

# FRONT SIGHT



**SCI**  
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

Jan.-Mar. 2013, Issue 21



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Larry and Joanne Witte  
March 2012

**CHAPTER MAGAZINE AWARD - SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL  
THIRD YEAR IN A ROW**





# JOHAN PIETERSE SAFARIS



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Members of Mid-Michigan SCI or Isabella County Sportsman's Club may use the shooting range located at 2872 W. Millbrook Road just east of Winn Road. The lock combination is 2520 and changes yearly on February 15th. Please carry membership identification on you when you visit the range.



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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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Don and Mary Harter, Kevin Unger, Mike Strobe, and Tim Schafer representing your chapter at the board meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming last August.

## SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

\* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Date	Meeting Type	Time	Location
Jan. 12, 2013	Board	3:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
	Big Buck Night	5:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn
Jan. 23 - 26, 2013	SCI Convention		Reno, Nevada
Feb. 22, 2013	Fundraiser	2:00 - 10:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagle
Feb. 23, 2013	Fundraiser/Dinner	10:00 a.m. - close	Soaring Eagle
April 1, 2013	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
May 6, 2013	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn

**Reservations required. Please call and leave a message at 989-560-7288**



## Your President - Kevin Unger



I hope that everybody is enjoying the fall weather this year with archery bow season opening on October 1. The weather was perfect. I have talked to quite a few hunters and they are seeing lots of deer. A couple of lucky ones are Scott Holmes who shot a nice 8 point and I got lucky with a nice 8 point, also. The best part of the season is the prerut which should start about October 25. This is the time of the year you want to be putting in the most hours in the woods through that first ten days in November. The woods become magical. Bucks that you never saw before all of a sudden show up looking for does in heat. This is the best time to see a big buck.

Also, rifle season opens up November 15. If you need to sight in your rifle or just want to practice shooting, the Isabella County Sportsman's Club is available for you to use. The combination to the gate is 2520. If you do use the range, please make sure to clean up after yourself and be safe.

We are working on next year's fundraiser as we speak. We have changed some of the raffles to some we think everyone will like. We are going to have some great hunts and some of the best guns available. The dates for the fundraiser are February 22 - 23 at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort in Mt. Pleasant.

Also, mark down Saturday, January 5 for our Big Buck Night at the Comfort Inn in Mt. Pleasant. This is always a fun night. Remember you don't need to shoot the biggest buck to win a gun. Any legal buck taken in the 2012 season gets you in the drawing for a gun so if you shoot two bucks be sure to bring them both. We will be scoring all the racks that you want scored. We will be sending out information on all of our events. Make sure to check out our website at [www.midmichigansci.org](http://www.midmichigansci.org) for more information regarding our club.

## Editor's Message

Wow!! What fun hunting with grandchildren. It is more exciting seeing them be successful than ourselves. Hopefully, we have created lifetime hunters. I know we did with our own children. All it took for me was Don taking me out over 40 years ago. What a monster he created!!

We have been to Karluk Lake on Kodiak Island where Don shot a beautiful brown bear on the first day of the season. We saw 25 the first day and he shot the largest. We hunted the second day as I wanted a sika deer but totally we only saw three does. They had a lot of snow last winter and estimate a 40% deer loss plus a loss of many fox and eagles. We saw 23 brown bear the second day. We only saw three fox total. The eagles were all eating the many salmon. Mike Carlson from Larsen Bay sure has a great setup.

Next is Turkey and Tajikistan and then we will be home for Christmas, Big Buck Night, and our own fundraiser advertised herein. Please plan to join us. We have a great show and are always trying to improve.

Come and see and keep writing,



Membership Trap Shoot at Camp Misery  
last September

## Mid - Michigan Chapter Safari Club International • [www.midmichigansci.org](http://www.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

\$300 Local Dues

= \$ 1,800

Over 60

\$1250 National Dues

\$300 Local Dues

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Check/Cash attached \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Mid-Michigan SCI

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# Book Review

by Josh Christensen

**Title:** STORIES GOGO TOLD ME

**Author:** Lisa Grainger

**Publisher:** Penguin Group Ltd.

**Copyright:** 2007

**List Price:** I purchased this book in South Africa for 145 rand (around \$20).

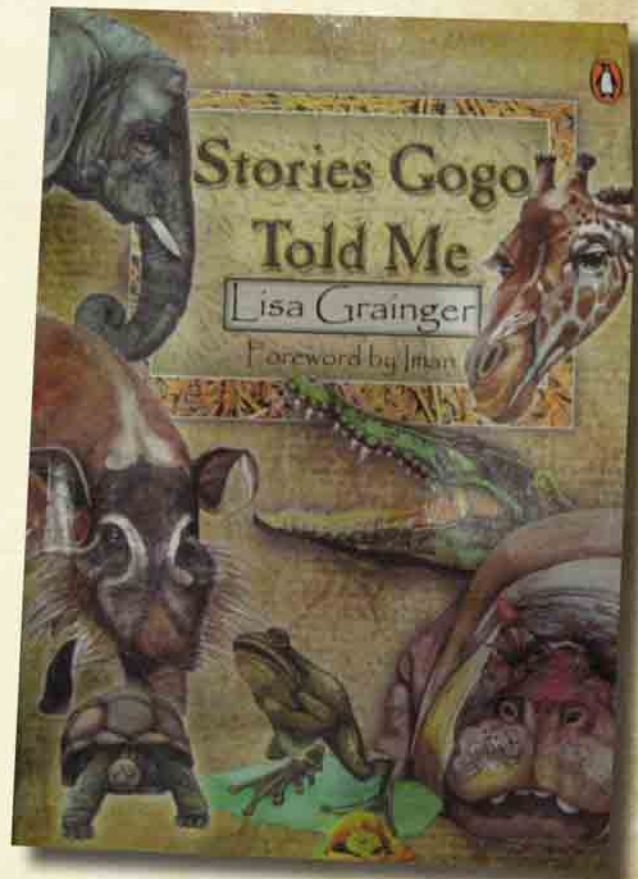


Throughout history indigenous people have passed on stories from one generation to another. No matter what culture these stories came from they all had the same underlying messages. They all explain why things are the way they are, why or how the universe came to be, what is right and what is wrong, and overall how one should act and treat others.

This book, *Stories Gogo Told Me*, the term "Gogo" means granny, is a compilation of these types of stories from different African cultures. The author scoured the African continent in search of such stories and compiled them into this book for our reading pleasure.

There are some stories that are similar to our cultural stories, such as a variation of the tortoise and the hare. Also, there is a story that explains why there is gold at the end of a rainbow, and more than one story about not talking to strangers.

All of these stories are meant to teach children lessons and some explain why certain animals appear and act the way they do. There are stories about why leopards are solitary, why monkeys have such long tails, why rabbits have long ears and many more.



These types of stories have always fascinated me and to find so many in a single publication is quite extraordinary. This is a great book to read on your own or with a youngster.

**This book gets 10 out of 10 bullseyes**



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**FRONT SIGHT**

**Mid Michigan Chapter of  
Safari Club International**

presents

# Big Buck Night

**Open to the Public**

*Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at the Comfort Inn*

*2424 S. Mission • Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858*

*Adults \$25 • Kids 12 and under \$20 • Under 5 yrs. FREE*

*The Comfort Inn has discounted their nightly rate to  
\$99 for us for this night. Call 989-772-2755 or  
989-772-4000 for a reservation.*

*Bring your rack that you shot in 2012 and get it professionally  
scored plus get in the FREE gun drawing with your scored rack.  
Other special events planned.*

**White tail and Mule deer**

*Trophy's for Non-Members • Prize Gun Raffle  
Youth Hunters Awards • Awards for Members &  
Non-Members • Special Guest Speakers •  
Reduced Rate on Rooms • Free Membership*

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

**Sign your  
kids up**

*(9-15 years old) for*

**FREE Hunter's  
Safety Classes**

**beginning  
June 1, 2013**

**RSVP by**

**Dec. 30th**

**Limited Seating**

**Call (989) 560-7288**

**For more information  
contact:**

**Kevin Unger**

**wk (989) 773-1711**

**cell (989) 560-7288**

**kevinunger1@frontier.com**

**REGISTRATION STARTS AT 5 PM DINNER AT 7 PM**

*Dinner includes two entree buffet, salad bar and dessert table*

*Cash Bar • Free soda for the kids*



**Don't Miss It!**

# **34th Annual Awards & Hunter's Convention**

**Our Biggest Ever!**

**Friday & Saturday, February 22 & 23, 2013**

**Soaring Eagle Casino • 6800 Soaring Eagle Blvd.  
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan**

*Outfitters from North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia,  
New Zealand and Australia*

*Trophy Animal Displays • Carvings • Artwork • Paintings  
Big Game Hunts • Fishing Trips • Guns • Auctions  
Games • Exhibitors*



Sponsored by:  
**Safari Club International**  
**Mid-Michigan Chapter**



**Friday, February 22, 2013****2:00 - 10:00 p.m. • \$5.00 Admission****Outfitters, Exhibitors, Awards and Auction****Saturday, February 23, 2013****Outfitters, Exhibitors, Banquet and Auction****10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration****5:00 - 6:00 p.m.****Dinner (reservations required)****6:00 - Close****Live Auction*****For more information, contact Tim Hauck: (989) 772-5494*****Partial list of live auction items:**

Wycon Safaris - Wynn Condict - Archery Elk in Colorado  
 Timber Creek Outfitters - Tim Hockhalter - Archery Elk in Wyoming  
 North Star Outfitting - Neil Johnson - Whitetail Deer in Saskatchewan  
 Argentina Expeditions - Rafael Tagliacozzo - Wild Boar  
 Argentina Expeditions - Rafael Tagliacozzo - Dove Hunt  
 Baguette and Round Diamond 14KY Earrings - 34 diamonds = .75ctw est. I/1 - SI/2  
 Windy Ridge Outfitting - Muzzleloader Whitetail Deer in Iowa  
 Windy Ridge Outfitting - Rifle Whitetail Deer in Iowa  
 50 Cal. Black Powder Ultimate Firearm - Ken Johnston  
 Wild Spirit Guide Service - Dan Kirschner - Bear or Bobcat in Michigan's UP  
 Hepburn Lake Lodges - Arlee Thideman - Black Bear in Saskatchewan  
 Hepburn Lake Lodges - Arlee Thideman - Black Bear and Fishing in Saskatchewan  
 Hell's Half Acre Outfitters - Ronnie Davis - Archery Elk in Oregon  
 Hell's Half Acre Outfitters - Ronnie Davis - Rifle Columbia Black tail Deer or Bear  
 Crosshairs Outfitters of Missouri - Mike Cowan - Whitetail deer  
 Crosshairs Outfitters of Alaska - Mike Cowan - Brown Bear and Black Bear  
 Hickory Creek Outfitters - Jeff Brondige - Whitetail Deer in Kansas  
 Hickory Creek Outfitters - Jeff Brondige - Predator Hunt in Kansas  
 Johan Pieterse Safaris - 10 Day Hunt in South Africa for Impala, Warthog, Kudu  
 Johan Pieterse Safaris - 7 Day Hunt in South Africa for Kudu, Blue Wildebeest, Waterbuck  
 Johan Pieterse Safaris - Hunt in South Africa for a Lioness  
 Campeau Guiding - Alvin Campeau - Whitetail Deer in Saskatchewan  
 Campeau Guiding - Mike Campeau - Whitetail Deer in Saskatchewan  
 Hunt Down Under - Glenn Martin and John Ham - Asiatic Water Buffalo in Australia  
 Roger Froling - Early Season Youth Deer Hunt - Ionia, Michigan  
 Roger Froling - Spring Turkey Hunt - Ionia, Michigan  
 Roger Froling - Buffalo Hunt - Ionia, Michigan  
 Jeff and Ken Harrison - 1/2 day Lake Michigan Fishing Trip  
 Cascade Fur Salon - Cascade, Michigan - Fur Coat  
 Whittrock Outfitters in Alaska - Brian Simpson - Moose or Grizzly  
 Fish Hunter Charters - David James - Salmon Fishing on Lake Michigan  
 Joe O'Bannon - Florida - Water Buffalo Hunt  
 Joe O'Bannon - Florida - Red Stag Hunt  
 Hidden Horns Game Ranch - Brent Fisk - Howard City, Michigan - Whitetail Deer  
 R C Outfitters - Brant Cunningham - Colorado Elk Hunt  
 Lost Creek - Greg Turner - Cody, Wyoming Mule Deer Hunt  
 Majestic Mountain Outfitters - Jeff Chadd - Forsyth, Montana  
 Havago Australia - Jim and Debbie Dieckmann



# My Hunting Story

By Savana Kirschner

My name is Savana Kirschner and I live in Upper Michigan in the town of Powers. I began hunting at a very young age. I had no choice because my dad owns Wild Spirit Guide Service and I am glad he does! We spend alot of time together as a family. My mom, sister and brother all hunt too.

Every year we take long trips to Florence, Wisconsin during the summer. It is the beginning of our hound training for the upcoming bear season. Our entire family participates. We have all had our own bear dogs. My first dog, Ruby, was an English Redtick. She died in January of 2009.

Although her loss was difficult, I will always remember the good times with her. I was able to fill my loss with Ruby's granddaughter, which I named Dixie. She has turned into one of our star bear dogs.

