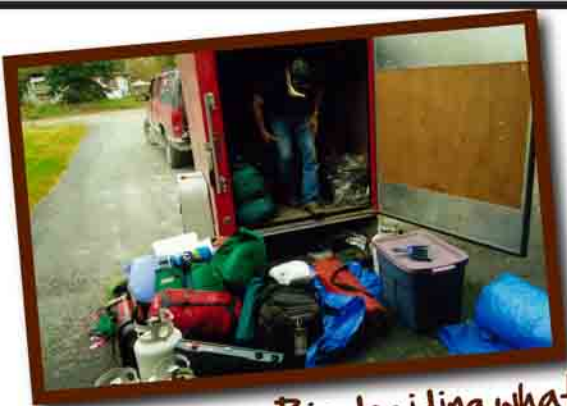
Everyone is very dependent on the weather and they seem to accept whatever happens without getting upset. Bernie was moving as fast as he could to make as many trips to camps as he could.

We had spaghetti and meat sauce for dinner made by Mountain Home—freeze dried. It was pretty good. Mike asked me if we had any liquor and I said "No". We were so concerned about weight that we didn't bring any. He told us about some hunters he had who finished their liquor in the first 3 days and paid another \$1500.00 to have a bush plane fly in more for them.

The tents were very nice. We had cots that had pads on them and were about 6 inches off the floor. There was a propane lantern tied to the ceiling and a buddy heater we could have used but since it had to be turned off at night we did not use it. You should have seen us trying to get up off those cots. We had to roll over on our knees and then stand up.

On Fri. we were up at 5:00am. We were cold in bed overnight so we put coats on top of our sleeping bags. We wore medium weight merino wool long underwear and had





Mike at Loony Bin deciding what to take to camp



Our stuff getting ready for first of three trips back to Kenai



Our tent on left in shrubs, Mike's tent on right



Our tent

sleeping bags rated for 15 degrees but that wasn't enough. For the next several nights Larry wore his wool shirt, wool socks, and watch cap along with his long underwear to sleep. I wore wool socks and a wool hooded sweatshirt with the hood up over my long underwear. In addition to the coats over the sleeping bags, we also stuffed sweaters over our shoulders.

That morning we had oatmeal for breakfast. Mike was well supplied with a two-burner propane stove, frying pans, a coffeepot for boiling water, an ice chest, lots of freeze-dried food, and instant coffee, tea, and cocoa. He also had three lawn chairs that we used for hunting and for lounging in comfort when not hunting. We spent our free time reading. I made sure to take lots of books. I could manage with one set of clothes but not without my books.

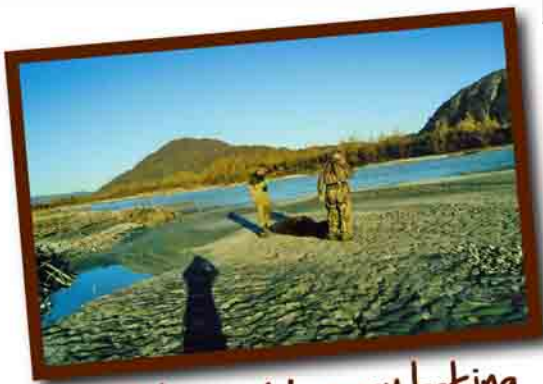
About 7:30am we went down the river behind camp with the lawn chairs and sat in some alder trees looking for bear. Our Trekkers, hip high overshoes made by New England Overshoe Company, worked very well. They fit over our own boots and attached to our belts by Velcro straps. Walking was a little clumsy but with Larry's braces chest waders were not an option. I had had surgery on my right foot 2 months previous to our trip so I could not wear the waders either. I wore the one pair of boots that didn't hurt my feet.

The wind was in the wrong direction so we came back about 9:30. I saw a bald eagle perched on top of a tree hunting for "breakfast". We were surrounded by the Alaska Mountain Range, which according to Mike is a young range and is still "growing" at a rate of about two inches a year.

The scenery was beautiful. We were on North Fork Creek, just on the edge of Lake Clark National Park. There were gorgeous waterfalls, snow, glaciers, and occasionally falling rocks. We had flown over Cook's Inlet to get here. Our hunting area was actually a horseshoe shaped peninsula about 500 yards by 300 yards surrounded by the river and a huge flood plain. We were hoping for salmon in the river to lure the bears to us.

All day we heard air traffic and saw small planes flying over. During a one-hour period 5 planes were overhead. Pilots had only been able to count on about a two hour window each day to fly for the previous 10 days. Mike said they were all trying to catch up after the fog. We had beautiful sunny days after the morning fog.





Mike and Larry looking at his bear

For lunch we had crackers and cheese, salami, and smoked salmon. Delicious!

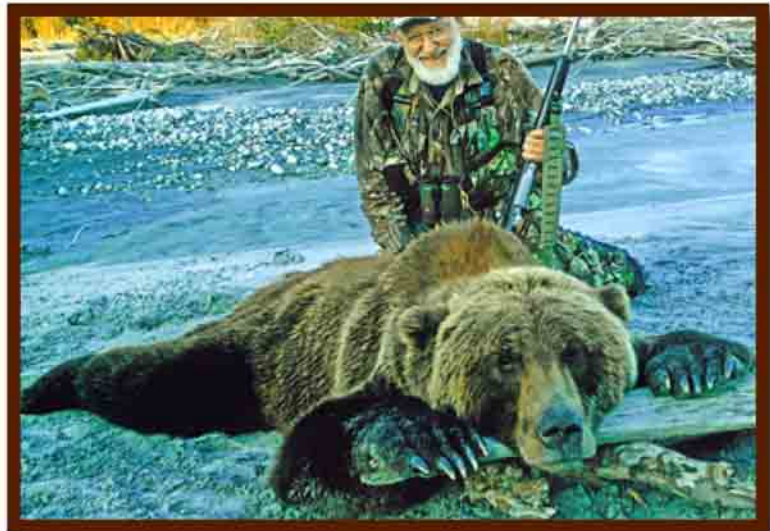
During the afternoon while we were all napping in our tents we heard air traffic much louder than usual. We went to investigate and there was a lovely red helicopter landing. It seems that the pilot needed to refuel from the cans he had strapped to the runners on the helicopter. Mike didn't know the two guys who got out to talk to us. They said they saw a flat spot that looked like a good place to land and came down. They figured the tents were for hunters who would understand their predicament.

The black flies were still horrible. Thank goodness for the head nets. The mesh was fine enough that we could see through it to read our books. It was windy but that didn't discourage the flies.

About 5:00pm we had supper—fried pork ribs and peas. It was good. Mike had forgotten to bring bread, but we don't eat much bread anyway so that was no hardship for us.

At 6:00pm we walked down to the end of the peninsula where we were camped. Due to the wind direction this was our only option. We sat in the lawn chairs and glassed the floodplain for bears. Around 7:00pm Mike spotted one a long ways away at the edge of the riverbed. We watched it meander toward us and jump in and out of the water for fish. Larry decided it was too small for him to shoot but at the last minute I decided it was not too small for me.

Mike and I slid down a steep riverbank about 6 feet high into the riverbed and sneaked up behind some brush to get closer to the bear. The bear was walking along the edge and at times he was partially hidden by the brush. I used the tall shooting sticks and while standing up got the bear in my scope while it was walking and shot. It went down. Mike said to shoot again so I did and he did and we had a dead bear. Larry had watched the drama from the hillside.



Larry's bear

My shot was about 60 yards and I got it right behind the shoulder. Mike had told us earlier that once we shot, he would shoot. There was no discussion. He did not want to have to pursue a wounded bear. That was fine with us.

Now it was time for the work. Mike skinned the bear including the ears and lips and pads. He said he doesn't like to carry any more weight than he has to when he brings the hide and skull back to camp. It took about 3 ½ hours so we were walking back in the pitch dark. Crossing the ankle deep water in the river with the slippery rocks was a little treacherous but we made it.

The next day we were up at 5:30am again but it was too foggy to hunt. Mike said there was no weather moving so the fog just hung there. Mike fixed bacon, eggs, and hash browns for breakfast. I thought he was kidding the day before when he said we would have eggs for breakfast. He wasn't! Since it was too foggy to hunt we slept, read, and munched all day.



The Looney Bin Bed and Breakfast in Kenai





*Joanne's bear*

Mike turned the ears on the bear and worked on the hide and skull. For supper, we had chicken and green beans. We also drank cocoa that tasted really good.

As we were getting ready to go back to the same spot we were in last night, I looked out across the floodplain and said, "There's a bear out there." I had Larry look and we agreed it was a nice one.

I ran back to Mike and told him; he got his binoculars and after searching for a few minutes finally spotted the bear and agreed it was a nice one. We all walked the 500 yards to the end of the peninsula and by now the bear was walking toward us.

Larry and Mike sat down under some brush on the edge of the riverbank. The bear had come out of the water and was looking at us but couldn't figure out what we were. After a few seconds he turned broadside and started walking to the left. Larry got a bead on him and shot. That bear cartwheeled into the air about one and one half times and made horrible loud roaring sounds and dropped dead.

We were both using Browning A-Bolt .300WSM with 180 grain fail-safe bullets. Larry's 128 yard shot went through the left shoulder and exited just behind the right shoulder. The bear never knew what hit him. Since

Larry had his right wrist fused in April he was apprehensive about his ability to shoot. He was using a rifle with a thumbhole stock and it worked beautifully.

I asked Mike if this was the first time a hunter had spotted a bear from camp and then went out and shot it. He said in his 32 years in Alaska this was a first.

We had another late night skinning a bear.

On Sun., September 19, we decided to pack up and go to Kenai. Mike used his satellite phone to call for the bush plane to take us out. I was to go first, then Larry and Mike last. We had everything packed up by noon. We had to wait until then to make sure the tents were dried out.

I actually enjoyed the trip back. There was no fog so I could see everything and I wasn't scared anymore. Bernie spotted two huge moose sunning themselves in the marsh. I have no idea how a hunter would get to them.

I had a long wait before everyone got back. I watched the owner of AWA take his 10 year old daughter and about 10 friends in two float planes to celebrate her birthday by going fishing. All the little kids had on borrowed waders. They were having a wonderful time. The gazebo at the base was decorated with balloons and streamers for a dinner of grilled hot dogs later.

We stayed at the Uptown Motel in Kenai where we had a very nice room and an excellent dinner with celebratory drinks after much enjoyed showers. The restaurant was top notch and the motel rooms had large metal keys to open the doors. We can't remember the last time we stayed in a motel where we used actual keys.

We changed our tickets on Era Alaska so we could fly to Anchorage the next day. We decided to change the Anchorage to Grand Rapids tickets after we got to Anchorage. All the airline changes made this an expensive trip.

After breakfast at the Uptown on Monday we went to Kenny Jones Taxidermy to take the bear hides and skulls. He uses Dermestid beetles (museum quality) to clean the skulls. Once finished, Kenny will ship them to us. He will also finish fleshing the hides, dry them and send them to our taxidermist.

After that stop we went to a gift shop where we bought a very nice brown bear sculpture, a jacket and two tee shirts. The proprietor was coming to Michigan to hunt Russian boar in an enclosure in the Upper Peninsula next month. We have hunted there and told her she would





*Helicopter that landed by our tents to refuel*



*Joanne in the plane*

it. Larry's first supervisor at Michigan Water Resources Commission and Department of Natural Resources spent two years there in the army quartermaster corps when he was 27 years old. We kept looking for pictures of him but to no avail.

Our trip back to the Comfort Suites was an adventure. Our taxi driver—a Korean who spoke broken English and talked all the time—took us

have a wonderful time. Then it was back to the Uptown for lunch and on to the airport.

We tried to get tickets home on Tuesday but could not so we made reservations for Wednesday. That meant a day in Anchorage.

At the Comfort Suites, we got boarding passes and paid for our two extra bags on the hotel computer. Aren't computers wonderful! Then we decided to go to the Anchorage Museum.