At the age of 12, I have harvested the following animals; black bear, Russian boar, one whitetail buck with my gun and two does with my crossbow. Although bear hunting with hounds sounds dangerous, the only injury I have gotten was from my scope while shooting my buck. In all of the excitement, I was holding my head too close to the gun and got a bruise between the eyes! Crossbow hunting is really exciting because the deer are really close. One night while hunting with my crossbow, I had a huge 8 point buck only 18 yards away! But, I had to let it go because of the shot angle. I got my Russian boar while hound hunting on our ranch with my dog, Dixie. My entire family was along with me for that hunt.



*Savana Kirschner with her buck*

All hunting is great, but bear hunting is my favorite! I drew a tag for the 2011 Michigan season. My birthday is September 27th, and I was hoping to get my bear on my birthday. On September 24th, my dad had an opening in his schedule. This opened the door for my chance to get a bear. We started checking for tracks long before day-light. I always have trouble getting up for school, but not for hunting! We located a track that dad thought was a good one for me and we released the dogs. Dixie and all of the other dogs raced off in a roar of barks. If you have never heard a bear race, it is hard to imagine the excitement. Once my dad's dogs are running, he's like an off-road racer! I'll bet he makes alot of his clients nervous with his driving, but I like it! As the bear race continued, my anticipation was growing. After all the years of watching others get their bear, this would be my day. I think my dad wanted this to work out even more than me. All at once, after miles of chasing, I got to hear my dad's favorite words. "They are treed!" My heart was pounding as we made the way to the tree. There was my bear, treed with my dog and my brothers' dog too. Dad set me up with the right angle and with one shot I had a dead bear on the ground. We were able to video tape it so I will always be able to watch it. I will never forget that day anyway!

Dad still has one more goal to help me fill. That is my bobcat. Each time I get to go bobcat hunting, the cat seems to win. I guess he has to try a little harder! (I think Mrs. Mary Harter knows what I am talking about!)



*12 year old Savana Kirschner  
with her black bear*



# Walleyes For Warriors

by Bill Shelt

In 2010 Nels Larson, A Vietnam Veteran, got a vision to hold a Fishing Day for Veterans to recognize their service to our country. On Saturday, June 16, 2012 some 90 fishing captains met the veterans that would be fishing with them on the next day. While the day progressed and boat crews were finalized, hot dogs were served and music was provided under the tent.

Sunday was the big fishing day with 200 veterans going fishing for walleye in the Saginaw Bay. There were professional fishermen, charter captains and fishermen that just wanted to help out. Crews were picked up starting at 5:30 a.m. At 7 a.m. the National Anthem was broadcast and the trip started from Vets Park in downtown Bay City to the Saginaw Bay. Ahead about five miles and fifty minutes leading the 90 boats was the United States Coast Guard and the Michigan DNR. Also Tow Boat US brought up the rear to help any boats with problems. I was lucky enough to be included in their crew.

The fishing day was a great success with nearly 400 walleye caught. Also, a very large sheep head won a trophy. There were more volunteers to clean and package fish fillets so that every Veteran could go home with fish. There was a dinner provided by Soaring Eagle and Saginaw Eagle Landing Casinos which included pulled pork, salads and yes! deserts to satisfy anyone's sweet tooth.

About 4 p.m. with the Veterans gathering under the tent the Ceremony of Recognition to honor our Veteran's began. There was a group of Chippewa Indians who were former Vets displayed their talents and past rituals honoring the service and bravery of those before us. Following them, Mike Avery, who also took part in the fishing event, took the microphone to pay his respects to the Veterans. Several other speakers and veterans took the stage with their stories that brought silence and wet eyes to those attending.

Since It's SCI's mission to help honor veterans through hunting, SCI Mid-Michigan set up a booth to help honor the Veterans and to receive applications for hunts that we will participate in this year and in the future. Kevin Unger, Randy Raymond, Mike Strobe and myself manned our booth for two days. We talked to many veterans of all ages and all walks of life. We were overwhelmed with the enthusiasm from Veterans to go hunting. Most of the Veterans were unaware of the services that SCI provides to our Veterans. It was an awareness for both Mid-Michigan SCI and the Veterans to experience hunting as a therapeutic service or tool to help vets cope with everyday life.

In closing, this was an honor and privilege for me to be involved with such a great event. I feel Nels Larson should be applauded many times over for his work and dedication in organizing Walleyes for Warriors. Our time and effort spent at this event was successful in getting in touch with more veterans and has added to our membership.





# Youth Hunters & MUCC Camp Participants

by Mary Harter

This past summer our chapter sent seven students to the MUCC Camp held in Chelsea, Michigan. Two of these students were our grandchildren, Jenna (11) and Kyler (9) Koch from Bath, Michigan. Kyler's friends, Nick Reed and Nicholas Stoskopf, also went to camp as did Jenna's friend, Riley Ingram. Here are several pictures and thank you notes.

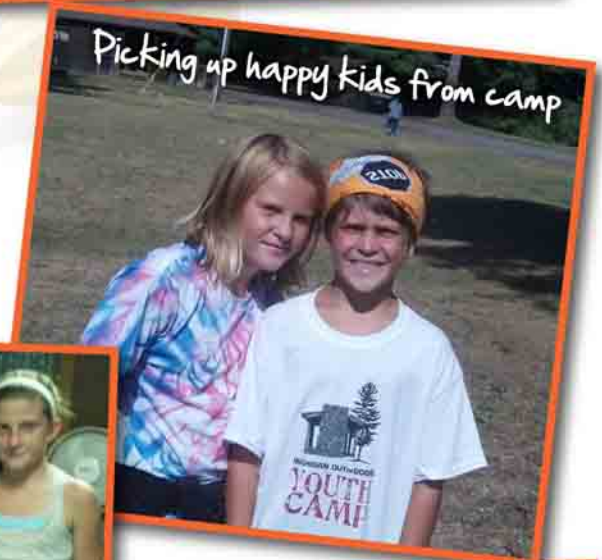
Jenna and I went out hunting during the Youth Hunt September 22 and 23, and on the first night about 5:00 p.m. Jenna shot a 9-point buck using a 270. Taking about a 100 yard shot, Jenna's buck went right down in his tracks. Kyler with Grandpa (Don Harter) on the second night shot a spike. Both children were using skills taught at camp as well as from parents and grandparents. They have been in hunting blinds with us since a very young age and have helped track often.

Two of our students from two summers ago sent pictures of their harvests. First is Emily Schroeder who was successful on the first day of the Youth Hunt on a local farm outside of Davison, Michigan. Emily, with a friend, spoke at Big Buck Night last year, telling of their camping experiences. This was Emily's first hunt. What a nice buck!!

Second is Christopher Mars who shot a 6-point at 7:20 a.m. opening morning of the Youth Hunt from a blind on the family farm. The buck was about 50 feet away from him. Chris attended the MUCC camp along with a friend from Durand.



MUCC Camp participants Nick Reed, Nicholas Stoskopf, and Kyler Koch



Picking up happy kids from camp



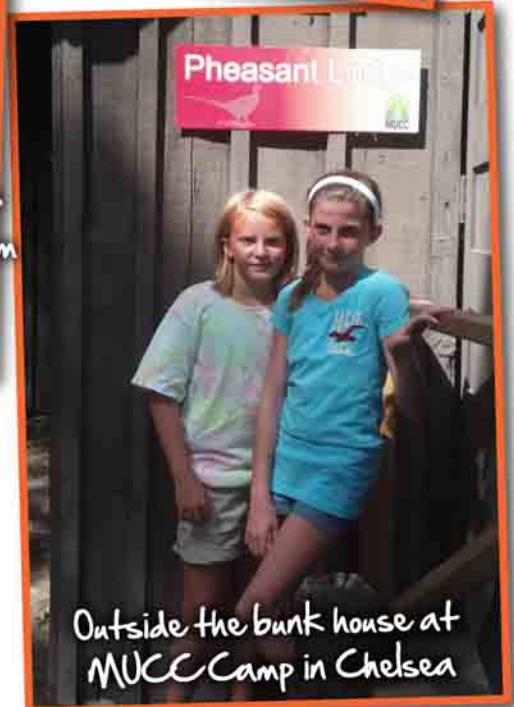
Emily Schroeder with her first buck



MUCC Camp participants Jenna Koch and Riley Ingram



Christopher Mars with his buck



Outside the bunk house at MUCC Camp in Chelsea



# My First Buck

by Jenna Koch

Grandma came and got me after school on Friday, September 21, so I could hunt with her on September 22 and 23, 2012, the Youth Hunt. We went to bed early so we could get up early the next morning. It was raining hard when we drove to the piece of property where we were going to hunt. Grandma drove in closer to the blind so we wouldn't have to walk far in the rain and we waited a few minutes in the truck until the rain let up. Then we hurried to a blind on the edge of a field. We saw several does and fawns and I practiced looking at them through the scope on the 270 I was using. My mother had shot many deer using this same gun. We had a 6 point and several 4 pointers pass us on our right side but they were down on the side of a swamp. I liked the 6 point and he polished his horns on a poplar tree. Grandma thought he might come out in front of us but he didn't.

When we left to go back to Grandmas for lunch I wanted to go over and see where the 6 point had rubbed his antlers. I walked right to the spot and Grandma said I was very good in the woods because I had marked the spot in my mind.

We had lunch, rested a little, played cards, and then it was time to go back out to the hunting blind. It was the perfect night for hunting. The wind was blowing right at us so the deer couldn't smell us. My Grandma was showing me right where to shoot a deer on her phone (I had showed her how to find images) and we looked up and there was a nine and a seven point standing right there. I got the gun ready to fire when all of a sudden the two bucks started fighting but then they walked apart. Finally the big buck was broadside and it



Dear SCI,

Thank you so much for paying so that I could go to a hunters safety camp. I learned about how to handle a gun and more. We also got our trappers ~~set~~ ed. Camp was so much fun. Once again thank you so so much.

Sincerely,

Jenna K.

was time for me to shoot. I got the cross hairs right behind the shoulder, took a deep breath in, let half out, and gently pulled the trigger. BOOM!! The deer dropped right in its tracks and didn't even move. I asked Grandma if I had hit it. She said she thought he was laying right there. It was a 100 yard shot. I couldn't believe I actually got a buck. My Grandma was so happy and proud of me. We waited a few minutes and went over to check out the deer and Grandma gutted it. I helped hold the legs. Then we waited for my brother and mom to get finished hunting so they could help load the buck in the back of the pickup. That was the best weekend ever!!



Dear SCI,

Thank you so much for paying for my hunters safety camp. Now I can trap beavers I got my trappers ed. I can also hunt deer and stuff like that because I got my hunters safety. I learned all the different types and what they can catch. I also learned all the five techniques they are: hold, break, semi automatic, lever, and pump are the techniques. I learned so much I can't explain it all. Once again thank you so so so much for paying for the camp.

From

Myler G. Koch



# Down Under Dugga Boys

by Mike "Mac" MacEachron

While hunting with Glenn Martin of Aotearoa Safaris last spring, Glenn brought up that he and his son, Ben, would be opening a new hunting company in Australia for water buffalo called Hunt Down Under. It didn't take much of a sales pitch on Glenn's behalf for my wife, Sheila, and I to say "count us in next August" for an Aussieland water buffalo hunt and whatever else could be conjured up, especially after the highly successful hunt we had last year with Glenn and John Hamm in New Zealand.

We would be hunting during the dry season on the concession Hunt Down Under leases from the aboriginal natives in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territories.

Interestingly enough the dry season is their winter with temperatures averaging in the 50s at night and 80s during the day. Rough winters!

Darwin was the starting point for this hunt. Whether you overnight in Darwin or not depends upon what flight you arrive on.

From Darwin it is a half day ride to camp. I would suggest driving in. It is an interesting ride on some very scenic roads plus you will see some of the wildlife driving into camp. This includes water buffalo, scrub bull, donkey, kangaroo, dingo, wild pigs and various bird species. If you prefer Hunt Down Under can arrange a helicopter to bring you to camp from Katherine for an additional charge.

Camp is a tented camp site complete with a shower, flush toilet facilities and a satellite phone as well as a generator for power. You are truly in the "outback of Australia". I would compare this to an African experience.

The first night in camp we had time to check the zero of the rifle. We then headed out "to get after some buffs" as Ben suggested. We saw at least a hundred buffalo coming into camp. Our first stop was an old burn where the area had some "greens" as Ben put it. As we snuck in, we spotted some cows and calves in the "greens" and a rare white colored water buffalo. No Dugga Boys!

I should explain "greens". The aboriginal people have always started fires to burn the high spear grass so they could spot and hunt game easier. The Australian government has continued the practice. We met the ranger, Ian McConnell,



Mike MacEachron with his water buffalo

of the area we were hunting who was a very interesting fellow. His job is to manage the lands. Setting fires is one of his jobs. The fires burn until they burn themselves out. With time green grass and plants grow for the wildlife in the area.

Well, darkness was upon us so we headed back to camp where a wonderful dinner and campfire next to the river awaited us.

The sounds of the outback were very relaxing and it didn't take much for Sheila and me to fall asleep.

The first full day of the hunt came early and we weren't out of camp 10 minutes when I noticed black objects in the distance. Ben said they were wild pigs. He continued to say "we don't see many in these parts" and "we should get on em quickly". I grabbed the rifle and Ben, Sheila and I started the stalk. The two boars were making their way through the burnt scrub. At 75 yards Ben and Sheila stayed back to video while I continued on to try and gain on the two. Suddenly they turned on each other which gave me the chance I needed. I had a tree in front of me which served as a solid rest for the 40 yard shot. I placed the cross hairs on the front shoulder of the largest boar and squeezed. The 300 pound boar ran twenty





Mike with his boar

yards to my left and dropped. He had great tusks, a true South Pacific trophy. Not a bad start to the day!

So after some picture taking and care of the animal we were off again. The next 3 hours were very exciting. We saw at least 75 buffalo and a couple of scrub bulls. A couple of the buffalo showed some promise. I had set a 90 inch minimum for the water buffalo so we passed. It was close to noon so back to camp for lunch and to finish care of the boar.

After lunch Glenn, Sheila and I headed back into the bush. As we approached the area I shot my boar in the morning, Glenn hit the brakes and said "scrub bull". A large scrub bull was standing 200 yards away in the shade to get out of the sun. Scrub bulls are cattle gone wild. They have adapted well in the bush and are very dangerous. Ranger McConnell had told Glenn a local man had been charged and gored by a scrub bull the week before our hunt.

Glenn asked Sheila if she would like to "give it a go". Don't have to ask her twice! She grabbed the rifle and followed Glenn. I stayed back a ways to video. The scrub bull was a beautiful reddish color with thick horns and as big as a tank.

Glenn and Sheila stalked the bull using whatever cover was available to conceal them. Closing the distance to 50 yards, Sheila raised the rifle and used a tree for support. Her first shot hit him in the boiler room. The bull never flinched. "Did I miss?!" Sheila asked. "No", Glenn replied, "Hit him again." The bull was just walking away then stopped 65 yards away broadside. Shot number 2 buckled him but still he walked away. Glenn said "Hit him again". This time she hit the shoulder and trophy number 2 was down.

I was very proud of my wife. She never lost her composure when the bull didn't go down and on a very dangerous animal. She was all smiles for the camera. All her shots, by the way, were within 4 inches of one another in the lungs.

Glenn said "Well, we have a couple hours left, let's go find a big buff for Mac". Well, OK! We snuck into a couple "greens". We saw some decent bulls but they didn't meet my requirements or Glenn's, for that matter. A couple were close. In particular an old chocolate colored bull with really thick bases but no length.

So the hunt continued. "There's a couple of bulls off the right" Sheila said. One was young; the other had his head down so I grabbed the rifle just in case. When the bull raised his head, Glenn yelled "Mac, that's a shooter". But the big bull had other ideas and ran off into a thick covered swamp. He didn't give me an acceptable shot and I didn't want to take an errant shot and possibly wound a dangerous game animal. Oh, well, that's hunting. Plus we had a couple days left.

We grabbed Sheila's scrub bull and headed back to camp. We were all excited about today's success. To top it off, T-bone steaks, corn on the cob and redskin potatoes cooked on an open fire Michigan style.

For day two Ben wanted to get an early start and go further east on the concession. We were also hoping to run into the big Dugga boy we saw yesterday afternoon.

Ben knew of some waterholes he wanted to check out. The terrain was a little different from the areas we had been hunting. It was freshly burnt making it very open except for the burnt trees. You could see a long ways.

I was a little skeptical but I trusted Ben. Heck, we had seen over 200 buffalo so far. We had only gone a quarter mile when we spotted the first herd. We gathered our binoculars and began glassing the group hoping to find a big herd bull.

I happened to glass to my right and spotted a large bodied animal a couple of hundred yards out. Ben mentioned earlier in the trip that large older bulls can be solitary animals and usually get run out of the herd by a group of young bulls. So we turned our attention to the lone animal. Ben and Glenn said "We should get a closer look." I grabbed the rifle just in case.

We closed the distance to a hundred yards. Ben said "Mac, this is really good bull. It has mass, length and would meet the requirement you had requested."

I thought about it. We still had a day to hunt. We had seen a lot of buffalo and there was still the matter of the large bull from the night before. I decided to take him. I told Ben I wanted to get closer. So Ben, Sheila and I inched closer.

Continued on next page





At 75 yards I proceeded alone. The bull was truly an old monarch. At 40 yards the feeding bull raised his head and spotted me. The bull needed to turn just a little. When he did the first shot hit him in the shoulder but he didn't go down. I was stunned! He was now trying to run straight away. The next shot dropped him. Wow!! What a hunt! What a bull! Ecstatic couldn't express how I felt at that moment.

Ben figured the Dugga boy weighed over 1800 pounds and would score 93 SCI points.

Ben and Glenn from Hunt Down Under worked their tails off. I would highly recommend this hunt. So for a true Outback Experience in Australia give em a yell, Mate. It's all good!

## A Turkey with Grandpa

by Dylan Harter

It was the spring turkey hunt of 2012 when I shot my first turkey. It was a beautiful spring morning and the second day of the hunt when we went out to the blind. The blind overlooked a field with pine trees lined on the right where we thought the turkeys were roosting. My Grandpa, Don Harter, and I were sitting in the blind that he refers to as "the hilly field" and overlooking that field for turkeys. After a couple of calls we heard a nice sounding Tom in the swamp area, but he never came out. A little bit later two hens came out but still no Tom! I started to become impatient but felt that something would have to come soon.

My Dad and brother, Cole, who were also hunting were sitting behind us in a blind overlooking the front field. After the turkeys were done eating in their field, they should come over to our smaller field.

Some time later my Dad and Brother texted us saying that a hen was headed our way and we should keep a look out for her. At this point I was wishing that he would have said that it was a big Tom, but just seeing a turkey is exciting.

When the so-called "hen" came into the field, my Grandpa took a look at it with his binoculars and said that it was a Jake! I asked, "Can I shoot it?" and he said, "Yes!" I was so excited that this would be my first turkey! The Jake was moving but not towards us. Grandpa kept calling and calling. He used three different calls. Finally the Jake turned and started walking towards us. We waited until it got close enough to take a shot. I got my shotgun aimed at the turkey and just as I got the right aim, I pulled the trigger! The turkey flopped and flopped and we quickly got out of the blind with the



*Dylan Harter with his spring turkey*

shotgun and walked down to where the turkey laid. It was still flopping around but finally stopped and I realized that it had two beards!

At that point my Dad and Brother showed up to see my turkey. My Brother was a little mad because he thought he saw a beard on it but my Dad didn't. Overall the hunt was very fun and I was very happy with my turkey.



# CONSERVATION AFFAIRS

By Larry Witte

## CONTINUING DNR-SCI WILDLIFE PROJECTS

### Predator-Prey Project

Eighteen black bears and three wolves now wear VHF radio collars in preparation for the 2013 start of the project's second phase in the medium snowfall area that includes portions of Iron, Dickinson and Marquette counties. The VHF collars will be switched out with sophisticated GPS collars when bear are in their dens this winter. Wolves, bobcat and coyotes will also be fitted with GPS collars which will pinpoint a predator's location every 15 minutes. Visits will be made to sites where predators spend an hour or more to look for kills.

Preliminary results of the first 3 years of study in Menominee County indicate that bobcat and coyotes are responsible for most deer predation. For at least one year a significantly smaller number of collared bobcats killed more deer than collared coyotes. If the same number of bobcats had been collared as coyotes they would have accounted for significantly more deer.

The Michigan Involvement Committee (MIC) of Safari Club International donated funds to make this research possible.

## OTHER CONSERVATION ISSUES

### Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD)

Michigan deer hunters were concerned as they looked forward to the 2012 deer seasons about the impact EHD would have on their traditional hunting areas. DNR announced in September 2012 that EHD had been found in 24 counties with over 4200 dead deer reported. As we looked forward to the first hard frost which would kill the biting midges (no-see-ums) that transmit the viral disease reports of friends and neighbors finding dead deer increased the estimates of deer lost. Fall of 2012 has been billed as the worst outbreak of EHD experienced in Michigan.

While many of us may not have been aware Michigan experienced EHD outbreaks in 1955, 1974, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 that affected 14 lower peninsula counties. The 2012 outbreak which stretched from Washtenaw to Mecosta counties killed more deer than all the other years combined. Although humans are not at risk of contracting EHD by eating venison we are warned not to eat deer suspected of being ill due to various bacterial infections which may be secondary to EHD.

We are more likely to experience EHD in those years where we have high deer densities and hot, dry weather in late summer and early fall. Presently there appears that little can be done to curtail the impact of EHD other than let nature take its course.

Deer herds do rebound over time through fawn recruitment which is dependent on the severity of winters and predation populations.

### Wolves

House Bill 5834, introduced by a Western U.P. Representative would add the gray wolf to Michigan's list of game animals. This would prepare the way for a wolf hunting season. The bill would establish the following license fees:

Resident license \$100.00

Nonresident license \$500.00

Application fee for a lottery drawing \$4.00

If the bill passes and becomes law the Natural Resources commission would be responsible for setting seasons and methods for taking wolves. DNR has expressed support for the use of hunting as a tool to manage Michigan's wolf population.

### Wolf and Dog Incidents

New for 2012, the Bear Hunter digest allows a hunter or his agent to use lethal means to kill a wolf in the act of killing or injuring the owner's dog. A hunter can not kill a wolf that is merely present near the dog. Killing a wolf preying on a dog must be reported within 12 hours.

The carcass must not be disturbed until a DNR official is present and the dog must be produced for inspection. Most dogs killed by wolves are bear or rabbit hounds. Seventeen hunting dogs were killed by wolves in the U.P. in 2011.

### Wisconsin Wolf Hunt Challenged

As reported in the SCI "In the Crosshairs" e-Newsletter October 6, 2012

SCI filed a motion to intervene in a case in Wisconsin in order to help the State DNR to defend against a challenge to the state's wolf hunting regulations. The case, filed by a federation of Wisconsin Humane Societies, is designed to prevent wolf hunting with dogs in Wisconsin. A Wisconsin state court has already issued a temporary stay against the dog hunting provision. SCI has joined with the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, the United Sportsmen of Wisconsin and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation to intervene to defend a hunting opportunity mandated by state statute.

### Court Ruling Allows Minnesota's First Managed Wolf Hunt to Be Held

As reported in the SCI "In The Crosshairs" e-Newsletter October 12, 2012

On Wednesday, October 10, 2012, the Minnesota Court of Appeals cleared the way for the state's wolf hunt to proceed as planned. The Court denied a preliminary injunction to stop the hunt that had been requested by animal rights groups. The court ruled that the groups failed to demonstrate that the harvest would cause their members irreparable harm. Although an emergency stay of the hunt was averted, the underlying case to challenge the legality of the hunt will continue.

### U.P. Moose

DNR Has announced that the population of U.P. Moose is steadily increasing about 4 Percent per year and Moose numbers are not greatly impacted by wolves. Progress toward a U.P. hunt is slow as issues of seasons and number of permits are considered.

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

"We cannot but pity the boy who has never fired a gun; he is no more humane, while his education has been sadly neglected." Quote from Henry David Thoreau, American author, naturalist, (1817-1862)

Consider taking a youngster hunting with you!



Larry Witte with his Michigan turkey 10" beard and 1 1/2" spurs



# A Victim of My Environment

by Dr. Peter Bucklin

My dad and I were pretty close, probably more than the average because he was a traveling salesman and spent so much of his life on the road. Time spent with him was more valued because he was gone so much.

He was born and raised in Vermont. His dad owned the only sporting goods store in Rutland. (In those days, sporting goods stores didn't sell tennis rackets or golf clubs. They were strictly hunting, fishing, and camping.) I was told grandpa was the State of Vermont fly-casting champion five years running. It was no wonder dad grew up in the outdoors.

When he returned home from the opening two or three days of the Ohio pheasant season (we had moved to Cleveland by that time), he always brought home two or three big rooster pheasants which hung in the garage for a few days until he got around to cleaning them. I was taken by those birds - they were a far cry from the city pigeons that infested our neighborhood. To me, they were a beautiful, gaudy representation of what just had to be adventure.

When I reached age eleven, I guess he thought I was old enough to tag along with him pheasant hunting. In those days, Ohio law prohibited hunting with a gun before age sixteen. When he asked if I would like to go along with him come opening day, I thought - WOULD I!!!!

The big day finally came and he awakened me at "zero dark thirty". I crawled onto the back seat of the old Desoto and went back to sleep for the drive to Grand Rapids, a little farming town in northwestern Ohio.



Peter Bucklin

pointer, piled into the car and headed to the farm where we had permission to hunt. We pulled off a gravel road and into a woodlot.

After we got out and the men loaded their guns, they let the dog out and directed him toward a stand of thick brush about the size of a two car garage. Before the dog even reached it, pheasants started boiling out like bees from a hive.

Guns went bang, roosters thumped to the ground, the dog (and dad) took off after a cripple (I don't think I ever saw dad run before), and for the first time in my life, my nostrils filled with the cold, crisp November fresh air laced with the smell of freshly burnt gun powder.

I could never have even imagined anything like it. My eyeballs must have looked like two hard boiled eggs. That was it. I was hooked right then and there. I don't think dad and I ever missed a pheasant opener after that.