What a fabulous museum! The Comfort Suites shuttle took us to the museum after making an airport run and we spent about 5 hours there. We could have spent two more hours but we were too tired. It is a treasure trove of native people artifacts. There must have been 8 or 10 native tribes represented. The clothing, utensils, and dioramas were spectacular. Even the restaurant was outstanding.

There was also a large exhibit about our WWII troops at Kiska for the invasion of Attu and Adak. The Japanese occupied those islands at the beginning of WWII, but they left before our troops landed. We read all we could about

to the wrong hotel. When we told him that was not the place he punched the correct address in his GPS. He had only been working for the cab company for two months. We wanted him to be quiet and just drive. I had a map and watched him closely to see that he took us to the right place. I had visions of embarking on a wild goose chase that would cost lots of money and perhaps result in bribes to get us to the right place.

We spent Wednesday, September 22 in airports and airplanes. Everything went according to schedule except for a one-hour delay in getting off the ground in Minneapolis on the trip to Grand Rapids.

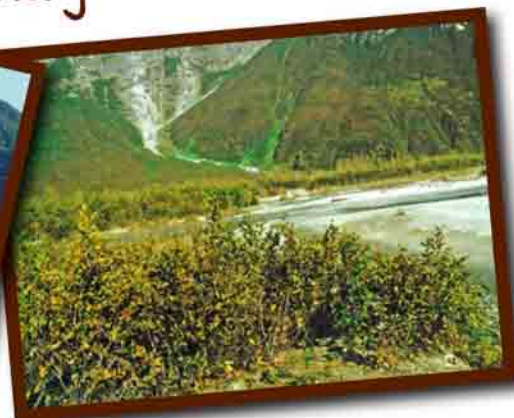
We got back to Grand Rapids about 11:00pm and then had to get our luggage and get to the Comfort Inn to get our vehicle. We got home about midnight.

It was a great trip. The adventure was outstanding! We proved to ourselves that we could manage in a tent camp without running water, bathrooms, showers, heat, and other amenities. Mike was instrumental in helping us enjoy the experience.

## Scenery



*Beautiful waterfalls*





## My

## Grizzly

by Cindy Cotter

On Monday, March 29, 2010 a friend of mine called and said, "Would you be interested in a grizzly bear hunt?" I said, "Before I make any decision, I think you, Sheri, Jim and I should go out to eat tonight and you can ask Jim." We went to Olivera's and Roger asked Jim. Jim said, "If she can get air fare to Shishmaref, Alaska for less than \$1,000 she can go." We went back to Roger's house, got on the computer, and Jim found an airline ticket for \$998 so it was decided if I could still get the hunt and Brian Simpson could get me a license, I could go!!

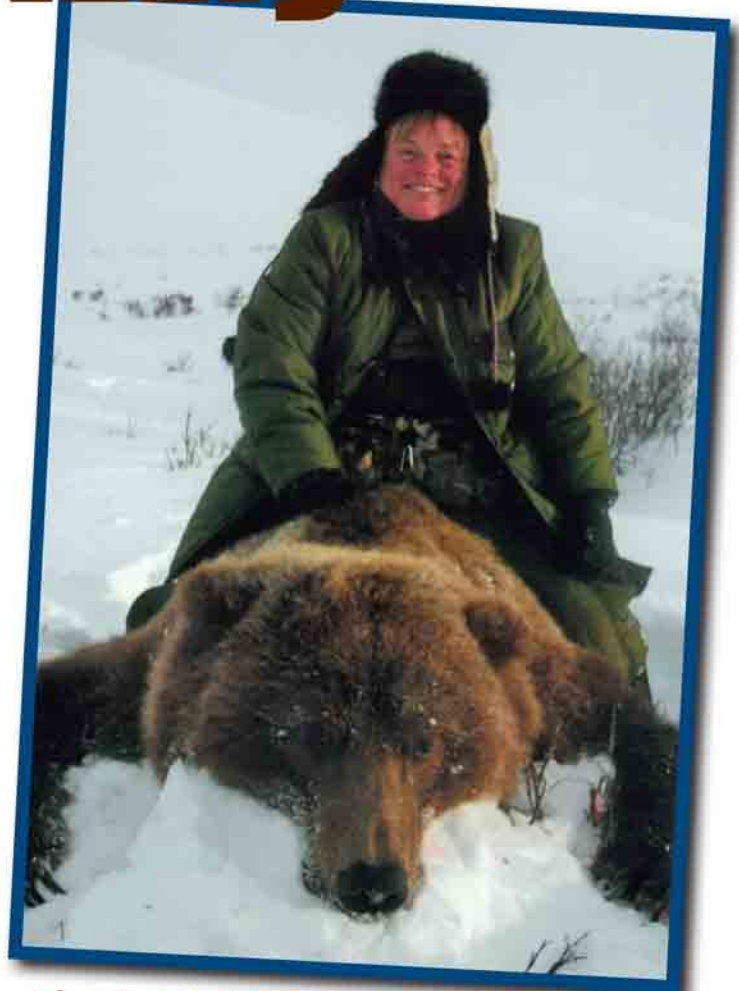
I had never hunted out of Ionia County. Besides, I was going to Alaska by myself with guides from Alaska.

My departure date was April 27, 2010, flying from Grand Rapids to Nome, and I spent the night in Nome and flew a puddle jumper to Shishmaref. On the flight from Nome, I met a woman from Nome. Her name was Gina and she asked why I was going to Alaska. I told her I was going on a grizzly bear hunt with Brian Simpson from Fairbanks. She asked where I was staying and I told her Ethel and Dan were going to pick me up. She said they were her Auntie and Uncle and their car was broken down so she would take me to their house. We arrived at their house and they had not been informed that I was coming but welcomed me like I was their granddaughter. The next morning, Gina picked me up and took me back to the airport. She gave me her home and cell numbers so I could call her when I came back through.

I arrived in Shishmaref on April 29, 2010 at 10 a.m. with a man from Brighton, Michigan, Tony Biddix, who is a commercial roofer. He said he remembered our shop, General Rental of Ionia when he'd put the roof on Walgreen's or Lowe's.

We stayed most of the day in Shishmaref. We walked around the village and went to the local general store. Green beans were \$2.95 per can, Purel hand cleaner was \$11.95 for a 4 oz. container. We walked by a Laundromat which was called a washeteria. There was a little church graveyard and lots of storage tanks for gas, diesel, and seal oil. I think there were more dogs than people.

One of the guides brought a hunter back from camp and picked us up. We drove snowmobiles about 2 1/2 hours to the first camp and dropped off some supplies. Then we drove to the second camp that was in a National Reserve with Hot Springs. We met another hunter from Mt. Pleasant, Jeff Barnes, who had shot



*Cindy Cotter and her Grizzly*

a grizzly bear that day. We watched them skin the head and paws and he went back to Shishmaref the next morning.

I got up at Hot Springs Camp the next morning and soaked in a 10 x 10 square wooden tub with two plastic drain pipes that come in from the outside, one from the hot springs and one cold from the mountain springs. If it was cold you closed the cold pipe and if it was hot you closed the hot pipe. The vent in the roof had a panel of steel missing so most of the floor was snow or ice to walk across before you got in the tub. We had pancakes every morning with eggs and bacon.

On the first day around 10 or 11 a.m., I rode snowmobiles with Brian Simpson and Jim Wilson. We went looking for signs of bear. To do this you ride snowmobiles to the top of a hill or mountain and look for animals. We were in the tundra seeing miles of white snow which was 8 to 10 feet deep. We came upon an abandoned Gold Sluice with an





## Cindy's hand on the bear's paw

abandoned village where the gold diggers stayed. Then we rode off into the snow to the tops of mountains where we saw six musk ox and something brown or black behind them. I said it looked like a turkey. They didn't think it was anything. Then we rode to the area where the musk ox were and continued to the river bed to get out of the wind and cold. I had to go pee so I walked down river and went in the willow brush. Seeing tracks of something, I followed them down the river to a bend. It was bear tracks with no snow. I went back to the snowmobiles and told Brian and Jim. Brian asked if I was ready to fire my guide and then proceeded to tell me to never go that far alone. The bear could have burrowed in the side of the river bank and hid from hearing the snow machines coming into the river bed. We drove out of the river and went down the sides to see if we could see any tracks coming out. NO SIGNS. We kept driving and looking for animals or tracks. Then we went back to the cabin to eat and sleep.

On the second day, Friday, we went in a different direction seeing more snow and the weather was windy. We didn't see any animals at all. When we came back to the cabin, a lot of the village people were there for the weekend. We packed up and went back to Cliff's cabin.

On the third day it was very windy so we didn't go out until after noon. While we were killing time in the cabin, John (Cliff's son) went out into the entry room and brought back a five gallon bucket. He asked me if I'd ever had buried seal meat and said it was delicious. I did try some which was dried like jerky. When we did go out it was very hard to see in front of you. We spent about six hours on the snowmobiles. I saw a wolf, red fox, and arctic fox running through the snow. We also saw moose tracks but nothing bigger.

On the fourth day, Cliff, Jim, Brian, Tony, and I took off together. We saw lots of moose, caribou, and musk ox. In the afternoon, Cliff, Jim, and Tony went around a mountain one way and Brian and I went the other way. We were going to meet back up on the other side. Brian and I scanned the area for awhile and couldn't find them so we took off in the direction we thought we might catch back up to them. We ate lunch then saw a moose or bear going over the top of the hill. We drove to the area where the tracks were and followed the moose backwards. We saw a herd of musk ox, a bull musk ox protecting his herd, running at the bear, and the bear doing a belly crawl toward the musk ox. We watched them in the binoculars for 15 minutes. Brian said, "In the years I've been a guide I never saw a bear on a hunt like that." The bull would run at the bear, paw the snow, back up, and charge at the bear. The bull never turned away

from the bear. He only backed up and ran forward. Then the bear must have smelled us or saw us. He stood up and looked at us and slowly turned the other direction and took off on a dead run. Brian said, "If you want a bear, keep up with me because he's headed for that big mountain." We went a long way before I shot the bear. We went to where the musk ox herd was and I looked in the binoculars. The bear was headed across an open field to more big hills so we went down the hill, around a little obstacle and got back up to the tracks in the field. Then we went through a valley with a lot of willows. The bear dug a little in the snow and the tracks had already started filling in with snow. Brian went one way around the willows and I went the other. He picked back up on the tracks. I caught back up with him and we went another half mile and we saw him again. We got about 250 yards away and Brian motioned to shoot so I pulled a .338 Winchester out of a holster bolted to the snowmobile. The scope had snow in it so I blew it out quick, racked in a shell, laid across the machine for support and shot him in the butt twice. Brian motioned me to come over where he was and gave me the gun I had in the sled. As I put the bear in the scope he stood up with his front legs in the air and growled. I could see his teeth, claws, and growl all at once. All I could think was that this better be a good shot. I shot him in the arm pits. He took one leap and dropped. The hair on my arms grew three inches in two seconds. This was at 10:30 p.m. on May 2.

Brian said we should wait a few minutes then drive around another willow swale. He drove close to the bear with the gun out. Three times he poked the bear in the eye area to see if he would move. He hollered, "Come on over Annie Oakley. You got him." He pulled out his gear





*Cindy with her prize mount*

no answer. When I arrived at the airport, Gina was behind the counter. She told me to hurry as they had a plane leaving in a half hour. She booked me through to Grand Rapids. These people in Alaska treat you just like God wants us to treat each other. Anyone can be a neighbor and God said, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

I saw an Eskimo couple in the Anchorage airport where I was sitting by myself eating a hamburger. The lady asked where was I going and I told her I had a three hour delay and was flying back to Michigan. She had me come and sit with them. I still wasn't convinced that bear meat made women mean so I asked the lady. She laughed and told me to eat grizzlies you need to cook the meat well done. You should boil it for four hours just to be safe. I had a great conversation with the couple. Then I flew to Minnesota and on to Grand Rapids. What a great experience!!

to skin him out. I asked if we could take a little meat back to the cabin and cook it up tonight and he said, "NO! MAKES WOMEN MEAN." I laughed and said I suppose it wouldn't make a man mean. Then he told me about grizzly bears having Trichinosis. We got the bear in the sled wrapped up and headed for camp. We were going through a river bed heading up the other side of it when we became stuck and buried the snowmobile and sled. Brian said, "Your bear is too damn heavy." After two hours of rocking and pushing snow under the snowmobile, we were back in the seat heading back to the cabin. We arrived back to the camp at 3:30 a.m. Cliff was ready to come get us. He saw the lights of the snowmobile at 1:00, 1:30, and then NO lights. Just getting dark, he decided maybe we ran out of gas. Then he saw lights bobbing across the snow again. When we got back he said, "I knew you got a bear or you were in trouble. A guide will not leave a hunter ever. We just fix the problem." By the time we went to bed it was starting to get daylight.