Before we left for home tired, stiff, and full of the day's excitement, Mr. Kisiberth firmly warned dad that he was not to come back next year without me.

That was probably the first time in my life I experienced a feeling of self-importance in the company of grownups.

Going to the movies consisted of watching a "feature film", a cartoon, RKO Pathe News and a short subject. The latter three were all on twelve minute reels. RKO Pathe News was a big deal because it was the only way we could see the likes of Eisenhower, MacArthur, and FDR in "real life". They could be heard of radio, and their pictures (in black and white, of course) could be seen in newspapers and magazines. Television was yet to come. Seeing and hearing them animated on those news clips made them more "real".



Peter Bucklin's recurve and Osage orange long bow

On the way we stopped at a cafe for breakfast. The place was jammed with men in heavy canvas hunting garb and wearing red caps. Pretty heady stuff for a non-worldly, naive eleven-year-old.

When we reached Mr. Kisiberth's house (he was a business associate of my dad's), the two men sat down at the kitchen table and discussed the day's plan.

The four of us, including Mr. Kisiberth's English



On the "shorts", my favorites were those featuring the archer, Howard Hill. They were formatted very similarly to today's outdoors programs on TV without the crushing weight of almost continuous commercials. Howard would do some trick shooting followed by a travel log type tour of the area and its culture, then the hunt.

One episode closed with him being charged by a pig. The pig wasn't just running in Howard's direction - it was definitely a charge. It was small but was hell-bent on "getting" Howard. At the last second, Howard seamlessly lifted his bow, drew, and released the arrow. The pig cart wheeled to Howard's feet - dead on arrival. And it wasn't "Hollywood" - it was real! You could do that with a bow and arrow?!!! That did it - I was hooked.

Another episode ended with a nighttime bobcat hunt. The dogs had treed the cat near the very top of a 70 to 80 footer and the camera angle was over Howard's shoulder. He raised his bow, pulled back, and released, all in one motion. I'll never forget seeing that moonlit arrow carving a graceful

arc into the darkness of the tree branches. The black form jumped straight up, then pinballed down through the branches, dead before it hit the ground.

Dad bought me a bow, a six foot long "long bow" - one piece Osage orange, six arrows and a target butt. I spent hours shooting that bow in the backyard, pretending all the while I was Howard Hill. I still have that bow and it still shoots.

Over a hundred years ago, a man by the name of Will Compton wrote a book entitled "The Witchery of Archery". I never read it because I always thought witches were not such a good thing.

I looked it up and found that Mr. Webster defines "witchery" as "an irresistible fascination". Bingo! I had been "witch-eried" all along.

After growing up, I experienced the witchery of the fly rod on an Alaskan salmon river. "Hooked" again!

None of this was my fault. I was, as they like to say nowadays, simply a victim of my environment.

Just "got hooked". And still am - at the ripe old age of 77.

## Dr. Dave Petrella's Deer Ranch, Lewiston, Michigan

by Roger Froling

Several SCI members decided to head north of Mt. Pleasant and go to Lewiston, Michigan for a very fun and exciting Whitetail Deer hunt. Dave is one of the past Presidents of our Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter and has always supported our chapter and our chapter members including donating a hunt for our Veterans. The Lodge has a very nice location right in the hardwoods of Northern Michigan. The rolling hills and the beautiful lakes are a great place to watch the wildlife and just enjoy the wonders of Mother Nature while hunting.

There are a lot of whitetail deer, turkey, partridge and a very nice herd of elk. Dave offers some great hunting opportunities on this pristine piece of property right here in Northern Michigan. Everyone that wanted a nice buck



Roger Froling



Joanne Witte

had the opportunity. Everyone enjoyed the great food and the lodging was very nice. Nice blinds with good views that keep you out of the weather and warm with nice chairs. What more comfort could you want. Everyone had a swell time at the Ranch.

Dave's wife Danae is one fine chef. Danae prepared excellent meals for the hunters. It's not far from anywhere and a great place to hunt. There are lots of whitetail deer and you can even get an elk. This was a hunt that was enjoyed by all.



# Hooray For Hunter's Safety Training

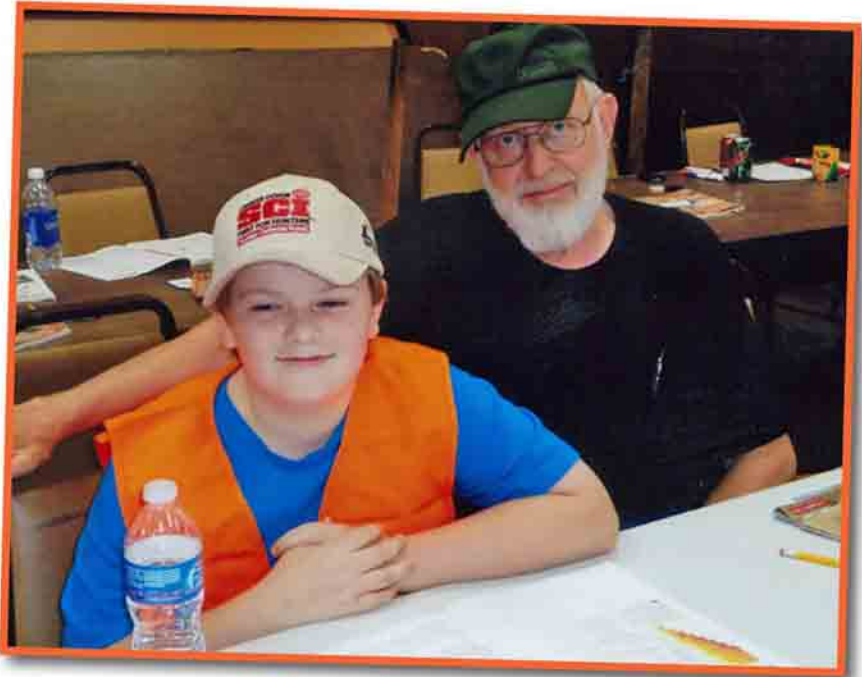
By Joanne Witte

Larry and I had a great experience from August 7 to 10, 2012! We took our 10 year old grandson, J.R. Clock, to Hunter's Safety Training at Jay's in Clare where our good friend and SCI Mid-Michigan Board Member, Randy Raymond, was the Lead Instructor.

J.R. wants to hunt but he lives in a highly urbanized suburb of Ann Arbor where his Dad, Bill Clock, is a Sargent in the Ann Arbor Police Department. J.R. has sisters age 16 and 18 and his mother is a Speech Pathologist for their local school district. The family is heavily involved in soccer, very busy, and there is no place to hunt nearby. We invited J.R. to stay with us so we could take him to Hunter's Safety Training. His Mom said he was so excited he could hardly stand it.

The class at Jay's was from 5:00PM to 8:00PM Tues. through Fri. That meant we had to leave our house about 2:45, and take sandwiches to eat in the car about 4:00 so we could be ready for class on time. I had let J.R. pick out what he wanted for meals. Of course it was very simple stuff like cheese, chips, deli turkey, lots of string cheese, hot dogs, and Kraft macaroni and cheese. We didn't get home till about 9:30 after which we had to have a snack. Larry figures he drove about 640 miles to and from Clare.

I went to class the first night with Larry and J.R. There were lots of people there! 97 students of all ages, about half of whom were girls, were taking the class and the kids had assorted parents with them so the conference room at Jay's was full. There were posters and displays up along the walls. A book was given to each student and the idea was to study the



J. R. and Grandpa Larry

book at home and fill in the practice test that was four pages long and covered all 8 chapters of the book. The reading level was adult and I was not sure how good a reader J.R. was. We soon found out he is a great reader. He had no trouble at all.

His only trouble seemed to be keeping attentive to what was going on. He drew pictures in his notebook, put his head down on the table, squirmed in his chair, had to go to the bathroom etc. Larry and I made him study the book each morning after breakfast before doing something "fun".

The second morning Larry and J.R. did something really fun. They went over to our hunting property and shot rifles. This was a first for J.R. Larry set up a bench and J.R. shot a semi-automatic .22 at 25 yards and a single shot .223 at about 50 yards. He did very well. Unfortunately the third and fourth days it rained too hard to go shooting.

I went to class with Larry and J.R. the third and fourth nights. We were told to get there early and be ready to go at 5:00PM sharp. You could tell the instructors have been at this a long time. The instructors had the kids very much engaged. Occasionally it got too noisy and a voice would boom, "Listen up!" and all talk ceased. There were several videos and some were very graphic. After the video the instructor would ask what the hunter had done wrong and the kids would raise their hands and answer. One video was called "Shoot or Don't Shoot". A situation would be acted out after which the kids would be asked if the hunter should shoot or not. That was fun.

On day 3, Jay's gave each student a blaze orange hat and vest. The room was a sea of orange.

Now for a little bit about the Instructors:

Marcia Mc Cown sat at a desk in the back of the room



Marcia registering kids







## Jay's stage

and took attendance. She has worked for Jay's for 12 years in the clothing department. She is married and had 2 sons and 6 grandchildren.

Randy Raymond is one of our Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter Board Members, is a certified Lead Instructor and has been teaching the class for years. He is also involved in Quality Deer Management, and is President of Midland County Whitetails Unlimited. He holds seminars on Black Bear Hunting, is a Black Bear Guide in Canada and has guided Elk Hunts in the West since 1976. He is currently writing a book about the lives and habits of Black Bear and how to hunt them. He and his wife Janet have been married for 40 years and have one son, Ryan. Randy shared lecture duties with Dave Randall—another instructor.

Dave Randall, who is also a certified Instructor, shared lecture duties with Randy. He has taught Hunter's Safety since 1991. In addition to the sessions at Jay's he also teaches at the Isabella Sportsman's Club. At their last session they had 130 students and 18 Instructors. Their classes run over a weekend and include shooting activities. Dave is disabled with both diabetes and epilepsy. He formerly worked for the US Forest Service where he was responsible for patrolling 21 miles of the Au Sable River. One of his favorite duties was canoeing the river for one week in the summer. After that he worked for Isabella County Parks and Recreation. He is a member of many wildlife organizations including the National Wild Turkey Federation, Michigan Bear Hunters, Isabella County Sportsman's club, NRA, and Whitetails Unlimited.

Martin Bergey grew up in Coleman and was in the Army for 14 years where he taught special tactics in electronic warfare at the National Training Center. He was disabled while in the service. He is a current Board Member of Whitetails Unlimited and a member of Mid-Michigan Chapter of SCI.

Gary Brandon has been married for 40 years and is the father of 5 children. He grew up in Clare and attended Mid-Michigan Community College. For 5 years he was a Steam-fitter apprentice after which he traveled all over on different construction jobs, mostly as a heli-arc welder. After 33 years he retired and now enjoys hunting and fishing. The last 7

years he has been a volunteer driver of EIF Kharafeh Shriners, driving crippled children from Bay City to Lansing to Chicago to Cincinnati or Erie PA. He has made 46 trips from Bay City to Chicago. He is Treasurer of Whitetails Unlimited.

Ron Larrance is the Store Manager at Jay's. He has been there over 17 years and loves it. He started in the Gun Department and in 2006 became the Store Manager where he is involved in everything that happens with the Building, Grounds, Customer Service and most all the major decisions. He has been happily married to his wife Carol for 42 years. They have two children—a son who is married with two children and lives in Knoxville, TN. Their daughter is married with three children and lives in Midland. He has 5 grandchildren who he loves spending time with.

Jeff Poet is one of the owners at Jay's and was introduced to the students. He is also a member of our Mid-Michigan Chapter of SCI.

R.J. Myers operates the Trophy Room Taxidermy business in Jay's and is a Mid-Michigan Chapter SCI member and an Official Measurer. He signs up students and helps with students on Test Day.

That brings us to Test Day! There were 50 multiple choice questions on the test. The Instructors read the test to the students on Thursday evening and made sure they knew the correct answers. Several of the students took notes and wrote down the right answer. Again on Friday early in the class they read the test and made sure everyone knew the correct answer. For the actual test, the kids could not have any notes or books or help. Oh oh! Would J.R. be able to do it? We had watched him squirm and fidget and wondered how much he had absorbed.

The Instructor told the students he would read the test and wait for them to write their answer on the form. However if anyone wanted to go ahead on their own that was OK. If anyone needed the test read individually the student should



Dave Randall instructing





Jeff Poet and Randy Raymond



J. R. shooting the .410



A sea of orange



The instructors with J. R

utes and I could tell he got all the answers correct. Wow! We were impressed. After everyone was finished, the students exchanged papers and corrected each other's tests. 97 students in the class took the test and 5 who had taken the class on line were there for the test. Of the 102 students, 40 got 100%. One of the 40 was J.R. Good for J.R.!

There was a rather formal ceremony to award the Hunter's Safety Certificates to the class members. The staff lined up in the front of the room. Each student's name was read and the student went to the front to receive his or her certificate. Then the students walked down the line and shook each Instructor's hand.

J.R. called his parents on the way home to tell them he passed with 100%. We all cheered.

On Sat. before I took J.R. to Ionia to meet his mother and go home, he shot a .410 shotgun and again did very well. He shot bottles full of water, and empty pop cans. In fact he did so well that Larry gave him the .410 to take home and put in his father's gun safe. When he called to ask his parents if he could bring the gun home, he said it was one of "Grandpa's old guns". We had to explain to him that it was not an "old" gun; it was a very nice gun that had been purchased several years ago.

Now the plan is to take him hunting over Thanksgiving when his family comes to visit us. Larry plans to have him use the .223 with 60 grain Nosler Partition bullets. We hope he sees something.

We highly recommend taking a grandchild to Jay's for Hunter's Safety. We had a great time and it was a good review for us. Jay's provides the room and the Instructors volunteer their time. We appreciate their efforts very much. Randy made a point of telling the students they need to get involved in hunting organizations and do what they can to foster safe hunting practices.

If anyone is interested in becoming an Instructor, volunteers are always needed. Contact Randy Raymond at 989-465-1648 to find out how to sign up. Classes are held periodically to train Instructors and to provide refresher courses for Instructors.

go to the back of the room and someone would take them to another area for an individual test. We were very impressed with that. Five people wanted an individual test. I asked J.R. if he knew what to do if he could not answer a question. He said, "Yes, skip it. I learned that on the MEAP."

We had J.R. sitting between us and we watched him take the test. He breezed through it! He was finished in 20 min-



# A Ram of a Lifetime

By: Kasey Hixson

Rocks were falling towards my face, my heart was racing, and I had already been climbing on rocky, mountainous terrain for thirteen hours. At this point, I wasn't thinking about the ram, wasn't thinking about the rush of pulling the trigger; I only cared that I somehow made it to the peak of this mountain alive. My grandfather had always told me that a sheep hunt was the epitome of toughness, but I didn't truly understand until now.

I owe it all to my grandfather, Gale Hixson. He had planned what was to be my first trip to Alaska to hunt Dall sheep. My grandfather was to join me on the ten day hunt within the Alaska Range outfitted by Mike Cowan, owner of Cross-hairs Outfitters of Alaska. Leading up to the trip, I was excited for the hunt, the rush, and the ram that I hoped to bag. However, as I flew into our campsite with my grandpa and our guide, John Gray, the only things I could focus on were the steep mountains, the beautiful terrain, and the glassy lake on which our Otter plane landed.

The following morning we decided to go down the valley and around the mountainside, hoping to see sheep. Although it was the day before "opening day," we wanted to get a head start, hopefully observing sheep before beginning the hunt. After a long hike we began glassing the far mountains for rams. I suddenly saw what I thought were sheep on the far mountains, and I excitedly pointed them out to John. After John took out the spotting scope to get a closer look, he turned wide-eyed to me and said, "Kasey, there are eleven rams up there and definitely two shooters. Definitely." He passed me the spotting scope, and I got my first close-up view of a mature Dall Ram. Wow! We decided to watch them for the rest of the day, using that time to plan a stalk for the next day – "opening day."

Opening day came and went without ever seeing the rams, and the next two days followed suit. Throughout this time, we only saw four sheep total, none of which were shooters. On the third day, our plan was to press further into the saddle, the space between our mountain face and another where we had observed the rams before opening day. We got to the top of the snow covered saddle and saw, down the skyline of the far mountain, a lone ram. We figured this was the "sentinel ram" that we had seen four days earlier with the other rams. We waited and glassed in hopes of seeing the rest of the sheep.



Kasey Hixson with his "Ram of a Lifetime"

With little luck, we finally had to return to basecamp, a five hour hike. On the way back, we decided that we were going to press ahead past the saddle the next day to look for that same group of rams, knowing full well this would mean a long, hard day on the far mountain.

We went to sleep that night hopeful of what the next day would bring. We woke up at 5:00am the next morning, packed extra food, ate breakfast, and set off for the snowy saddle. We pushed through the valley faster than we ever had before, coming within view of the mountain face in under two hours. With no sheep in sight, we crossed a river run-off beneath the saddle and started to climb. Suddenly, we saw a grizzly sow and newborn cub maybe 500 yards in front of us, both blonde to the point of looking more like polar bears than grizzlies. They continued above us over the snow and out of sight. As we entered the saddle around noon, we prayed that the same sentinel ram we saw the previous day would be there, and, as we glassed the mountainside, we saw the sentinel ram. This time, the two shooters were with him.

We waited. We knew that they had to go to the other side of the mountain in order for us to start our stalk without being in their line of sight. Around 3:00pm, we saw the two shooters cross over and out of sight, quickly followed by the sentinel. John looked at me and said, "Are you ready to do this?" My heart beating faster by the second, I looked back and said, "Let's do this."

Moving as quickly as we could over huge boulders with water rushing underneath, we headed for the rams. However, we were quickly turned aside by a snow bank that came up to our knees, and we were forced to go down in elevation,





*Smiling Kasey and Grandpa Gale Hixson*

something neither of us wanted to do. We knew that the first part of this stalk was steep, dangerous, and rocky. As we came down to avoid the snow, we started side hilling, looking for a place to climb, but the sheer cliffs made it impossible to go up. Finally, we reached a point where John, without a word, started climbing. I looked up at the loose rock sliding down an almost vertical cliff, swallowed hard, and took my first step. Soon fatigue started to set in, the sun beat down until my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth, and sweat poured over my brow. My hiking stick hung loosely around my wrist, useless in the face of a cliff so steep that I was clinging to it with bloody knuckles and tired feet. We took frequent breaks, leaning our shoulders into the mountain and whispering hushed encouragement to each other, and I started praying that we would make it to the summit safely. In the middle of that prayer, John looked at me and uttered these words: "And we have to come down this thing too."

We pressed further until we were within a few hundred yards of the top. At this point, my mentality changed, and, instead of merely hoping to survive, I thought to myself, "This ram better be up here, and I better get a shot." We got to the top and collapsed, clinging to the top of a cliff no more than five yards across. To our dismay, the other side of the mountain was somehow even steeper than the rock face we just summited. After a few moments, John urgently whispered, "Ram! Ram!" and pulled me down off the skyline. We sat unmoving and saw the sentinel ram and the two shooters 600 yards away. As the shooters drifted off over a ridgeline and out of sight, the sentinel ram continued to stare, pinning us in place. After what seemed like an eternity, the sentinel ram followed the others, and we quickly side-hilled 300 yards over boulders. John crept around a boulder and saw the rams. Keeping low, he whispered to me to follow him over the skyline. I took off my pack, turned to him, and asked him if I should rack one in.

I had no idea where the shooters were or if they were in range, but as soon as John said, "Yes, rack one in!", I knew that I had a shot. I laid my 7mm Magnum rifle over my pack and looked through the scope to get my first look at the scene below. Incredibly enough, as I looked through my scope, I saw both shooters grazing below, and I heard John say, "255 yards." I asked him if I could take the one on the right, as I had a broadside shot, but he advised me to wait as he determined which ram was larger. He told me to take the one on the left, but I couldn't shoot because there was a juvenile standing behind him, and he wasn't broadside. After waiting and waiting and waiting, the ram on the left turned broadside, and the juvenile moved away. I asked John if I could take him, and

he whispered "Take him; take him." I calmed myself as much as possible and slowly squeezed the trigger. "He's down; he's down!", I heard John say as I racked another shell in. I had dropped him right there: no rolling down the mountainside and no need for a second shot.

John and I embraced, nearly shaking each other off the mountain in our excitement. All the money, time, sweat, and effort had not been wasted. I had bagged my Dall ram.

John assured me that we had a long night ahead of us as we made our way down to the ram. To our amazement, it was even larger than we thought. "Kasey, that's a ram of a lifetime," John said. I couldn't have been more thrilled as I grabbed ahold of the ram's horns and posed for some pictures. John started working on the ram while we went back and forth talking about the incredible stalk and the sequence of events that led to the monster in front of us. It was around 9:00pm by the time we had finished packing the last of the meat. I secured the horns to my pack and stood up. My quadriceps tightened, and my knees felt the new weight of my pack. "Now is the hard part," John said.

We started side hilling back towards the saddle, a much easier route than the rock face we had climbed. With every step I took, the weight of my pack caused my feet to pound hard against the rocky hill and my knees to strain. I started to get a feel for what we had ahead of us, knowing it was many miles back to basecamp. We took frequent breaks due to the sheer weight of our packs, and we made getting to the saddle our first goal. It was around 11:30pm by the time we made it to the saddle. Exhausted, sweaty, and hungry, we put down our heavy packs and began to eat. At this point, it was pitch black and cold, a result of the crisp air that swept over the snowy saddle. With my headlamp and extra sweatshirt on, I





*Kasey Hixson climbing in Alaska*

grabbed my pack and stood up, ready to begin the next leg of our journey home.

We started hiking down the saddle towards the river run-off. Suddenly, I saw John fall onto his backside, gaining momentum as he slid down the snow. He soon came clear of the snow and dug his legs into the rocks beneath him in an effort to stop. I asked if he was alright, and, looking back, he said, "Be careful, it's really slick." The snow had turned to ice in the cool night, so I cautiously took tiny steps and forced my walking stick into the glassy surface. We finally came to the river-run off beneath the saddle and took a long break, drinking thirstily from the river. The weight of our packs was taking its toll as aches, cramps, fatigue, and exhaustion became permanent issues. Frigid and stiff, we stood up and pushed on down the river. We were looking for a particular part in the river's high ridge to climb, one we had climbed the previous day. However, as we hiked farther and farther down the riverside, we couldn't find any part of the ridge that seemed climbable. Now, as the river headed in the opposite direction of basecamp, we were forced to climb.

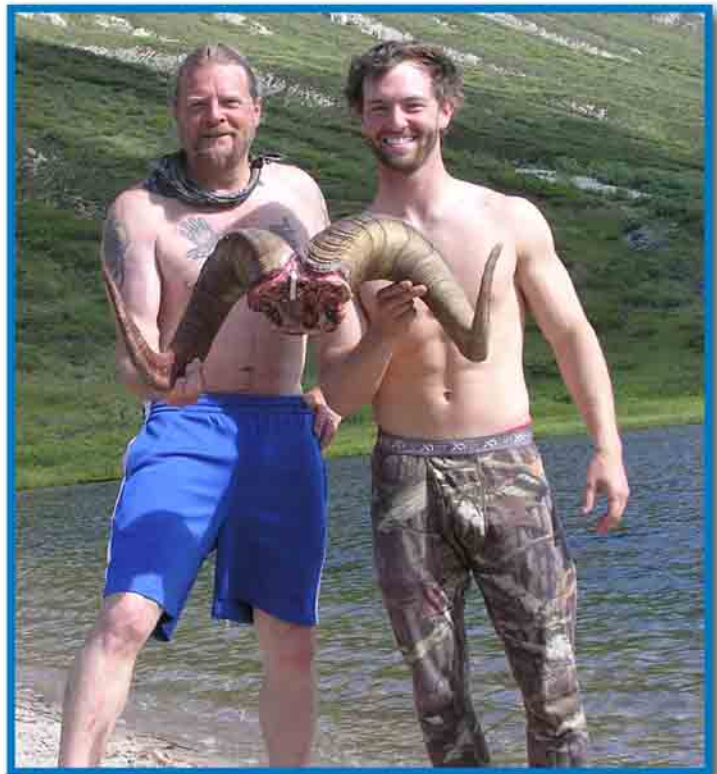
It was steep. Of our entire journey back, this was the toughest challenge yet. We climbed no more than five yards at a time before the burning in our legs forced us to lean into the ridge and break. During one of the breaks, I leaned into the ridge and dug my heels into the soil for more support. It got eerily quiet. I looked back at John and saw that his eyes were shut. He opened them and said, "Man, I can't afford to fall asleep, not on the side of this mountain." We somehow made the last stretch over the steep ridge and collapsed at the top for another break.

We hiked through a stand of small alders and over many smaller ridges that carved through the valley, and we couldn't help but feel disappointed as we crested each rise without a single glimpse of the basecamp lake. Half joking, John tiredly

asked, "Is this even the same valley?" It felt as though basecamp was moving away from us. We moved slower and slower, our bodies beaten and mentalities drained. Then, after hiking up what seemed to be the twentieth river run-off, we climbed over a ridge and saw the lake. In a moment of pure relief I yelled, "I see water!" Filled with new hope, we took fewer breaks and made it closer and closer until we could finally see tents. Finally.

We had made it. It was now 24 hours and 15 minutes since our hunt had started; the time was 5:15am. It had been the most physically demanding ordeal of my life. I threw down my pack and eagerly yelled for my grandpa to get up. He came out of the tent, saw the horns, and his face said it all. We came in for a hug that I will always remember; it was such a special moment to share with him. I couldn't have been happier telling my grandpa every detail of the hunt, and my grandpa couldn't have been more proud. Sharing this with my grandfather was the best part of the trip, and I will never forget that special moment.

I was blessed to have bagged a Boone and Crockett award winning ram, blessed to have gotten to know a skilled guide and even greater man in John Gray, blessed to have had the best of outfitters in Mike Cowan, and blessed to have shared the experience with my grandpa, Gale Hixson. In the end I owe many thanks to Mike, to John, and of course to my grandfather, who I look up to in many ways. It was an unforgettable experience that I will always cherish.



*Kasey Hixson and Guide John Gray*



# J. R. Outfitter in Florida

by Roger Froling

Florida is not just a great place to visit but a really great place to hunt. J & R Outfitters is one of the best for a number of reasons and there is lots of game to see and hunt. Joe O'Bannon is one fine Southern gentleman who will guide you and yours for a great hunt.