The next day Brian skinned the paws and the head of the bear. Cliff, Florence, and I headed back to Shishmaref. Cliff called a bunch of locals to come and clean about an inch of fat off the bear's hide. There was about two five gallon buckets of fat. We went to bed and left for Nome early the next morning.

Arriving in Nome, a van with a young man driving, took me, my bear, and my luggage to the DNR office to check my bear before flying home. After they checked my bear I asked if I could leave everything there for 10 to 15 minutes to see if I could find a ride back to the airport. I knew I wasn't far from Dan and Ethel's so I went to their house, told them about the bear, and that I needed a ride back to the airport. I had called Gina's number with

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# Great Pheasant Memories

by Jason Lange

This past year I was attending the SCI Convention in Mt. Pleasant in February. I was fortunate to purchase a pheasant hunt at Safaris Pheasant Fever in Shepherd, Michigan. My original purpose of the hunt was for my Father who told many stories of past hunts for ringnecks with great fervor. But with the decline in open hunting and the lack of birds he had not hunted them in over thirty years. I myself had never went pheasant hunting so I was ready for the adventure to make some of my own stories.

Wanting to share the hunt with friends and to increase our probability of putting some birds on the ground, we invited long time friends, Todd and Don Harter and Mark Koch. Don is an avid hunter who travels to South Dakota yearly to hunt pheasants. Todd and Mark also have hunted and the three of them can be heard blasting away at clay pigeons on many different occasions while sitting on my parents deck next door to them. On the other hand, both my Dad and I have only shot our guns at turkeys over the last dozen years during the spring hunting season in Michigan so we did not know what to expect of ourselves. We would be guided by the owner of the preserve, Matt Seeley, who with his wife, Katie, scheduled our hunt on a holiday weekend to accommodate our needs.

The day after Thanksgiving we had all planned on meeting at 9 a.m. at the hunting preserve to try our luck. As does happen in November in Michigan the weather turned ugly and on top of snow and cold there were wind gusts supposed to be approaching 40 mph. Out of courtesy, Matt had called and verified that we were coming and tried to let me know that the hunt could be moved to another date to ensure we had fun and success. As busy as we all are these days I let him know we would be coming and understood the obstacles.

We had decided to hunt 20 birds between the five of us. We used Matt's two dogs and Don's dog, Rex. Just to be safe Matt only released ten of the birds at first just to feel us and the birds out. We had about thirty acres of prime habitat for our first batch of birds and the dogs were working great and I believe pointed on all of the birds. The birds were cooperating admirably. They were flying at once and offering all kinds of great opportunities for shots. My



Jason Lange, Don Harter with Rex, Rick Lange, Mark Koch, and Todd Harter at Safari's Pheasant Fever Shooting Preserve

Dad and I struggled at first for sure, and if Don was not with us early we would have lost many. As we made our way through the hunt we all settled and started aiming a little better.

With that first ten birds we got eleven. One was a carryover from another hunt most likely. The dogs, the birds, the companionship were all at their peak. As far as my personal experience, I was apparently the one who liked to shoot the most and hit the least. I was down to one shell out of the twenty-five that I grabbed for the first part of the hunt. Everyone else had shot ten or less. I guess I was getting the most for my money. We ended the day with eighteen birds and some of the most fun I'd had in a while.

What I take away from this hunt is the way a good dog can work a bird to help a hunter in ways unimaginable to me. My Dad had fun and we are already talking about planning another hunt with his gang who chased the same birds together some thirty years ago. This is a great way to introduce new hunters at a reasonable price to guarantee some shooting and bonding that will never be forgotten.

Thanks to Matt and Katie and the Safaris Pheasant Fever for the great time.

The guy with a sore shoulder, Jason Lange



## CONSERVATION AFFAIRS

BY LARRY WITTE

### DEER BAITING BAN

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC), the policymaking body for DNR, will meet in Lansing at the Lansing Center on April 7, 2011. Agenda items include a public discussion of the Lower Peninsula deer baiting and feeding ban. The three-year ban on deer baiting in the Lower Peninsula was enacted and approved by the Governor in 2008.

A commitment was made at that time to review the ban if there were no other Chronic Wasting Disease positive findings in that three-year period. Since that is the case the NRC proposed to conduct 3 public meetings, March 10, April 7, and May 12. This would allow options to be developed for action in June if there were to be a change and still meet the deadline for publication of the Deer Guide in the fall. Some of the issues to be considered will be other states regulations, economics, social impacts etc. as brought up by the public.

The NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries will provide leadership on the issue. Committee members are Commissioner John Madigan, Chair, Commissioner John Matonich, and Commissioner J.R. Richardson.

### MOOSE

DNR's biennial 2011 aerial moose survey found 433 moose in Marquette, Baraga, and northern Iron counties. This is a slight increase over the 420 moose found in 2009. The trans-location of 59 moose in 1985 and 1987 from Ontario provided the nucleus of the present moose population. Legislation passed in 2010 authorized the NRC to establish a moose hunting season and created the Moose Hunting Advisory Council. The Council is directed to provide a report to the NRC on the biological and economics of a moose hunt by December 2011.

### LEGISLATION

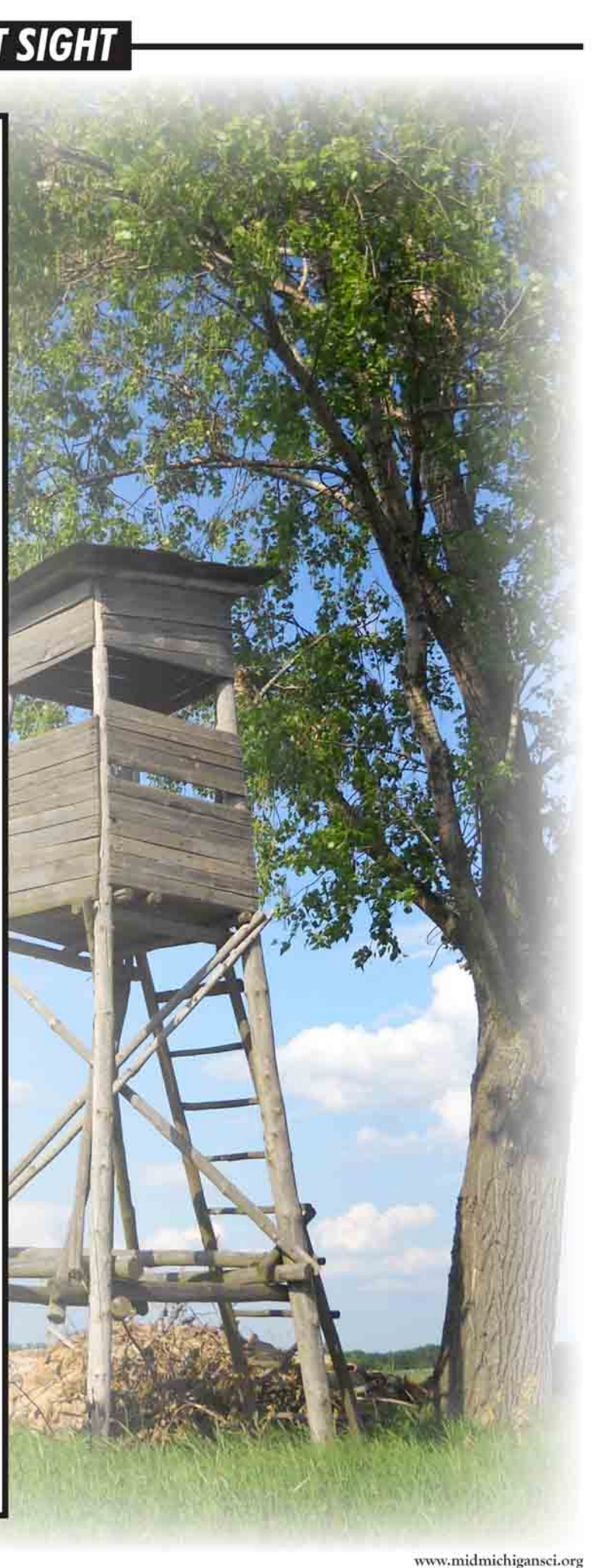
Deer Firearms Opener

Rep. Kevin Cotter, R-Mt. Pleasant has introduced HB4259 to move the opening of the states firearms deer season to the second or third Saturday in November, whichever is closest to November 15.

### YOUTH HUNTING

Sen. Joe Hume has introduced SB207 which would direct the DNR to establish a youth hunting safety program that would eliminate age requirements and allow more younger hunters to participate in small game, deer, and turkey hunting.

It is unclear if the bills are passed if they would have the power to require the NRC to take any action. The 1996 Proposal G made the NRC the authority in establishing hunting and fishing seasons and regulations.





# Hunting Muskox and Caribou on

by Paul Conner

## Victoria Island

It's late October 2010, myself and stand-in hunting partner, Jack Feightner, are now being driven to the airport in the wee hours of the morning by our gracious friend, Jim Goerges. This begins the long journey to Cambridge Bay, Nunavut Territory on Victoria Island far above the Arctic Circle, to hunt for Greenland Muskox and Arctic Island Caribou. The later being needed for our Caribou Grand Slam, a time consuming goal. Jim Stender and I booked this hunt two years ago and then his world as he knew it .. collapsed. His wife of many years, Carol, had been diagnosed with a terminal disease and as the time neared the stress levels of business and his wife's condition proved to be too much and Jim had a heart attack. He survived but soon after, his Cardiologist had me cancel all of Jim's hunts for 2009 and 2010 and said he doubted if Jim would ever be able to go hunting again, and especially .. never again in the Arctic. We talked often with high hopes but in the end he understood that this hunt would be too much to handle in his present condition. Enter Jack Feightner .. friend, big game hunter and demolition contractor who knows Jim and Carol and being aware of their situation volunteered to go with me in Jim's place. Certainly a welcome gesture and very much appreciated as I didn't like going without Jim nor did I want to go to Victoria Island to hunt alone. It's just not the same.

We had booked this hunt with Jerome Knap of Global Expeditions, a highly recommended Outfitter, and a well known Arctic hunter. Jerome was told of Jim's condition which required his hunt cancellation and immediately refunded his money. Jack was added to my hunt contract as a non-hunter with flight and hotel changes accordingly. Jerome's crew is one of the best we've ever worked with, every detail was flawless and perfect. We were told to bring along Arctic rated sleeping bags as well as Arctic rated boots. An Arctic hunting parka and pants could be rented once we arrived in Cambridge Bay. A bad situation was averted by Jack being a non-hunter and not needing a gun case as the large sleeping bags and boots required an additional duffel bag. We were told only two bags per person into Cambridge Bay and we now had the correct number. Our flight time arrived and off we go to Edmonton, Alberta ending our first day of travel and where we stay overnight. Our hotel shuttle van was waiting for us and check-in was followed by dinner and wine at a newly opened restaurant. Bright and early the next morning we leave for Yellowknife, NWT where naturally it's below zero on arrival and the small airport is fairly empty. It's our jumping off place to Cambridge Bay. The Victoria Island plane is also an hour late arriving in Yellowknife. As all 12 passengers sit in silence wondering if



Jack Feightner and Paul Conner

the flight to Cambridge Bay will go as scheduled an airline spokesperson notified everyone of their "Act of God" clause being in effect due to the really bad weather at Cambridge Bay. Everyone ignored the strange message. Our plane finally arrives and we were allowed to board the plane shortly afterward. The flight was more than 1 1/2 hours late but we're finally on the way and then .. the plane stopped right on the runway for a last minute deicing treatment. We took off immediately afterwards. Next stop Cambridge Bay on Victoria Island.