A few years back I was looking for a good alligator hunt and other exotic animals. While talking with Larry Higgins at the SCI Convention in Reno, Larry said he knew of a great place for gators and lots of other exotic game and that he would be glad to introduce us to the man. Larry had hunted with J & R Outfitters and Joe O'Bannon is the owner and an excellent guide. Larry said he was more than pleased with his hunts there with Joe.

Larry introduced us to Joe, the owner. We talked about his operation and after some talk of what he had to offer, we told Joe about our Mid-Michigan Chapter banquet at the Soaring Eagle Casino. Joe decided to donate a couple of hunts and to come to our show. Joe donated a red stag hunt and an Asian water buffalo hunt.

Kevin Whaley, one of our chapter's members, made the winning bid for the red stag hunt and invited me to go along. I was going to try for a nice axis deer and so when the time arrived, we hopped on a plane and flew to West Paul Beach. We rented a nice rig and drove the short run to Indian Town, Florida. We got to the ranch with no problem. The ranch is tucked into the landscape and you would not know there was any game there. You can't see anything from the road. The accommodations are very nice. We settled into our own bedrooms and unpacked and got ready to go scouting. The ranch is at least four or more square miles of thick forest with lots of waterways and larger wide open flats that remind me of the wide open African plains. There is lots and lots of game.

We hunted hard and saw a lot of game but Joe was looking for one very nice stag he had seen and was not going to give up until we found him. Once spotted, Kevin and Joe made a very nice stalk and Kevin found the stag in his cross hairs and made a fine one shot kill. When you look in your Safari Club Magazine you can find a picture of Kevin and his beautiful red stag. Look for the J & R Outfitters advertisement. Kevin's stag is one of the nicest red stags you will find on any ranch in the USA.

It was my turn to try for axis deer and we saw a lot of what I thought were very nice. Joe suggested if I would be able to come earlier in the year, like March or April, when most of the axis deer come out of the velvet, there would be more trophy axis deer to look for.

We found the axis deer to be more wary than the white-



*Pete Flannigan with his axis deer*

tail. They are very beautiful with a coat like no other animal except maybe a fawn whitetail deer. They make one fine trophy for anyone's trophy collection. They are also very good eating. They were brought here from India and now we have more here than they have. Kevin shot some more animals he wanted and we had a great trip. I took Joe's advice and booked a hunt for the following spring. I might add that it is a nice time to get out of Michigan for a few days or more.

February at the banquet, I was talking to Pete Flannigan, one of our members who also wanted an axis deer so I introduced Pete to Joe O'Bannon and we planned our trip together. Pete and I decided to drive so we could bring all our meat and horns back and not have to go through the extra maneuvering involved when you fly. Some places you have to fly. Florida is just a nice trip and the states you go through are nice to see and let one realize how great and beautiful our country is.



Pete and I drove down in Pete's nice four door pickup with coolers in the back and an empty back seat. The drive took only a day and a half, arriving there early afternoon the next day. We were able to get hunting soon after we arrived. Joe's nephew, Jamie, was our guide. We saw a lot of animals but didn't pull the trigger.

Early, and I mean EARLY, the next morning, at 5 a.m., we had breakfast, climbed on the swamp buggy, and headed out in the dark. It was a beautiful morning with the sun coming up in the East and the ground fog rising all around us. You could see the ghost like figures disappearing everywhere. The swamp buggy is a two-story rig with six foot tall tires. The rig keeps you high and dry as it goes across the waterways and keeps you well above any gators or other critters and giving the hunter a safe and wonderful view of the great outdoors. I might add, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get through some of this terrain on foot. As the sun came up, we got to a spot where Pete and Jamie got down off the rig and made a stalk on an area where several nice axis deer are usually found. I stayed on the rig and waited to hear a shot. I didn't hear a shot but Pete and Jamie sent a nice axis deer back by me. I wasn't sure if it was a shooter even though I got my cross hairs on it. I was reluctant to pull the trigger without Jamie to tell me it was a good one.

The two returned without firing a shot and had not seen this particular buck. We continued hunting and about 11 a.m. we spotted a very nice buck in a thicket. Pete liked this one and wanted to get a shot. We were two hundred and fifty yards from it and luckily it did not know we were there and get spooked. With all the brush and trees it vanished. First we could see the tops of its horns, then an ear, never a shoulder, just not presenting any possible shot. After about a half hour or more it moved and gave Pete one little opening. That would be all Flannigan needed as he dropped his trophy axis deer with a two hundred fifty yard shot. Another good one shot harvest. After some pictures we got it loaded and back to the processing building right there on the ranch. It was taken care of so fast and into the cooler, Pete and I could not believe it. Caped, boned out, and into the cooler so quick it was amazing.

[www.midmichigansci.org](http://www.midmichigansci.org)



Roger Froling with his axis deer

A quick break for lunch and back out after my axis deer. We saw lots of red stag still in the velvet, lots of Asian and European water buffalo, a 9 foot alligator, Pere David deer, wild hogs, and other exotics. We saw lots of axis deer but Jamie was always looking for a bigger one. As the sun was setting we spotted one very nice shooter. I could see it through the binoculars but could not get it in my scope. I was thinking, it's going to get away. Pete and Jamie were watching through the binoculars and lucky for me, Pete was behind me and directed me more to the left and I was able to get my cross hairs on the shoulder. Pete had his range finder on the buck and said 250 yards. I put my Sheppard scope on the 250 yard circle right behind the shoulder and touched off my Ultimate 50 caliber, Ken Johnston muzzleloader. I said I wanted to get my axis deer with the muzzleloader and the guide really had no faith in a smoke stick. He wanted me to bring my high powered rifle since the axis is a hard deer to kill.

The guide could hardly believe it as he saw the 300 grain bullet hit the stag so hard it not only killed the stag instantly, it flipped the beautiful stag over completely sideways. Pete was even impressed. At that range and moving I was lucky to have Pete Flannigan there to direct my shot. It was almost too dark to shoot and without Pete's artillery guidance I would never have found the deer in the scope.

What a great hunt both Pete and I had. We are planning to go back again to Joe O'Bannon's ranch for a red stag hunt. The next trip, Pete is going to take his son along. We sure recommend J & R Outfitters.



# Nurse Lady Takes a Shot

by John Baker

Myself being an avid outdoorsman, naturally I wanted to find a girlfriend with similar interest. I found a girl who is willing to try any type of outdoor adventure at least once. Fly fishing, downhill skiing, golf, it really doesn't matter. Tonya is her name but all my friends call her, Nurse Lady. We have been together quite some time and from the beginning one of my buddies coined the name, Nurse Lady, for her for the obvious reason, she is a nurse. Just about every Sunday night we watch Jim Shockey's Hunting Adventures. Last year she saw Jim shoot a deer with a crossbow! A few days later she was shopping online for a bow. After lots of research she had her heart set on a TenPoint Crossbow. Her first species to go after was going to be a black bear. "Honey, if I want to go will you take me?" What do you say to that? Nurse Lady has been to bear camp in previous years only as a spectator/cook. This year she was going to be hunting. After a few phone calls and a down payment, she was good to go. She practiced shooting off the deck at a stationary target set. All summer long, the range finder was smoking. After much adjustment, the bow was sighted in for twenty yards.

The Quest for a Canadian black bear was set for Labor Day Weekend. After a short wait at the border and a trip to the Visitor Center for a license, we were off. The plan was to get to camp, setup, and hunt the next night. After a day of lounging, we were ready for the hunt. Our guide and friend, Wayne Knight, had been baiting our site for us for about a month. He had good trail cam pictures at our sight, about seventy-five yards off a dirt road that led to the stand. I looked around our site area and all I saw was cedar swamp next to a thick bog. When Wayne pointed out our stand I was pretty surprised. It was a huge boulder the size of a semi truck with a flat top. It was big enough for the both of us. We set up a saw horse for Nurse Lady to steady her crossbow. The only thing left to do was to put out more bait. I drizzled a can of bacon grease on a tree limb close to the bait bucket. We sat quietly for two or so hours. Mosquitoes and flies were starting to be a problem. Luckily we had a Thermacel. It worked perfectly.



*Nurse Lady Tonya with her first bear*

Soon after the sun started to set in the West, a nice bear showed up. The bear crept into the bait sight like a ghost. Not even a twig snapped when he came in. The bear was truly a traveler of the bush. I saw him come down hill with his nostrils flared up and twitching almost every second. His nose was working like a scent factory. He was trying to make sure he felt safe entering open area. The only area open as far as we could see was right in front of us. I thought he looked like a shooter. I could hear Tonya's heart beating next to me. This was very exciting. My heart was beating fast as well. The whole time you are waiting for a bear you want him to show up, and then you want it to be over as fast as the moment arrived. The bear was taking his time, goofing around eating muffins and French fries. We waited quite some time for the bear to turn broadside. The bear stepped in front of the feed barrel and covered up the barrel. That means this was a good bear for this area. Just as he squared up to dive in for greasy French fries, Nurse Lady chucked her arrow at the bear. She stuck him behind the shoulder in the kill zone just a bit too high. I was a little worried about the shot when we didn't get a pass through. The bear lunged off into the brush crashing everything in his path. He was definitely not a happy camper. We waited five minutes or so for a death moan with no avail.

The two of us climbed down the ladder and we inspected the area where we shot the bear and discovered no blood trail???? Not even a speck. I knew we were about to have problems. Nurse Lady and I went back to town to retrieve our



guide and good friend, Wayne. By now we only had about 45 minutes of light left. This is where it started to get a little interesting.

I had a pretty good idea the direction the bear went. We followed the tangled web of snapped brush that lead away from the bait sight. We went a good jaunt, 25 to 30 yards with no blood trail, not even a splatter. By now we were down on our hands and knees. It was particularly difficult to spot. It was almost dark but there were little red leaves everywhere. Finally, Nurse Lady said, "I found some". "How do you know?" "I am a nurse. I see it every day!" The guide and I believed her and trudged on into the brush. Now about fifty yards from the bait without a good blood trail, the thought of not retrieving the animal was racing through my mind. Just as negative thoughts were in my head, Wayne found the arrow on a rock. It was bloody and snapped in two pieces. Had the bruin pulled it out? How did he do that and where was he? Was he in the brush watching us? What an eerie feeling.

Now the flash lights were on. It was getting dark in the bush. Upward and onward we went. After five minutes of searching we found more blood. The trail was hot and we were making good time. Now we were about twenty yards from where Wayne found the arrow and still no bear. What was going on? Just when I thought we would trip over the bear, the blood trail stopped. Did he fly out on a helicopter?? Now the flashlights were starting to die and we were almost ready to give up when the guide said, "Stay here. I will be right back". Wayne made a huge circle around us and then another and another, each time getting farther away from us. Now we could not see his light or hear him. It seemed like hours and then we heard him yelling. I thought he was saying, "Stay there". Neither of us could make out what he was saying. Our lights had quit and there we were standing in the bush in the dark. After a few more minutes of yelling for each other, our guide made his way back to us. He had a big smile on his face. He said, "I found the bear". He was really yelling, "I found the bear". It took him so long to get back to us because he was waiting for his GPS to get a signal to mark the bear for retrieval. Thank goodness for technology. We all did a happy dance in the dark. We made the decision to retrieve the bear in the daylight. The bear traveled about 350 yards through hilly terrain. It seemed too dangerous to recover the bear in the dark.

The happy dance continued back at camp. There was a lot of replaying the night's events with one another. We could celebrate knowing the bear would be recovered and Tonya could rest easy because all of her hard work had paid off. It would have been disappointing and discouraging for a first time bow hunter to not make a recovery. She knows hunting isn't all about bringing home game. It's great when it happens



but it's the adventure and experience that brings great joy.

The next morning, Wayne, Tonya, and I headed out to retrieve the bear. Finding it was a challenge, the GPS was having a hard time getting the signal. We hiked to where we thought the bear rested and fanned out fifteen to twenty feet apart and started walking in the same direction and eventually stumbled upon the bear. After taking care of the bear, dragging it out was where all the work began. Tonya thanked us over and over again for getting her bear to the truck.

I took lots of pictures of a very excited Tonya with her first bow kill. The bear is already at the taxidermist to live forever on our wall. We had a true Canadian bear hunting adventure. The hunt brought us closer together and she can't wait to do it again. We are in the planning stages of a Western hunt. With continued crossbow practice and preparation, hopefully, my Nurse Lady will get another shot.



# Leaf River Caribou Hunt

by Roger Froling

Caribou come in a number of categories. There are Mountain Caribou, Perry Caribou, Alaskan Caribou, Woodland Caribou, and a few more. Leaf River has the Quebec Labrador Caribou. When you go on a caribou hunt you hope to see a lot of caribou so you can get a chance to look at a lot of nice ones.

The camp we went to was on the Leaf River about 200 miles from the Arctic Circle and only 150 miles from Hudson Bay, a beautiful set up right in the center of the caribou migration. The camp also offers world class fishing for those of you who want to experience the thrill of an Atlantic salmon on the line, leaping and jumping across the water or a four or five pound brook trout hitting your fly or spinner and leaping clear out of the water and dancing across it, a fish on almost every cast. A world class fishing experience along with some of Northeastern Canada's great caribou hunting, this Leaf River Camp is hard to beat.