The flight has been in totally overcast skies for the last couple of hours and then the pilot tells us we're descending into Cambridge Bay airspace. As we dropped out of the cloudbank we were immediately aware of the snowstorm surrounding us driven by heavy winds. The Arctic Ocean was directly beneath us and now we're passing over a barge apparently tied up to a pier or frozen in place. The seatbelt sign has never been turned off and now we're on the final ap-







proach. The snow is heavy with poor visibility and then the plane touches down on the runway and skids. It was suddenly so quiet in the cabin you could hear dust falling on the seats. The wheels finally gripped the runway and the pilot reverses the engines, braking very hard at the same time. Above the noise and over the intercom we here, "Welcome to Cambridge Bay". What we could see of it.

In the blowing snow Jack and I took pictures of each other in front of the small airport lobby to get the name of Cambridge Bay in the "I was here" pictures. It's noticeably colder here. Inside now two smiling ladies dressed in parkas approached us and introduced themselves as Mabel and Brenda, our Cambridge Bay hunt coordinators and "knowers" of everything important. Soon all the hunters, now totaling six, and our gear are packed tightly into Brenda's 4-wheel drive crewcab truck and we're on the way to the Inns North Hotel to get our rooms. Immediately afterwards going to the local government office to obtain hunting permits, licenses, and tags. So far, so good. Back again to the hotel for a 30 minute wait before dinner and to take advantage of an option offered when we booked this hunt, Arctic hunting clothes rental. After trying on various sizes of pants and parkas, Mabel took care of all the rental paperwork and we quickly headed back to the hotel dining room for dinner. This HIGHLY recommended option offered by Global Safaris should be considered by all. Typical lower 48 winter hunting clothes may leave something to be desired on this island in the Arctic Ocean.

Everyone on the island wears Canada Goose arctic clothing for a reason. You'll know this reason soon after you wear it. The hotel restaurant is open only an hour for breakfast, lunch, and dinner so .. don't be late. The cooking staff is truly a pleasant surprise here in this far North arctic island hotel. Everything is prepared quickly and to order. It looks great and tastes even better. The dessert selection will completely ruin all diets known to man. No alcoholic beverages are available.

Bright and early the next morning, dressed in our hunting clothes, we're all introduced to our guides by Mabel and shown our traditional hunt transportation .. Inuit wooden sleds. This time of the year they are pulled by snowmobiles. My Inuit guide, Colin, brought his father to meet me prior to our leaving for camp. A genuine surprise and unexpected honor meeting the elder gentleman and proud father. He didn't speak English but I understood his message of .. "Good Hunting and be safe with my son." The hotel manager had gladly stashed our duffels and extra bags in a secure room until we returned after our successful hunt. After a few more pictures, we move out heading for a remote Inuit hunting camp right on the island's northeast shore line. Jack and I shared a sled for the ride to camp, leaving the other sled to carry supplies and such, which kept us both warmer as it was very overcast, windy, and getting colder.

After the visually stunning ride to camp (everything everywhere in every direction is bright white) we managed to get our bodies working enough to get out of the wooden sled and into the cabin where we stowed our gear. There we met our first hunter, a man from Iran, who just took a fine Arctic Island Caribou and soon would be after a Greenland Muskox, weather permitting. We also met the other two hunters bunked in our small cabin, Ed from California and Bob from Louisiana and had some hot tea to warm-up a bit while getting to know



each other. It was then that our cook, Sunny, entered the cabin with a bucket of blue ice that he had just chipped from an iceberg a little offshore from camp directly behind our cabin. A very risky thing to do and we all hoped he wouldn't ask for volunteers. The Arctic Ocean is saltwater but, the icebergs are made of freshwater and this is how he obtains the fresh water for our coffee, tea, and soup. The downside of this is .. the very hard blue ice pops and crackles all night long while very slowly melting. Sunny's sister, Bella, appears to be the chief organizer of food and meals in the camp and, so it's said, quite the card player. Soon enough our guides came in and said, "Get dressed, we're going hunting for caribou!" Jack, Ed, Bob and I were shortly dressed and heading out to locate our sleds and guides. It was time to go hunting. I wanted to get some pictures of all the activity going on outside so as soon as possible I hurried out with my camera. Dave said to be sure and walk on the snowmobile tracks all the way up the hill to the sleds which I tried to do but it was awkward in the morning's overcast light and the deep snow around the staging area. Backing up to get a better picture perspective I stepped off the track and immediately sunk up to my hip in the snow. Our camp being on the sloped shoreline has some rather deep snow where it starts to angle down towards the ocean and naturally I wanted to learn more about it the hard way. (Note to self; Listen to Dave).

We followed the ice laden island shoreline for many miles with heavy overcast skies above us all the way. The two guides, Colin and Dave, stopped and glassed periodically for signs of a caribou herd while Jack and I took a few pictures from our sleds. It was cold and exciting being out in the all white island landscape hunting for game .. in the Arctic. We kept watching the ocean waters for whales or submarines but saw neither, just lots of floating ice in a blue-green sea. Stopping once again we finally see a herd of caribou in the distance and with our binoculars try to locate a shootable bull, none was found though. Colin and Dave cautiously take the slack out of the sleds tow ropes and off we go again, a little faster now as the hunt is getting more serious. Shortly we find a second herd and stop to glass. This time there are several bulls visible but just not the right one. We leave again but now, in this particular feeding area, we're on the hunt and it's obvious the guides are in hot pursuit of a herd on the move and it's more exciting than ever. We don't even notice the Arctic cold any longer. Ten minutes later another group of caribou are now in view with at least three good bulls located. I have a brief conversation with Colin as he tells me about a particular bull in the group with great "back scratchers" but I can't get a shot yet as there are too many other caribou around and behind him. The caribou are now moving quickly away in another direction. Colin is now unhooking the sleds tow rope and motioning for me to join him on the snowmobile. After making sure my rifle magazine is full we take off to intercept the fleeing herd. The fast snowmobile quickly gets us about a quarter mile ahead of the fleeing herd and Colin stops the snowmobile on a rise to give me a good position to shoot from. The caribou chosen does not have the largest or darkest rack of the other large bulls but he does have the most points visible of any and .. shortly he's mine. A great trophy!







Excitedly Jack takes one super picture and his camera stops working, a victim of the cold or the ride. After a few more quick pictures with my camera of my very first and only Arctic Island Caribou, the two guides quickly and efficiently field dress the caribou and secure the hide, meat, and antlers on the sled. Like all Inuits, they're masters of the sharp blade. We told

them we would like to donate the meat to a local family or mission to help with the long winter needs. They assured us it would be needed and appreciated. Now finished hunting for the day, we all have to make the long journey back to camp in the late afternoon hours. The journey is not soon forgotten.

As Jack and I settle in to our wooden sleds we're having thoughts of hot coffee followed by a hot meal as soon as possible after our arrival. The other guys may have also scored early or had a memorable day out on the island and we were looking forward to sharing stories and pictures. Its snowing now and the sky is getting dark, a storm is obviously brewing in the distance. Colin and Dave stop the sleds to check on us or so we thought. Their GPS unit had suffered a major malfunction and died. After several more failed attempts to get it working again they decide to move ahead. They were both born here, both Canadian Rangers and know the island well. We are somewhat lost in reality. It's now dark, getting colder with constantly blowing snow. As the sleds continue to move forward again the guides are looking for some evidence of the right direction home, an outcropping on the shoreline or something to assure them of going the right direction towards camp. Another fifteen or twenty minutes go by and the storm is now upon us .. we're now in a complete whiteout. Visibility is down to a very few feet and, stopping again, Dave and Colin tell us not to worry. They will get us back someday soon with luck but in the meantime get completely wrapped up to weather out the storm. According to my thermometer the temperature had quickly dropped about 40 degrees and it was noticeably colder. The Canada Goose parka and pants felt mighty good but now the sled ride was getting uncomfortably rough as the guides push ahead faster to get out of the whiteout. A few of the impact jolts were truly numbing to both of us and we wondered about the affect on the sled's runners. Later we found out there's a steel band covering the runners. The all white landscape is now dark, cold, and unfriendly as we finally exit the whiteout where it's now several degrees warmer again. It was then we noticed that both sleds and hunters are covered with a layer of ice and snow, some of

which is melting due to the large temperature change we came through. It re-freezes almost instantly though. We've now stopped again to refill the snowmobiles with the remaining can of gasoline but the guides don't seem all that concerned now which was reassuring. After all, it's an island. How lost can we be? The wandering Polar bear on the island probably entered our thoughts somewhere during the whiteout or just after. We were here for an adventure and now it certainly was one. A couple of hours later the sleds slow down considerably and then a short time later come to a complete stop. As we wait quietly in the sled for the journey to continue, Colin's face appears in front of my parka and says, "We're home!"

Our first day of hunting has been all anyone could ask for and more. We're tired and hungry, barely able to get out of the sleds but the thought of a hot cup of coffee and an Advil gave us the extra strength we needed. Leaving all our gear and rifles in the sleds, we slowly tread through the deep snow and make our way into the cabin. Everyone inside is worn out from the long days activities and crawling into the sleeping bag sounds real inviting but, Bella has made some kind of hearty caribou stew that has our complete attention. The fresh hot coffee has now revived us enough to want food. Peering out the kitchen window we can see icebergs floating by in the moonlight, with limited visibility provided by the dense blowing snow. It's getting colder again. Later, after the food and stories we're zipped into our warm sleeping bags and soon everyone is sound asleep. Tomorrow morning at 5:30 a.m. our hunt begins again.

Bella and Sunny are trying to quietly make breakfast but soon the noise level has us all awake. It's morning and dawn's early light is just barely visible through the window and with our flashlights we're up and moving about carefully. There's gear laying everywhere in the small cabin. A quick trip outside to relieve the pressure is a total shock. It's truly chilly with a ghostly dim light and trying to hurry doesn't always work as it should. The silk underwear that I wore in the sleeping bag wasn't quite warm enough to keep the instantly violent shivers away.

After a warm and filling breakfast sprinkled with a little conversation, all the guides came in for a quick cup of hot tea while Colin explained to us that the part of the island that we're heading to for our muskox hunt had a bad storm last night and it was much colder there so, dress as warm as possible and put on the Canada Goose Parka and Pants. After dressing I hurried outside again to get some early morning pictures of the various groups of hunters from this hunting camp as they got aboard the sleds and started their days journey. The early morning light is one of my favorite times to take pictures and here, not far from the Magnetic North Pole, the scene was reminiscent of early explorers setting out to search the vast icelands for mythical places and things created in man's dreams. It was just us though ..



hunters from around the world that traveled great distances to this frozen kingdom where the Eskimos live in harmony with remnants of the last ice age, "Omingmak" the muskox, and "Nanuk" the great white bear.

Now it's our turn to leave camp as Jack boards his convertible model sled while I get comfortable in mine. We have many miles to go to get to the muskox feeding grounds. Fortunately today's ride is much smoother thanks to the fresh layer of snow that fell last night. As Colin mentioned earlier this morning, it was getting colder the closer we got. Now, as we stop to glass for a muskox herd we spot two other sleds heading the same direction but still quite a distance away. As we head out we soon notice that Colin and Dave are now driving faster. Apparently there's a hunter's code that means, "First come, first served." The snow is deeper here with some drifting owing to last night's high winds. All of a sudden both snowmobiles engines shut off and both our sleds quietly slide to a full stop. Then we see the muskox herd about 200 yards away, already in a defensive circle with most facing outward to protect the inside group. Colin is now motionless as he carefully examines the herd for a trophy bull with his binoculars. A few minutes later the guides decide to pass on this herd and scout further ahead to locate another herd with, hopefully, better bulls. Jack and I exchange smiles as our sleds pass. Now we're going even faster as the other two sleds seen earlier are now only a half mile away. Another mile or so ahead we see a much larger muskox herd and, as before, the snowmobile motors go silent and we coast to a stop. This time we're even closer to the herd as Colin walks over to a slight rise in the ground to glass for a trophy. After a couple minutes of careful glassing he comes back to tell me there's a great bull but he's surrounded by too many others to risk a shot but .. he has an idea. The herd is now in a semi-circular position to warn us away as Colin very noisily starts the snowmobile engine and inches ahead as the herd now separates while running away in the opposite direction. Colin had lost sight of "my" bull when the herd split into two groups. As we speed ahead of the now fleeing muskox in a flanking maneuver, Colin stops the sled to glass the closest approaching group. My bull was not in it. Unhooking the wooden sled from his snowmobile he says, "Grab your rifle and get on!" Then a problem is discovered.

My aluminum rifle case was frozen shut. Colin immediately takes his hunting knife and with a mighty grunt breaks the rock hard ice bead



which allows the case to be opened. Onboard together now he rapidly accelerates toward the second group now more than a quarter mile away. Again he chooses a location close enough to the herd to easily identify my bull. Quickly glassing the bulls, now lined up facing us head on, Colin says, "The second one from the right side is your trophy" as he slides off the seat for me to shoot from. I waited a few seconds as all the bulls had their heads down facing us and patiently waited for a better shot. Then, further down the line another bull snorted loudly and my bull looked his direction -- just long enough. At the shot all but one ran away as fast as the deep snow allowed.

Jack and Dave now slide to a stop beside us. It's obvious to them that we located my trophy bull. He's laying about 65 yards in front of us. Jack said they never even heard the shot from close by, the frozen white Arctic landscape immediately soaked up the noise of my .340 Weatherby. That was comforting to us as we had both brought emergency signaling whistles in our survival kits. Now the work begins for Colin and Dave but first they poured hot tea for Jack and I to warm up with, a welcome gesture and it also helped celebrate the end of our hunt. The tea was very hot from an insulated thermos stored in a small cooler inside a larger cooler, so I sat mine down on the sled while I took several pictures of the field dressing, the landscape, the sky and everything else in between for our hunt photo album. Returning to the sled I put my camera back inside my nice warm parka and grabbed my now ice cold tea. In disgust I threw the tea into the air behind the sled and watched as it hit the hard snow and bounced. After getting all the horns, hide and meat firmly lashed to the sled we start the long ride back to the camp.

We had already mentioned to the guides about returning to town if we tagged out early so we could arrange for an earlier flight back to Yellowknife. Colin assured us it was possible this early in the day and much later, after quickly gathering all our gear back at the cabin, we were gliding across the snow back towards the village of Cambridge Bay, our successful and thrilling hunt was now over .. after only two days!





# Botswana Bulls x 2

by Mary Harter

At the January, 2010, Reno Convention, Don asked me what I might like for my February birthday. I said either an elephant or a lion. After talking to Ivan Carter, we went to see Johan Calitz from Botswana in his booth.

In September of 2010 we traveled to Botswana with Ivan Carter, our PH, to hunt Elephants with Johan Calitz Safaris. We left Grand Rapids to Chicago to Dulles to Dakar to Johannesburg which took 28 hours. It was fun to walk through airports with Ivan and see how often he was recognized. People would nudge each other and whisper. Once we sat to wait for our flights people would approach him asking about Africa.

We did an overnight in Johannesburg at African Sky Guest House where we ate dinner and breakfast and then flew to Maun, Botswana. After a two hour truck ride we were at Kukama Camp in the Kalahari Desert. After we passed the cattle fence we began to concentrate on wild animals. In Botswana there is a fence between the cattle and other domesticated animals and the wild ones. One must get out of your vehicle and step in some chemicals to kill any disease when passing from one area to the other.

Arriving at camp, we met Dave King, our camera man, Max, the camp manager, Mongoose our assistant PH, Chester, our apprentice PH, and Bashop, our lead tracker. This concession, Kukama Camp, consisted of 2 1/2 million acres in the Kalahari Desert. This was CT-2 with very low hunting quotas. No lions could be hunted here and the elephant quotas were for less than 1%. This desert is all sand, two to three miles deep, with no stones and very little rain. Without hunters paying hunting fees which pay for the watering holes, there would be very few animals able to live here.

The main lodge was built around a camelthorn tree on a platform overlooking a water hole. It was open with a thatched roof. There were many wild animal tracks around it and even leopard tracks under it. There were many out-buildings.

Our room was a platform tent divided into a sitting room with TV that we never used, bedroom with a single and double bed, and our bathroom with a stool, sink, shower, and dressing area. Clothes placed in the basket were washed daily and on your bed that night. This is one of the great advantages of traveling to Africa.

We settled in and then went out to sight in our rifles.

During the night we heard lions roaring and hyenas barking and many animals including elephants splashing and drinking at the watering hole.

We were ready early the next morning and after a wonderful omelet breakfast were in the Toyota ready to hunt.



Mary Harter with her Botswana Bull

We saw warthogs, steenboks, giraffes, kudu, and seven bull elephants. The tracker riding in the back of the pickup would point with a stick from the top of the truck window the way we should look as he spotted most of the game first. We did three different stalks up to elephants which really helped to give a hunter experience and confidence with what they would be doing.

The first stalk was in heavy brush. As we approached the elephant, Don and I couldn't see it. Ivan said it was right ahead of us. We could see a little movement of what was his trunk and then as we looked up, we could see the elephant. Wow!! It seemed to be as big as our first house. Ivan laughed at us but now we realized just how huge an animal we were hunting.

The last stalk up to two bull elephants was the best. We got to within fifteen yards from the largest and I drew my rifle on him several times for practice. He did a mock charge and Ivan talked to him and he turned and went off. I practiced the side shot and frontal from several positions. Dave took a picture of us on this stalk which is on the cover of this magazine. Ivan even stopped at an old elephant skull



on the side of the trail and we talked about all of the positions and the location of the brain.

We also saw yellow billed kites, ducks, lilac breasted rollers, Franklin, yellow billed hornbills, crimson breasted shrikes, swallowtailed bee eaters, pied babblers, gray headed sparrows, a tree that smelled fresh with its flowers, and sweet smelling grasses.

There was a fire across the highway from camp and we drove out to see it. The smoke affected the animals and none were in that area. Ivan did a bit of filming about the fire telling how destructive a fire can be in the short term but also how a fire cleans up an area and new grasses grow up afterwards providing more nutrition.

There was a dead baby elephant near camp that had been killed in a fire. Three lions had eaten on it and now vultures and hyenas were finishing it off. We found it by driving to where the vultures were just to check it out.

We could hear more animals that came in to the water hole that night.

The second day we drove to a thorn pan to the north of camp and saw giraffe, steenbok, warthog, and duiker but no elephants until we were on our way back to camp. The smoke from the fire had affected them. Ivan told us more about elephants, that they eat for about 18 hours per day and may sleep for about 20 minutes at a time. They can drink up to 40 gallons of water at one time but don't necessarily drink every day.

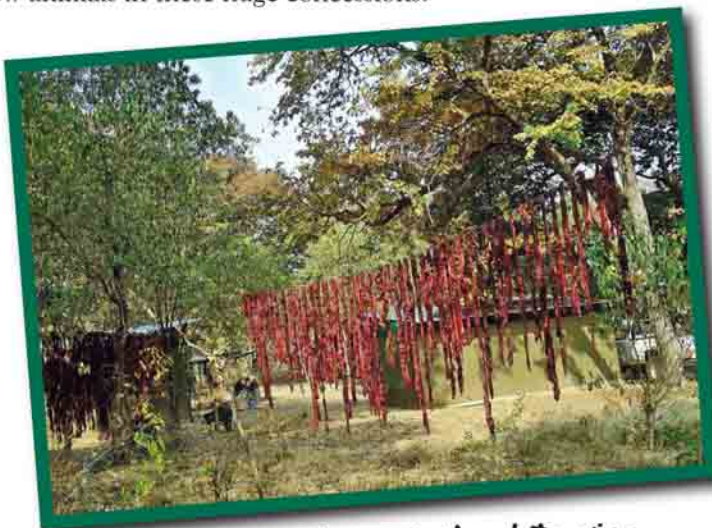
We ate lunch at camp as a giraffe watched us from the water hole. Most of these animals couldn't live here without the water which is pumped constantly with a diesel pump for seven months of the year until the rainy seasons come. Without the hunters paying fees which in turn pay for the diesel fuel and the wages of the people to maintain them, there would be few animals in these huge concessions.



We sat around a bonfire every night hearing the sounds of the desert, enjoying the stars in the southern sky, and visiting with our new friends.

On the third morning, Don was down to the lodge first, enjoying his coffee, when he spotted what he thought was a huge bull elephant. The bull had just walked off into the bush when I arrived followed shortly by Ivan. Ivan decided we should go immediately to track him. We jumped in the Toyota, called to the trackers, cameraman, and game scout, and we were off.

After about an hour of tracking with the wind to our backs we decided to go back to camp for breakfast. Then we were off again on the pickup to drive around to get the wind better. After about an hour we spotted two cows, two calves, and about a 40# bull. Further on we spotted some mature bulls and drove past them and then made a stalk back to them. We found four standing together in the shade of a mopane tree. The smallest stood behind the tree but three large bulls were in front of the tree. The one was facing us but did not have large ivory. The one on the left was about six inches taller than either of the other mature bulls. We could see his left ivory but not the right. We decided to wait for him to turn but after about 45 minutes the wind started to swirl. Ivan decided we needed to go see what his other ivory looked like so slowly we edged around the elephants. I just knew if the ivory on the right was as good as the left side we would take him. Ivan said that elephant's ivory looks bigger from behind and sometimes they are thin or oval and weigh less than what we were looking for. When we got around and could see the other ivory Ivan said he was probably too thin but we would study him. My mouth felt dry like it was full of cotton balls but Ivan's comments kind of took the edge off.



Strips of Elephant Meat Drying





The elephant gave us some great side views and then full frontal and Ivan said we'd take him and to shoot him right between the eyes which I did. He went down on his knees but got back up and turned. Don took out one hip and I got him right above the tail in the spine. Down he went completely and Ivan and I rushed up behind him. Ivan had me take an insurance shot and he was still. It was 10:30 a.m. and now I can get nervous and realize just what I had done. Oh, he was huge! He was taller than me laying down! He was about 14 foot standing and like a gray house. The other elephants ran away immediately after the first shot. We checked out "my" elephant, watered him down, covered him with shade cloth and tree branches and went back to camp - about an hour's drive - for lunch and to get the rest of the staff, truck, and trailer.

Back to the elephant and the work began. Eleven people worked on him at various places. One worked on his front legs caping them out for stools for us. Several started caping him out at the shoulders and neck. Two began skinning the trunk. Mongoose cut off the tail and presented it to me as the owner of this elephant and the hair was made into bracelets for us. Eventually an ax was used to cut through the skull to secure the ivory. The front of the skull is all honeycombed. If it were solid bone, the elephant wouldn't be able to hold up its head as it would be too heavy.

Eventually they used heavy cables attached to the truck to turn him over. Some of the workers started removing meat which would be dried by the natives and eaten later. Surprisingly a 12,000 pound elephant only yields about 3,500 pounds of meat. The bones and skin are much of its weight. It was good to see the care taken with this whole process. Ivan kept sharpening the numerous knives, pieces were cooled and folded, and the precious ivory carefully removed. Everyone worked together in a happy, jovial mood.

It was almost dark when we left and very dark when we reached camp. We drove right to the skinning shed and

butchering location. Proper care is taken to insure we have a great looking trophy to enjoy at home for many years.