I talked to Brad Eldred and some of his friends that wanted to go but they wanted to go later so the big bulls would for sure be out of the velvet in hard horn. My friend, Jeff Harrison, wanted to go when bow hunting would be good and we could get in some fishing. JoAnn told us, yes, the earlier hunt was



Roger Froling and Jeff Harrison with a caribou

better for bow hunting and fishing because the weather plays a big factor so we decided on the earlier hunt.

At our convention in Mt. Pleasant, JoAnn told us it was only a ten and a half hour drive from Mt. Pleasant to Montreal where we would take a plane to the camp in Northern Québec. Jeff Harrison and I decided we would drive to Montreal. Having our truck in Montreal made it nice for hauling the larger caribou racks and our meat back home with us. We were very optimistic about this hunt and we had not even gotten there yet. It's a lot easier to park the truck, skip security and all the stuff you know can be a pain when flying.

The day finally arrived and it was time to go hunting. We had a very nice drive to Montreal and booked into the Crown Plaza. We had a nice dinner and got to bed. The next morning we were up at 5:30 a.m., had a nice breakfast and took the shuttle with all of our gear to the airport. Leaf River had arranged for everything, the hotel, the shuttle, and the private charter. This meant we did not have to go through security, check in any guns, etc., just get on the plane. They even handled our gear from the hotel to the hunting camp. We only had to bring ourselves. That was really nice. We did not know this was a two part fly in to get to the camp. First, we boarded a nice big plane that would seat all the hunters and all of our gear and a lot of food and supplies for the camp. Our first flight took us to Lou Pac, Québec, about 600 miles North of Montreal. We were met at the airport by a bus that transported us to a sea plane base and we were provided with a very nice box lunch that we all enjoyed. There was a complete camp here with couches and bathrooms and even beds that we could rest on while waiting for the float planes to be loaded with all the gear



Roger Froling with a beauty



and food. About two hours later, we all loaded on the buses and rode to the sea planes. We were all assigned to the different planes depending on what camp we were going to. With a full stomach we were off to Leaf River, our final destination for the caribou hunt. The planes were Beavers and Otters and they were all on floats. We flew a lot lower in the sea planes so we could see the ground. The landscape was amazing, lots of lakes and rivers. It was beautiful. A few hours later we were coming in for the landing at our camp.

Once out of the plane, the guides and Alain, the outfitter, were there to greet us. We were directed to our cabins and the guides hauled our gear to where we would sleep for the next week. Each little cabin was equipped with a gas heater and two nice beds with a dresser for each of us. There were even clothes hangers for us. We explored the camp and found fiberglass showers and flush toilets, all the stuff that makes a wilderness trip feel like you are at the Hilton. There was a big mess hall with a great cook. The food was very good and we all enjoyed every meal. We had roast beef, bacon and eggs, pancakes, hot or cold cereal, and plenty of juices, coffee, or tea.

We didn't hunt the first day, we just got our guns and bows sighted in. Then we got our gear together for the next morning's hunt. The generator came on at 6 a.m. and we all got our showers and then breakfast. We boarded our boats and with our guide at the helm, away we went looking for caribou. We tied our boat up and climbed up a small rise where we could get a good view of the area. We could see for miles. We could see lots of caribou. They were all around us but nothing close enough that we would be able to get to them to make a stalk before they would be gone. We saw at least 300 or 400 caribou that first day.

We got back to camp and enjoyed a nice meal complete with both white and red wine. After dinner we went to the Saloon, a building where the hunters can all get together and visit with each other and have a beer or whatever they like. The center table always had some cheese and crackers and other good stuff. The electric was turned off at 10 p.m. so with a warning just before 10 p.m. we all retired to get rested up for the next day's hunt. Oh, yeah, there were a few hunters that had already gotten their first caribou of the two each hunter could take.

The second day started out with coffee and a very nice breakfast. The guide got our lunches and we loaded into our boat. The first day we went down river and today we headed up river. We went up the river for about an hour. The guide spotted some caribou coming to the river and we tied up and tried to do a stalk. The cows went by us and got down wind and spooked and ran back taking the bulls with them. Once back in the boat, we continued up stream. We went through some very nice rapids and more wild and beautiful country.

Once again we tied up and climbed to a good vantage



Jeff Harrison with a caribou



point. We immediately spotted some caribou that were coming our way. We were hoping to get a caribou bull within 40 or 50 yards so Jeff Harrison could take a good shot. Jeff had gone to the range every morning before breakfast to take a few practice shots. On the first morning, Jeff had Robin Hooded an arrow while shooting at the 40 yard target. All this practicing was about to pay off. Jeff was shooting a 70# compound bow with graphite arrows. This nice group of caribou with a good bull was getting closer and closer. Jeff got behind a nice clump of spruce and waited. The cows and the calves came right by Jeff. The bull stayed off quite a bit further. Jeff ranged the bull at 60 yards. Jeff could tell the bull was not getting any closer so Jeff, determined as ever, adjusted and made a beautiful 60 yard one shot kill. We could see the big bull drop his head, falter, and fall. What a great shot! After several bullseyes at the fifty yard target at camp, Jeff was confident ten yards more would work. This was truly a great shot. The guide was really surprised for





*Fish for breakfast!!*

enough. We sat very still a few hundred yards away watching Jeff making the stalk. Jeff on the other hand was able to see us as a very nice bull came right up to within 30 yards of us. We took pictures and Jeff was now wishing he was back there with us. Some very funny things can happen when you're hunting. This just goes to show how crazy things can be. Jeff came back and we ate our lunch. I spotted a very nice bull along the river. Jeff and the guide headed off planning the ambush. Jeff carried his bow and the guide was close behind with the rifle. I tagged along even further back so as not to mess up the stalk.

That big bull had moved so fast that it got by Jeff and the guide. Looking down river Jeff spotted it, a very nice bull with a very nice rack. The bull was about to disappear and get away. Jeff decided it was a good time to use his rifle. With the crack of his rifle, the big caribou was down. Jeff had made another great one shot kill. The guide loaded all the meat and horns and we headed back down river, two successful hunters.

Now it was time for the best fishing ever.

There is no doubt Jeff Harrison is a great shot with his bow and his rifle. Jeff is also a master angler or in plain English, a darn good fisherman, too. We both caught and released a lot of fish, both Atlantic salmon and brook trout. I hooked eight Atlantic salmon the same day with dozens of brook trout. Jeff made a new record on the salmon, catching more in one day than anyone else. The following days were just the same. Lots of good fishing.

This was an absolutely fantastic trip. Jeff Harrison and I really had a swell time. Leaf River and Joann took care of every detail. They also offer summer fishing trips. Hope you enjoyed my story.

he had never seen anyone make a shot like that.

It was only about an hour later, a nice bull showed up heading our way. It was my turn. The big bull looked magnificent with its beautiful white flowing cape and very nice rack. I have a stainless steel Ruger in a 7 MM caliber with a Sheppard scope with the range finding circles that work very well for long shots. I got set up on a flat rock, got the big bull in my scope, got the three hundred yard circle on the bull and at 310 yards with Jeff confirming the range, I squeezed off the round as we watched the bull kiss the ground. We put the guide back to work. Two bulls, one with a bow and one with a rifle, both one shot kills. The guide took care of business with both the bulls in short order. He really did a fine job.

It was about time for us to start back down the river when I spotted another very nice looking bull. This bull was very white and had a nice rack and a beautiful cape. Jeff ranged him way out there and coming our way darn fast. We were up on this hill and he was about to disappear into some evergreens where we might not see him again. As Jeff ranged him at 550 yards, I got the 550 circle on him and squeezed off the shot and down he went.

It took us awhile to get to him and it was getting late. Our guide did not waste any time as he caped and quartered up the magnificent bull. We put the quarters on a big rock and would come back the next day to hunt and retrieve them. Three shots, three bulls, a pretty good day of hunting for sure. Jeff and I were both very happy hunters.

The next day we went back for the meat and we spotted another nice bull. I had my two bulls. It was Jeff's turn. Jeff took his bow and the guide carried Jeff's rifle. You never know if the caribou will give you a shot with the bow so sometimes you are going to be glad you have your rifle along. Jeff made a nice stalk on a group of bulls but just could not get close





# South African trip

by Mary & Ron Browning

Over the past several years Ron had struck up a friendship with Johan Pieterse at the Mid-Michigan Safari Club Banquet where he has a booth. Johan is the owner of Johan Pieterse Safaris. Johan had worked as a Game Warden in the old Transvaal Province of South Africa for 13 years before starting his business. The running joke is that every time Johan left his booth a beer appeared at his table (Ron bought one for him and placed it at his booth). I had been in South Africa in 2008 and wanted to go back. I thought it was a beautiful country. When I was there before I was not successful in harvesting a Kudu and I really wanted one. So in 2011 we bid on the auction hunt Johan had donated and won. This was a 7 day hunt for Kudu, Impala, Warthog and Blue Wildebeest. At that point we upgraded to add Ron as a hunter also. It was scheduled for the last of June 2012. In January we saw Johan at the Safari Club International Convention in Las Vegas. Ron had it in the back of his mind that he wanted a lioness. We talked to a few outfitters about going at a different time to lion hunt. When we went to see Johan at his booth we asked him if it was possible to add a lioness hunt to our upcoming trip. He checked his schedule and saw no problem with adding 3 more days so Ron could shoot his cat. We extended our trip and went to see a company called Travel with Guns to make flight arrangements. We had no problem getting flights. We would fly out on June 27, 2012 and be back home on July 12, 2012.

Our flight to South Africa was a long one. We flew out of Grand Rapids Wednesday, June 27, 2012 at 8:04am to Chicago, then on to Washington Dulles, DC and finally Johannesburg, South Africa, arriving Thursday, June 28, 2012 at 4:35pm. We were met by Johan who helped us check our guns through security. After leaving the cop shop we packed up the truck and began our drive to Johan's farm. It was about a three hour drive to our destination in the Limpopo region which is about a eight mile drive from a little town called Northam. There we were greeted by Bruce, our waiter, with scented washcloths for us to clean up. This tradition was always repeated every time we came back from a day of hunting.

Johan's ranch consists of 6,000 acres fenced with his home and lodge. The lodge with a trophy room, dining room combo,



Mary Browning with her impala

four separate luxury chalets for guests, a kitchen and cook's quarter, and a separate building for his guides and skinners overlooks a waterhole in the non hunting area. You could always enjoy watching numerous animals grazing and drinking around this waterhole.

After meeting the rest of the staff we enjoyed cocktails and snacks around a campfire while watching the animals come to the watering hole. We also watched the bush babies eating caramel in the trees. We did this every night after a day of hunting. Francisco, our chef, prepared a delicious meal before settling in our chalet for the night.

## IMPALA

The next morning we checked our rifles. I was using the new Ruger American Rifle, 270 Win. Ron brought our Sako, 338 Win mag. After sighting in the rifles we were ready to do some hunting. Johan decided we would concentrate on finding a Kudu because that would be the most difficult to find. We drove the ranch but had no luck finding any. We also spent time walking the bush to see if we could spook anything up. After a luckless morning we decided to head back to the lodge for brunch and a little break time. After a wonderful brunch and a nap we were ready to hit the trail again. On our drive out to find a Kudu, Johan spotted two nice Impalas. I got out of the truck and Johan and I stalked to within 100 yards of the Impalas. Johan set up the sticks and I took my time waiting for a good shot. Just as I fired the Impala moved and I hit him but not exactly in the correct spot. We started tracking him on foot





Mary Browning with her waterbuck

but finally it was decided to employ the assistance of Johan's dog, Max. It wasn't 5 minutes before Max was on the scent and had the Impala cornered. One more shot and the deed was done. I couldn't have been happier.

#### WATERBUCK

The next 2 days we were up at dawn and out all day. We walked, drove and sat at several waterholes but luck was not with us. The wind kept changing directions continuously making it hard to stay upwind from any animal. I think Johan tried every trick in the book to find anything for me to harvest. We did see several warthogs but they were too small. I really was getting discouraged.

We took a day off on July 2nd to go to another farm Kudu hunting. I will get back to that later.

On July 3rd Johan decided to stay on his farm. The wind seemed to settle, so hopefully we would connect with something. As before the morning was not too good and we were on our way back to brunch. Just before we entered the non hunting zone Boisman spotted a nice Waterbuck. We drove within 100 yards and I took aim and shot from the bed of the truck over the cab. I couldn't believe it - just as I pulled the trigger IT MOVED!! I thought it was all over but all of a sudden it stopped. Again we drove to a good shooting range. I pulled my rifle up and took aim. IT MOVED AGAIN. At least I didn't shoot. I was beginning to think this trip was jinxed for me. How many times can animals move just before one takes a shot. Then we couldn't believe what we were seeing - that Waterbuck stopped again. We moved up close again and I took the safety off, aimed and fired. It ran about 60 yards and dropped. Even Boisman was excited at my success. It proved to be a beauty, with horns measuring 28 inches. Boy was I happy after 2 days with no success.