Dinner that night included champagne with toasts all around. My elephant was about 50 years old and using his last set of teeth. Elephants usually have six sets and when the last set wears out, they slowly starve to death. They keep eating but can't chew their food small enough to digest it. Elephants never stop growing. Ivory grows faster the older they become.

On the fourth day, four cape buffalo, zebra, warthogs, and kudu were early morning visitors at the watering hole. We visited the skinning shed, tracker's quarters, kitchen/laundry area and saw the many strips of elephant meat drying. The drying lines stretched out all around the tents and sheds. We saw the huge nerves they had removed from each tusk. It was almost like a nerve in a tooth. One tusk measured 70 inches and the other measured 71 inches. We took a lot of pictures and Ivan and Max set up my tusks for evening photos to be reflected in the water hole. They made sure we had great photos to preserve this wonderful safari.

On the fifth day we left at 8 a.m. for the drive to Maun. We had opted for a helicopter ride from Maun in to Ivory Camp in the Okavango Delta where Don's hunt was to be so we would be able to see this remarkable area from the air and get a good overview. This delta of water slowly flows into the Kalahari Desert where it evaporates. Most deltas flow to an ocean but not the Okavango.

While flying we saw red lechwe, kudu, and tsessebe running through the shallow water and many elephants following the trails made by hippos. It is illegal to shoot a hippo as they are necessary to keep the waterways open. We saw many but mostly while returning to our camp at dusk.

Ivory Camp is in area NG-32 and so very different from Kukama. Our helicopter was greeted by our camp PH, Christo, who took us by makoros (dugout canoes) to the main lodge. Anelia was the camp manager who oversaw the many camp workers who did our laundry and cooked. Kathy and Rick, a couple from Chicago, were with us in camp for a few days and Cobus Calitz was their guide. Rick had already shot his elephant and they were staying on to fish.

The camp was on an island and our tent was at ground level just a few feet from the water. A hippo was just outside our tent in the water every night.

The first evening in camp, we were greeted by a snake falling out of a tree near the fire in front of the main lodge. It was not poisonous so Christo told us. He captured it and took it away. We only saw one other snake out in the bush later in the week. Dinner was fresh caught tilapia.

On day six, the first hunting day in Ivory Camp, we saw a total of 21 bull elephants and many cows and calves. We saw eleven of the bulls before 11 a.m. We saw many red lechwe but wouldn't hunt them until Don had his elephant. We also saw giraffe. We walked many islands to see the



bulls better. We landed the boat at one island to go in to see seven bulls, two bulls in particular and waded in water up to our armpits in several places. The water was clear but full of reeds which had sharp edges which cut across our bare legs and ankles as we were wearing shorts and water shoes. The next day and for the rest of the trip I wore long pants and socks in my water shoes. We glassed from several termite mound areas and eventually got within 20 yards of the two largest bulls. The bulls were eating under large palm trees and they would put their trunks up on the trunk of the palm tree and shake them. You couldn't believe how hard they would shake them.

As we walked Ivan would tease us. "Have we spotted an elephant? Then he is a spotted elephant." "Does he have chicken pox? No, he has elephant pox." And our favorite -- "Is he backing through the bush?" We wanted one so large he had to back through the bush!!

Lots of fish lived in these waters and we also saw fisher eagles, egrets, and many, many other birds. There were many kinds of reeds growing in the water and just as many kinds of frogs in all colors clinging to the reeds. Even the water lilies were in white, blue, and pink. Dragon flies would land on the tips of the reeds and look like a flower. After the sun set, egrets would fly up by the hundreds from where they had been roosting.

On day seven by 1:30 p.m. we had seen eleven bulls. We had walked around on one island to check out a bull and had seen herds of kudu, warthogs, and zebra. The other boat, the Go-Devil, had seen 21 bulls and 30 cows. Ivan transferred to the Go-Devil to check two of the bulls out and Doug, the cameraman, went to film them. The Go-Devil was a boat especially designed to go through shallow water and over reeds.

We walked around another island to check out a couple more bulls. Then Don went in the Go-Devil. He got covered with spiders and other insects as the boat flies through the reeds.

We waded in to see several more bulls. Christo waded to his neck to get close enough to view one bull elephant. More elephants were shaking the palm trees. Only mature palms lived in this area. The elephants eliminated the small ones. We saw wild sage and python creeper. On the way back to camp we hit a crocodile and our game scout said it was four meters long. That would be over 12 feet. We arrived back after dark.

Don and Ivan had seen four nice bulls, two on one side of the water and two on the other. They watched them for 45 minutes and one had good mass but a fast taper. They also had seen a huge cape buffalo with at least a 42 inch spread.

We had fresh tilapia for dinner caught by the Chicago couple.

On day eight the other couple left the camp by boat. We went out and scouted 14 bulls. The other scouting boat saw 30 bulls. We saw numerous cows and calves plus giraffes, kudus, hippos, red lechwes, and crocs. We waded in to islands to check out the bulls but never waded passed our knees today.

Many photo safari camps are in this area. We passed a park area where we cannot hunt on one side of the boat. We cannot go into the photo safari area but they can come into our area. If we did not hunt and pay the fees we do, the government might change the area to cattle ranching and the habitat for wildlife would be lost.

We had lechwe shishkabobs for dinner with peppers, onions, and bananas wrapped in bacon.

On day nine the Chicago couple were gone and we could use the 18 foot boat which was easier to travel in and we were off after elephants. We saw fisher eagles which had white heads and shoulders. We also saw Marshall eagles. The scouts on the other boat saw 14 bulls on an island and came to get Don and Ivan in the Go-Devil. It took them about 40 minutes to get there. They decided one was good enough to take so they called back to tell us and we came with the game scout. At each camp a government game scout must accompany a hunter when any game is taken. They record the coordinates of the location and other pertinent information needed for their records.

Don, Ivan, and Doug stood on a termite mound looking down on four elephants for an hour and a half. The elephants moved off about 15 minutes before we arrived with the game scout. The elephants took a mud bath. One of the trackers climbed a termite mound and spotted them and we were off after them. It was midday and Ivan kept checking the wind because in midday the wind changes often. We circled around to get the wind in our favor and kept moving closer. The temperature was much warmer once we left







Wading in the Okavango Delta

the water. You would have never known we were on an island. The ground was very dry and sandy and looked much like the desert except for more vegetation.

As we approached the elephants I glassed them, first checking their ivory. One had a much larger body than

the others so I immediately checked him out and knew he was the one they were after. As the large elephant walked, one of the others would either be behind or in front of him until we were at about 20 yards from them. Ivan called Don to his side and the huge elephant faced them and came closer. I walked up on Don's right as Ivan instructed Don on his left. I must say that with Ivan at your side talking you through the process, you have all of the confidence in the world. How wonderful to get this experience again! Don shot the elephant right in the brain and I shot about two inches from Don's shot as the elephant fell to his knees and then toppled over. He was dead right there, a "DRT". Ivan and Don rushed to his side and Don shot him again in the brain for insurance. There lay Don's huge trophy. Oh, the excitement! We had stood side by side with the best elephant expert in the world for the second time and gotten an elephant --- a huge Botswana elephant. It was about 1:30 p.m.

Calls were made back to camp for the

skinners and the other boat to come. We took our many pictures, Don was given the tail as a symbol of his ownership of the animal, and we cut brush to shade him and carried water to keep him wet and cool. Special attention was paid to his ears, eyes, and trunk. Ivan said after working for the Wildlife Gallery he knew more about the proper care of the hide to insure a great mount. It is just appalling how some animals are handled.

Eventually we were greeted by two more boats and the many people needed to process an elephant. They would build a fire, had lights, and would spend the night on the island, sleeping on the ground. The villagers would be contacted and some would come to cut up the huge amount of meat.

We drove back to camp in the large boat and eventually had to use the spotlight as it got very dark. We encountered many hippos that are more active during the night and several crocodiles. We saw a couple of fires of people fishing on the water ways who were spending the night in some huts and tents we had passed earlier.

On day ten we slept in and I'm sure we slept much better than those who spent the night with Don's elephant on the island. Don cleaned the guns and I made notes.

Christo, the skinners, and the others finally came back and had slept about one hour by the fire. The elephant meat was cut for drying and would be shared with the villages. Don's ivory was 71 and 80 inches long and the most beautiful ivory taken in this camp this year.

We went out fishing at about 4 p.m. catching 18, and, of course, Don caught the most. We caught African pike, silver cat fish, butter bobble, sharp toothed cat fish, nembwe, and many bream or tilapia including striped, red headed, and large mouth thin faced.

On day eleven, we went out in the makoros (dugout canoes) with two polers in two to four feet or more of water through the reeds. Olle spotted several red lechwe on an island and we made a stalk through the water to a termite mound where we could see a nice male laying in the grass surrounded by about a dozen females. Don, Ivan, and Olle

stalked around the reeds at the treeline to get closer. Some of the females spotted their movement and started walking and the male got up and followed. I could see Don raise his rifle, heard him shoot, and heard the impact. It was about a 200 yard shot and went through both shoulders of the lechwe but he was still standing so Don shot again and soon, down he went. They dragged him to a dry place for many pictures. Then they loaded him in our makoro and we took him back to camp.

This is delicious meat and the trackers even washed out the stomach to bring back. Everything will be utilized, even the liver.







*Don Harter with his Botswana Bull*

In the afternoon we went to another island in the makoros and walked about five miles around and through it seeing about 400 cape buffalo, several elephants, zebra, steenboks, lechwe, wart hogs, giraffes, and fresh tracks of ostrich and tsessebe. We waded water to our waist several times and as I followed Ivan I felt I was tracking sasquash seeing his toed shoes footprint before me. He was wearing vibram toed water shoes which were gray with yellow straps.

We had oxtail for dinner.

On the twelfth day we were out earlier than usual to hunt ostrich and tsessebe on the island where we went the day before and saw many tracks. We saw many giraffes, heard cape buffalo in the water, and saw steenbok, ground squirrels, and a couple of ostriches. We saw four hippos in a pond and a tree full of commorant. We followed an ostrich (forever) trying to get a shot. The males are black and white and the females a brownish tan. This huge male knew when to run and only slowed down when he was behind a bush. We went so fast that I couldn't keep up. My new knee didn't like it so Don carried on.

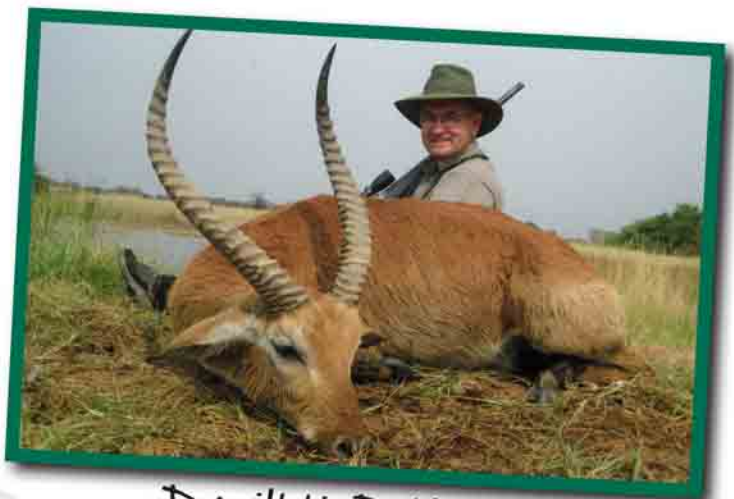
The makoros are hollowed out boats about 2 1/2 feet wide and about 16 feet long. You actually sit below water level and have a great view of everything on the water. The polers move us quite fast and it is so peaceful and quiet. You travel in very narrow paths through the reeds in the water but the polers know where to go and we arrive in no time. We are usually in less than two feet of water. If it isn't deep enough either Ivan or Don or both hop out and then get back in when the water depth increases. There is just so much to see and different things at different levels. You wouldn't believe the many flowers, lily pads and lilies, frogs, dragon flies, and the many egrets, ducks, geese, fisher eagles, and so many other birds flying up as we pass.

On day thirteen we slept in, packed up, took our last pictures and did our interviews for Doug, our cameraman. The workers hurried to do our laundry. We took the boat to Maun after lunch and saw many wild animals on the way. Nine elephants were in one group and then we saw two more. Many fish are in the delta and we saw fishermen in makoros with nets. After we passed the cattle fence we saw many goats and cows and knew we were getting closer to Maun. Maun has between 50,000 and 75,000 people of which about 4,000 are white and most of the whites are associated with the hunting or photo safari industry. We stayed at the Thamalakane River Lodge. Doug, Ivan, Johan Calitz and his wife, Kobe, met us at the lodge for dinner. We ordered line fish for the

main course and everyone but me had chicken livers for an hors d'oeuvre.

The next morning we ate breakfast at the lodge and were picked up by Mario who took us to go bird hunting with Johan Calitz and Ivan. What a fun experience! I used a beautiful Air Arms 5.5 mm pellet gun with a Swat scope. I shot doves and Franklin from the back of Ivan's Toyota. Several times Ivan, Johan, and Don got out after spotting birds and the beaters following us in another vehicle would try to flush them for the guys to shoot.

We stopped at another camp, Sankuyo Camp, for a gourmet lunch prepared by Henney, the camp manager. I tried to write down what he described that he had prepared for us and part of what he said was grilled tsessebe steaks with figs and blue cheese and also with anchovies and cheese, fish smoked using oak barrels, grilled fish, rice/potatoes/onions/fish dish, salad with tomatoes, cucumbers, pears, and apples, carpachio of impala, and homemade ice cream on waffles.



*Don with his Red Lechwe*





After lunch we went back to hunt birds and shot 22 in total including doves, Franklins, and an Egyptian goose. Our beaters took them home and will eat meat tonight.

We spent the night at the Calitz home in Maun enjoying a wonderful steak dinner on their patio. We were out at 6 a.m. the next morning to hunt birds again and I sat at one end of a water hole with Mario using the pellet gun and Don, Ivan, Doug, and Dave Lincoln were at the other end and around the corner out of sight using shotguns. Don used a 12 gauge Beretta Sporting over and under. I saw a yellow billed kite, honey badgers, and two raptors that came in and stole some of our harvested doves. We shot in front, across the water hole, and in trees on both sides of us. I must have shot over 100 times. Two bird boys stood between our groups scaring the birds from landing in the middle where neither group could reach them.

We enjoyed another wonderful luncheon prepared by Henney. Some of the wonderful items were canoes stuffed with cheese and shrimp, salad with tomatoes, apples, ripe olives, marinated spare ribs grilled right in front of the lodge, and Moroccan rolls which were fried. Henney loves to cook and we really enjoyed it. Dessert was tiramisu prepared with chocolate and peppermint.

We visited Debbie at Mochaba who ships most of the animals out of Botswana to the United States and she shipped ours to the Wildlife Gallery. She ships over 400 elephants per year. We visited her in her office and also the workshop.

Then we began the long ride home.  
"Until dreams are linked with thought and purpose, there is no accomplishment."

Johan Calitz

"Reward yourself for every goal achieved." Johan Calitz

## GIB'S ELEPHANT

What gift can a hunter give  
That through death  
Others may live . . .

They came in little groups  
Twos, threes . . . fives  
Carrying their pangas  
Spears and knives

They'd heard the shots  
An elephant had died  
Ivory for the hunter  
Food for the tribe

For forty years  
He'd eaten their maize  
Trampled their fields  
On his nightly raids

Stripping each stalk  
Of each treasured ear  
Hardship and famine  
For the coming year

But now he would give back  
That which he stole  
Food for the people  
Nourishment for the soul

They skinned and cut  
And broke every bone  
So that all who came  
Could go home . . .  
With meat

Meat of the elephant  
Fattened by maize  
Some fields are harvested  
In different ways

from "Where Elephants Go To Die"  
by Rege Podraza, hntstrx@comcast.net





# Sportsmen Against Hunger

This spring Marfoods, USA, in Taylor, Michigan called Jim Leonard, SCI Region Representative from the Lansing area, to donate 6 1/2 pallet loads of Pemmican Jerky to the SCI "Sportsmen Against Hunger" program. This was 9,000, 1.8 oz. packages of jerky. Our chapter agreed to help with the distribution. Mike Strope, our chairman of Sportsmen Against Hunger, distributed our share to the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen directed by Genny Sobaski and the Isabella Chapter of the American Red Cross where Irene Little is manager of the Emergency Services Program. Our many thanks to Marfoods for making this happen.



Jim Leonard with Mark Koch when he picked up our chapter's jerky and brought it to Don Harters.



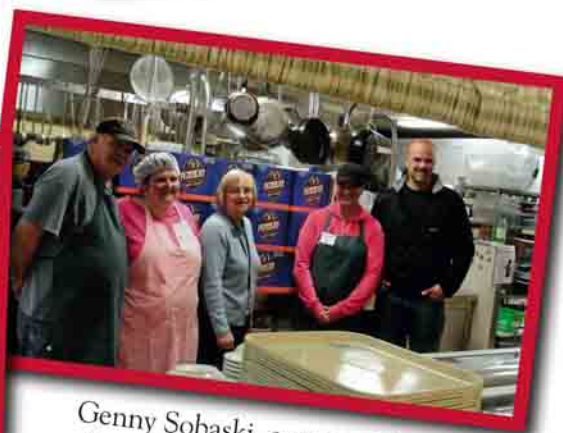
Inside the Marfood Plant



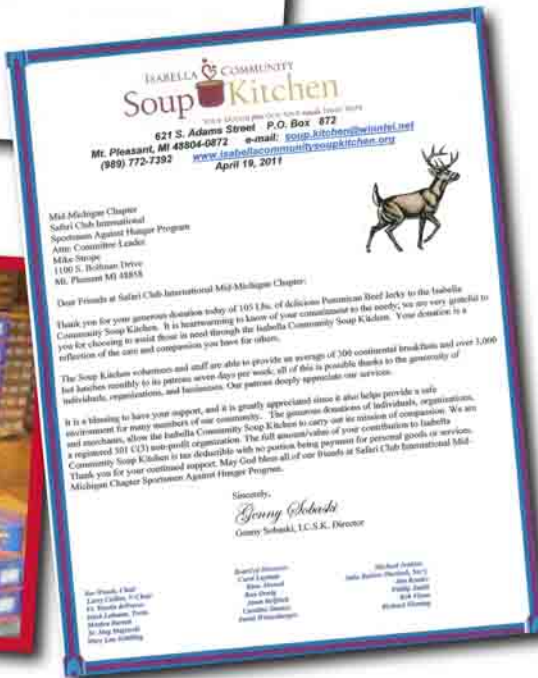
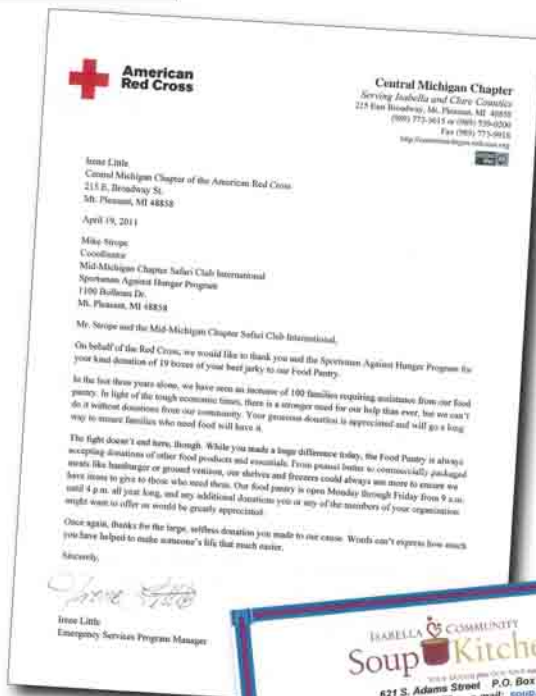
Don Harter and Mike Strope loading the jerky in Mike's pickup for final distribution.



Irene Little and Mike Strope on far right and other workers at the Red Cross Food Pantry.



Genny Sobaski, center, with Mike Strope, right, and other workers.





# Confessions of a Meat Hunter

By Michael Ritchie D.C.

I had the deer in my sights and focused on the lower third of the deer just behind the shoulder. Squeezing the trigger, the deer reacted and went right down. My fourth and final tag was filled. "Four tags?" you ask. "How did you get 4 tags?" When I returned from an antelope and mule deer hunt in Wyoming, a friend asked if I shot a big one. I replied, "We were doe hunting." He replied, "You went all that way to shoot does?" I explained my reasoning for such a crazy thing and he seemed to understand. Are you a trophy hunter or a meat hunter? I confess that I am the latter. It is not that I wouldn't love to shoot trophy bulls and bucks, but to improve my odds of doing so would be expensive. I used to be somewhat ashamed of a buck or doe that wasn't in the trophy class. Then I listened to a seminar by Gene Wensel, a trophy deer hunter from Iowa. "If you want to get a trophy buck, you have to go where they live." He then calculated the chances of shooting a trophy buck in the area of Northern Michigan where I live. The answer was so shocking. It was almost as likely for me to win the lottery than to shoot a trophy buck near home. Therefore, I was faced with a dilemma--either give up and stop hunting near home or pay big money to go to Pike County, Illinois, Iowa, or Buffalo County, Wisconsin.

This years trophy doe hunt started with an application to hunt moose in Wyoming for their version of the largest member of the deer family, the "Shiras" Moose. With 10 points accumulated, I assumed that I had enough to finally draw a tag. So I applied for some doe antelope and mule deer tags thinking that if the Moose hunt ends quickly my friends and I could have fun hunting those species. The applications for deer and antelope needed to be near our moose area so if moose hunting was difficult my friends could just go doe hunting on their own. Long story made short, the wolves ate my plans to hunt moose and I received another preference point (points don't taste very good at \$75 a point). We had a decision to make. Do we drive all the way to Wyoming to hunt does? We looked over the left over license list that the Wyoming F&W has on their website. We applied, then journeyed the 28 hours to Central Wyoming with 6 antelope and 4 mule deer doe tags in our pockets. Here was our reasoning for traveling so far to doe hunt.

1. We need 250 lbs. of wild game for our annual church wild game dinner.
2. The time spent with friends hunting is always the best part of any hunting trip.
3. We can explore new hunting areas for future hunts.
4. A bad day of hunting is better than a good day at work.

Page 34



Tommy with Mule Deer

(Not really, but our wives were sure happy to see us leave).

5. Doe tags are cheap and you can buy up to 6 tags for each species. Buck tags are becoming prohibitively expensive in most western states and you can only buy one tag. For these and more reasons, we have enjoyed doe hunting out west for several years.

Our hunt in 2010 would include two Michiganders and one Chicago native. We loaded up my Chevy extended cab Silverado, hooked up a friend's trailer packed to the gills and headed to the windy city to pick up my friend Tommy.

The load in the trailer included a 3500 watt generator and a 17 cubic ft. freezer. There is no way to keep meat frozen out in the wilds of Wyoming without a freezer. We find the meat is much better for the table when we butcher our animals immediately and cool them down right away.

We also carry a hitch hoist with a gambrel hook to keep the meat out of the high dessert dust and dirt. Remember, we are meat hunters so care of the each precious morsel of the game is a high priority. Why not take it to a processor, you ask? With the nearest town over an hour drive and the temperatures in early October reaching into the 60-degree range, we wanted to spend our time hunting and not driving.





no problem filling our tags.

Well, the information was on target because by the time we found our campsite we had filled 3 of our antelope tags. We took our time butchering, setting up our tent and getting dinner ready for the evening. The next morning came quickly and we made sure the generator was full and running and we went hunting at the crack of dawn to fill our other 3 tags. Before 9 a.m. we had our last 3 tags filled and we butchered the animals, took pictures and thanked God for blessing our hunt! In a total of 4 hours of hunting we had filled 6 antelope tags! The nice thing about doe hunting is you don't have to be so picky as there is no scoring system for does. We return to camp finished wrapping and cooling the tender antelope morsels and broke camp.