#### KUDU

At dinner the first night Johan asked us what animal was

the most important that we harvest so he could plan his strategy. For Ron it was the lioness and for me the Kudu. The last time I was in South Africa that didn't happen. The only one we saw was too small according to my PH. This time I wanted one no matter what size. I said I didn't care if it was a miniature. Having said that, Johan's idea of a Kudu for me was the biggest and baddest he could find. So our hunt began. For three days we searched but to no avail. But what drove me crazy is that every time we returned to the lodge for lunch or for the evening there they were munching on alpha, molasses or drinking water at the waterhole in front of the lodge. Of course this was a non hunting area and I swear they were gloating at me.

The next day Johan suggested we go to a different farm. Klapperrandje Farm is a few miles SE of Northam so it was a short drive there. The owner, Alan doesn't allow many animals to be taken at this venue so there are lots of monster Kudus on the property.

Johan, Ron, Boisman and I piled into the truck at 8:30AM and drove a short distance to Klapperrandje Farm. It wasn't long before I saw what I thought was going to be my Kudu but my bubble was burst when I was told it was too small. I couldn't believe it - it looked huge to me. Throughout the day all the other ones we saw were the same story - too small. Finally driving along the fence line there they were - the monster Kudus. The only problem was they had jumped the fence into the non hunting area around Alan's house. Johan called and asked Alan if we could take one but the answer was no. So we went on looking for another one. Finally Boisman spotted one at the top of a hill munching on a bush. Boisman grabbed my rifle off the rack, gave it to me and said shoot, shoot !! I did and took out the beautiful bush the Kudu was munching. He jumped and ran (bet he doesn't eat that bush anytime soon again). I couldn't believe my eyes - a Kudu seemed not to be in the cards for me. I never shot as bad as I did that day. We went back to the lodge that night empty handed.

My spirits were better the next day when I shot my Waterbuck. It was a dead on shot so I was back in the saddle again. That afternoon we went back to Klapperrandje Farm for another look for the big Kudu. Johan and I sat by a waterhole hoping something would come in. Small ones came but no big ones. Finally a Kudu came in that Johan thought was a shooter. Just as I brought my rifle up and took aim Johan changed his mind. Why shoot this one when there are better ones.

On July 4th, Johan, Boisman and I headed back to Klapperrandje Farm. Ron stayed back at Johan's to hunt Blue Wildebeest with Human, Johan's son. This was the last day I could harvest my Kudu before we left for the Kalahari to lioness hunt. If I wasn't successful today I would have two days to find a Kudu when we got back from Ron's lioness hunt.

Again it was the same story. If we saw one it was too small. After Ron harvested his Blue Wildebeest, he and Human brought us lunch (Kentucky Fried Chicken) and stayed to



help us find my trophy. Off we all went looking for my Kudu. A couple of times Human radioed for us to get over to where he and Ron saw a nice Kudu. When we got over there Johan said no - too small. Finally success at 4:00PM my Kudu appeared. What a beauty - with my emotions at their peak I shot. It took 2 shots but the deed was done. HURRAY!! What a beauty - horns measured approximately 56 inches. Finally my dream came true.

#### BLUE WILDEBEEST

Mary's original hunt was for a Kudu, Impala, Blue Wildebeest and a Warthog. Mary's main goal was to get a Kudu and the other animals were secondary since on her first trip to South Africa she was not able to get one. Johan was bound and determined to make sure that she did not shoot just any Kudu but that it must be an exceptional one. Several days passed in the pursuit of the big one and time was drawing nearer to the day when we would have to leave Johan's for the Kalahari and my lioness hunt. So it was decided that I would hunt for the Wildebeest while Mary continued in her quest for the big Kudu.

On July 4th, Human (Johan's son) showed up bright and early in the morning to be my PH on a Wildebeest hunt. We weren't out very long when a lone bull crossed the road in front of us but it didn't stay around long enough for me to become acquainted with him. Soon after that we came upon a small herd of Wildebeest several hundred yards off the road so with Samuel (our tracker), we took out after them. When we got within a couple of hundred yards of them a good bull was picked out and the shooting sticks came up. Now mind you I had never used sticks before on any hunt and consequently I missed with my shot and off they went. We continued to follow them and eventually they stopped. This time the sticks were a bit more steady and at about 180 yards, one shot later the bull was down. The next task was to get the animal into Humans' truck which turned out to be quite a job. With reinforcements (John was called in) the task was completed and at about 9:30 the hunt was over. What to do now? The only solution was to go to the local KFC, pick up lunch and go try to help Mary in her quest.

#### LIONESS HUNT

We were up early to travel to this area for Ron's lioness hunt. It was a good six hour drive as I recall. We would be staying at Frikkie du Toit Safaris. Their main camp, which is over 15,000 acres, is located just south of Botswana and west of Johannesburg, near the town of Tosca. This area is known as the Kalahari and is a semi desert area which is very sandy, making it well suited for plains game and all of the big five. There we met up with Ron's videographer Nicky. She has been doing this for 12 years so we knew we would be getting a quality product from her. After a delightful lunch we were off to find a lioness. We drove to a farm named Thandeka. This ranch comprises over 10,000 acres of hunting area in prime unspoiled savannah. Besides Johan and Boisman there was Frikkie and his tracker John along with Nicky. While Ron went off for his hunt I sat in the truck so we each have



*Mary Browning with her Kudu*

different stories to tell.

Mary's Lioness Hunt Version;

About 1pm we arrived at Thandeka where Ron would be lioness hunting. Ron, Johan, Boisman, Nicky and I piled into the back of the Range Rover while Frikkie drove and John sat on the hood to look for lioness paw prints in the soft sand on and along the side of the road. The farm was sectioned by roads so you track in a grid pattern. When a fresh print was found and it was determined to be a lioness Frikkie drove around the perimeter of the grid to make sure she did not cross a road into another area. She was still in there so Frikkie drove back to where she entered the area. Ron, Frikkie, and Johan loaded their rifles and with the trackers, John and Boisman, and the videographer Nicky, the hunt began.

Being a little nervous (or should I say a lot) the first thing I did when everyone left the truck was make sure the windows could be rolled up manually (and they could). I tried unsuccessfully to be calm while I read a book on my Ipad. The longer they were out the jumpier I got. All of a sudden the lions started roaring and then to top it off Frikkie's cell phone went off. I almost jumped out of my skin. I was so scared I called John Raddatz in Bay City, Michigan for help. He answered and said that I was calling the wrong person because he is scared of lions and would be of no help and besides he was in the United States.

A few minutes later Frikkie came back to get the truck. Ron's back started hurting and he couldn't walk much more. We picked up Ron, Johan and Nicky while the others stayed in the bush to see if they could drive the cat up close for Ron to shoot her. After several attempts and getting late in the day we called it quits and went back to the lodge.

After a fabulous dinner and a good night sleep we were up and ready to go. Ron's back felt better so after breakfast we went back to find his lioness. At about 10:15am tracks were found and off they went again. An hour later I heard a shot -





*Mary Browning with her warthog*

the lioness was down. Frikkie came back for the truck and we drove to where everyone was. What a beautiful animal. All I can say is WOW!!

#### Ron's Lioness Hunt Version

My original reason for going on this safari was to follow along on Mary's quest to harvest several different species of plains animals. After watching the on-line bidding of hunts on the Dallas Safari Clubs website I was intrigued by a bid on a lioness hunt and suddenly I wanted to go on one. As previously mentioned since we were already scheduled to go with Johan Pieterse I was able to add a three day lioness hunt to Mary's hunt.

After following Mary around for several days and finally after her successful Kudu hunt we were off to the Kalahari for my hunt. The drive itself was most interesting with the many different types of towns we passed along with the many donkeys and various other animals that were alongside the road. After arriving at Frikkie du Toit Safaris we met up with

Frikkie, his wife Natasha and one son along with Nicky who was there to videograph my hunt. After checking in to our rooms and looking over Frikkie's beautiful property I was taken into a trophy room where Johan proceeded to instruct me on where to place the shot depending on what position the lioness was in. We then loaded into the truck and were off to the hunt. When we arrived at Thandeka where the hunt was to take place, Mary, myself, Johan and Boisman (Johan's tracker) along with Nicky got up into the back of the truck while Frikkie drove and John (Frikkie's tracker) sat on the front of the vehicle looking for tracks. The area is made up into square grids so you drove along the road looking for tracks and if fresh ones are found you drove around the grid to see if the animal had left that particular grid. After John found fresh tracks and it was determined that the cat was still in that area Frikkie, Johan and myself loaded up and along with Nicky and

the two trackers the hunt was on. After weaving in and out and around the many thorn trees and bushes talking to them in my special way along with spilling some blood and without catching a glimpse of the cat, my weak back gave out and I was forced to get back into the truck. The idea was now for the trackers to continue on and if they found the cat I was to join them where it was. They found it once laying down but by the time I got to where they were it had moved on. While back in the truck we caught a glimpse of a cat walking away from us some distance down the road but in no position to take a shot. Day one concluded with no cat and a wonderful meal prepared by Frikkie's wife Natasha.

Day two with my back somewhat recovered but with some doubts that I would be able to follow the two Professional Hunters and their trackers for too many hours and therefore not accomplish my goal we were back in the thorns again.

We did pass a place where a cat had laid down and it was not too long after that it seemed when John came to an excited halt. I was rushed up to where he and Frikkie were after taking my weapon from Boisman. There was the cat laying in some very thick bushes looking straight at us about twenty yards away. With the weapon on the shooting sticks I had to wait to see if she would raise her head so I could get a clear shot into her chest. Finally after some time she turned her head to one side so I took the shot at Frikkie's urging to the other side of her head into the lung area. With a growl she took off but not very far where a heart shot finished the job. After what seemed like many pictures, handshakes and thank-you's later the hunt was over.

#### WARTHOG HUNT

The last animal I was after was the warthog. After Ron shot his lioness,



*Ron Browning with his Blue Wildebeest*



Johan and I thought, wouldn't it be great to have the lioness and the warthog together fighting as a mount. So it was imperative that I get one.

The first waterhole we sat at brought only a few momma hogs and their babies. A little while later a Baboon troop came in to drink so that ended our hunt at that waterhole.

We moved on to another waterhole and sat behind some shrubs and trees waiting again for the perfect warthog. In about an hour here it came. I took aim and fired. BOOM - down it went. My job was done. A perfect ending to a perfect safari.

## SNAKES

This is a direct quote from Johan's website. "In our winter months (March to August) you would be deemed lucky to encounter a snake". Well when Ron and I were there the snakes didn't get this message.

The first encounter was with a python. Africa's largest snake species and one of the world's largest, the typical African rock python adult measures 4.8 m (16 ft). But this guy didn't have eyes for us. It had been injured. Johan said it looked like a Honey Badger had attacked it and would be back that evening to finish it off for dinner.

Our next encounter with a snake was when we were out looking for a second warthog to harvest. I had shot one earlier in the day but Johan wanted to see if we could get a bigger one. As we were walking to the watering hole to wait for a warthog Johan saw a snake acting strange in the road ahead of us. Upon closer inspection he said it was a black mamba widely considered the world's deadliest snake.



Ron Browning with his lioness

This snake seemed to have no interest in us and slithered away in the opposite direction that we were going. We sat in a hidden area looking for a warthog for maybe an hour or two. But the snake was always in the back of our minds. At one point Johan went back to the road to make sure it had slithered away. No snake was in sight. About 30 minutes latter Ron poked me on the shoulder and pointed to the ground next to him as he was making a fast exit to the right. Not two feet away was the black mamba. I jumped and screamed snake. Johan grabbed my rifle and started shooting. then finally cut its head off. Boy that was a little too close for comfort.

So when you are told you will probably not see a snake in the winter - do not believe it.

Pilanesberg National Park and Game Reserve On the last day of our visit with our hunting complete Johan took us to Pilanesberg National Park. The creation of this park is considered one of the most ambitious programmes of its kind to be undertaken anywhere in the world. We had a wonderful time just animal watching and taking photos. It was a relaxing day to end our hunting adventure in the Limpopo Province.

The next day after a relaxing breakfast we packed and headed to Johannesburg for our flight home. Johan took us to a large store to shop for souvenirs. This store had items from a dollar to thousands of dollars. Anything you could think they had. We bought many beautiful items to bring home for us and our family.

At the airport Johan helped us check our luggage and turn our paperwork and guns into the cop shop. After saying our goodbyes we left Africa with many memories of this great adventure.



A Black Mamba



## *Looking Ahead - to our Next Issues -*

*Hunting Australia  
by Cindy Cotter*



*Red Stags of the North Isle  
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*Moose Hunting in Newfoundland  
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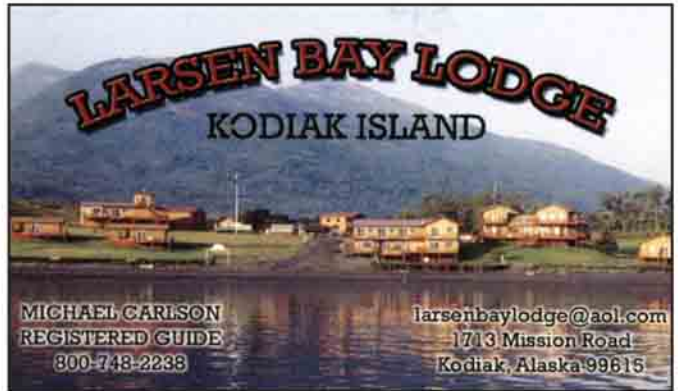
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