Unfortunately, our mule deer area is 100

miles away, so we head further west but we found a KOA camping cabin where we could stay and plug in the freezer. Speaking to a local DNR officer at a check station (yes they do have check stations), we found out our mule deer area is much smaller than we could have imagined. Our optimism is diminished somewhat as we drove through the area and saw that there has very little traditional deer habitat. The next morning we found ourselves driving along a two track next to a river. The river bottom held the only trees in this arid landscape. As the sun rises Tommy thinking out loud says, "It sure would be nice if a deer would pop its head out on that island over there." Within seconds a fat healthy doe was spotted grazing under a tree on the island. Tommy took aim and filled our first deer tag. Another deer came into the clear and my .270 cracks and my first deer tag is filled. Den-



*Dennis and Mike skinning their harvest*

We arrived at the predetermined meeting place at the predetermined time and our friend informs us on the cell that he thought Michigan time was an hour behind Illinois time. So Dennis and I get a cup of coffee and wait anxiously for the third member of our party to get his stuff together and join us. We could leave Tommy home but we have been friends since college and this hunting trip is the only time we get to see each other. He is a general contractor in the greater Chicago area and has a way of making any trip a lot of fun. Dennis is the other member of our hunting party and he is a friend from church. Fire fighting for the Michigan DNR is his occupation and he is an ethical, hard working person and is a pleasure to have along. Tommy finally shows up and loads his gear in the vehicle and we give him a hard time for making us wait (two years in a row I might add). Then, like a bunch of kids, we gleefully hit the road for our hunting destination. Tommy would be hunting with a Ruger M77 in 7mm mag. with hand loaded Barnes triple shock tipped bullets in 150 grain. Dennis was hunting with an Interarms bolt rifle chambered for 30.06 in 150 grain Barnes triple shock by Federal. I would be carrying my old standby Remington model 700 with hand loaded 130 grain Barnes triple shock bullets. We decided we would stop at a motel for a night just to enjoy the trip more even though we will miss opening day. You see, when you are doe hunting most of the competition fills their tags the first couple of days and you have hundreds of square miles to yourself. Our plan is to find a campsite in our hunting area and set up and then go hunting. Never having hunted this area before, we didn't know what to expect and this is one of the inconveniences of getting left over tags. You have to be ready to hunt a different area every year. Maps were purchased, game wardens were called and basically we were told that we should have





Yellowstone Black Bear



Beautiful Sunset

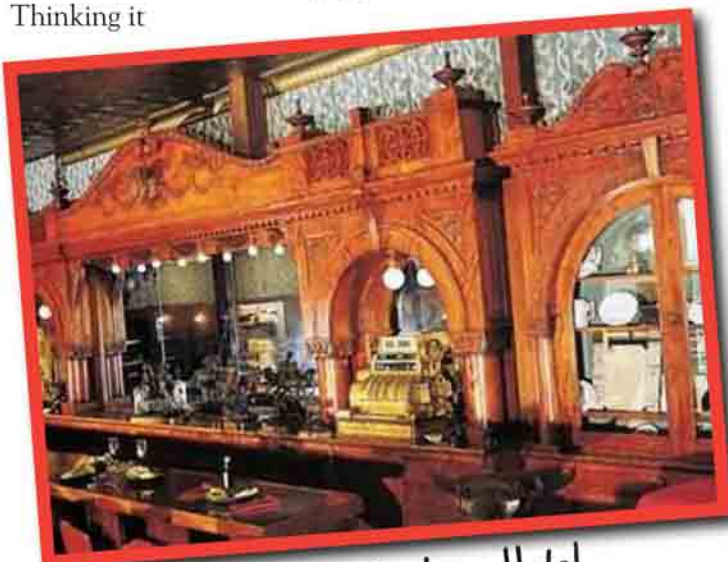


Coyote

nis who was unable to draw a deer tag went for the truck. Tommy and I waded a shallow spot in the river to go collect our kill. To our surprise Dennis was able to find a shallow spot in the river where he could drive the truck onto the island and we began processing. We couldn't believe how blessed we have been! More pictures, handshakes and giving of thanks and we begin to process our tender river bottom mule deer. About half way through our task Tommy excuses himself because, "The coffee is beginning to work." I continued to quarter the animals and he returns excited, saying he has spotted another deer watching us about 100 yards away. I handed him the Ruger and Tom crept around a bush to dispatch his fourth and final animal of his hunt. I walked with him to look for it in the tangle of thick willow bushes and a deer popped out of the bushes. Thinking it

was Tommy's, I shot it to finish it off. As we checked the deer there is only one bullet hole so I tagged it while Tom looked for his trophy doe. Unfortunately, he is unable to find his deer and we decide with the 55-degree temps that we need to get the 3 deer we have on ice. Finishing the job, we say a prayer that the Lord would help us find the deer and that it hasn't crossed the deep part of the river. Not pushing the deer turned out to be a blessing, as we walked right to the deer and began to celebrate an amazing hunt. We had shot 10 animals in a total of 6 hours of hunting.

It then occurred to Dennis, "What do we do with the next 3 days we had planned for hunting?" "Have you guys ever been to Yellowstone?" I asked. Like a kid in a candy shop Tommy asked, "We can go to Yellowstone?" So we finished our chores and went back to our cabin to clean up get some rest. In the cabin that night we pulled out the maps to plan our trip to Jackson Hole and Yellowstone National Park for the next day. The golden aspens along the riverbeds contrasted by the evergreen ridges and the glacial peaks of the Grand Teton Mountains of Jackson Wyoming were breathtaking. It was definitely worth the drive. Moving on to Yellowstone we encountered something that we hadn't planned on. The officer at the entrance told us that we couldn't bring our trailer load of game into the park because of bear issues! He said that if we were just traveling through the park, it was permissible. Our two-day stay in Yellowstone turned into a one-day outing, which was somewhat disappointing. In Yellowstone, you can see more critters in one day than a whole lifetime in most other places, so we decided to exit the north exit and spend the night in Cody, Wyoming. Playing tour guide, I showed the guys what I knew of the Park in one day. We



The bar in the Irma Hotel



had been blessed to see Old Faithful erupt, a four hundred pound black bear, elk in the rut bugling in Mammoth Hot Springs, took pictures of bison, big horn sheep and coyotes. This was like a trip within a hunting trip and we were loving it. Arriving in Cody in the evening, I told the guys that the Irma hotel was famous for prime rib and by now we were hungry for something other than our own cooking. Sitting in the expanse of the dining room, the wait person told us the 40 foot bar made of ornately hand carved wood was given to Buffalo Bill Cody by the Queen of England 95 years ago. The hotel was named for Cody's daughter Irma.

While savoring a scrumptious hunk of Wyoming beef, we planned our visit the next day to the Buffalo Bill Historical Museum. If you have never been there, the museum has four sections. One section is the Buffalo Bill history. Cody was a rock star of his time as he had brought the wild west to the Eastern U.S. and Western Europe. City slickers were fascinated by the stories of the Cowboys and Indians. The next section of the museum was the Plains Indian which displayed and told the story of Native Americans from past to present. The western art section contains paintings by Fredrick Remington and others who brought out the essence of the Wild West on canvas and through sculpture. The Winchester Firearms museum was the fourth section, and would be a thrill to any gun enthusiast. There just wasn't time to see everything in the 4 hours we had planned. The thousands of guns from hundreds of manufacturers were eye candy to these mid western hunters.

To finish out our hunting trip, we stopped at Mount Rushmore and viewed the mountain at night. This trip might not be your cup of tea, but we couldn't have had a more productive or enjoyable trip. Arriving home a day early my wife protested, "You're not supposed to be home yet--I was planning to do something with my sister today!" "It is nice to see you too honey!" I replied. The boys are planning another doelightful adventure this fall. I hope the bull elk and the buck antelope tags don't spoil our fun.

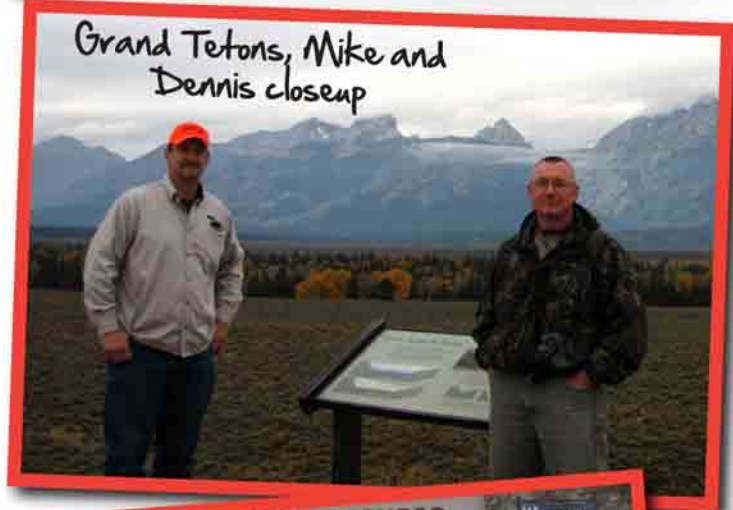
Campsite



Koavrock Springs



Grand Tetons, Mike and Dennis closeup



Irma Hotel in Cody, Wyoming



Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming



## Looking Ahead -

In our next issue -

*Majestic Mountain Mule Deer*  
by Mary Harter

*Redpine Whitetails, OMG*  
(Oh, my God) Bucks  
by Mary Harter

*New Zealand Hunting with*  
Shane Quinn  
By Bill Shelt

*And more articles, poems, recipes,*  
*and jokes yet to be submitted.*



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"Don't worry about avoiding temptation.  
As you grow older, it will avoid you." - Winston Churchill



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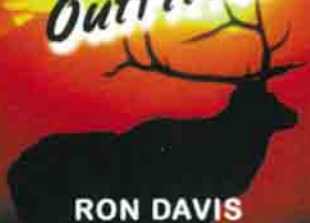
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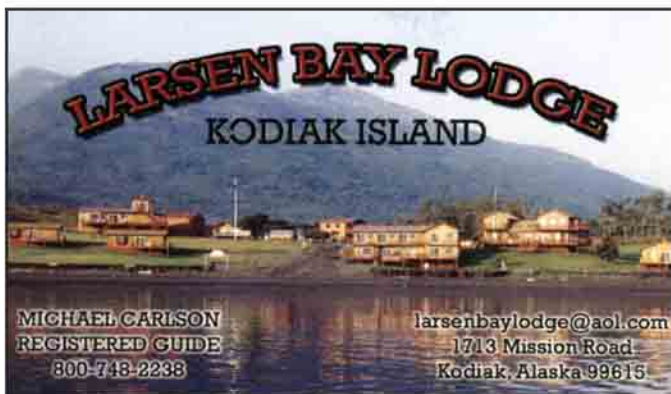
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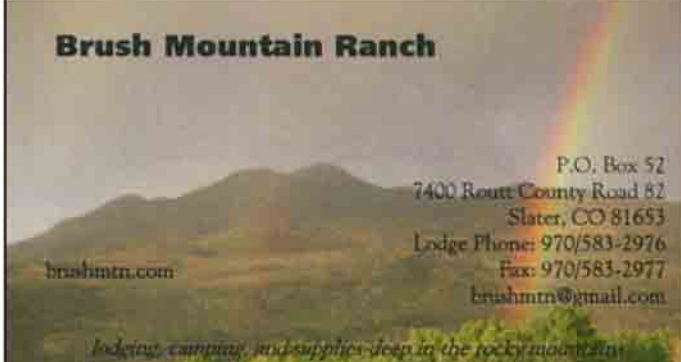
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I don't know the key to success but the key to failure is trying to please everybody. - Bill Cosby



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