

FRONT SIGHT



SCI
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

October - December 2013, Issue 24



*Cover Photo taken by Ivan Carter
Tajikistan Marco Polos
November 2012*

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



JOHAN PIETERSE SAFARIS



**SOUTH AFRICA
ZIMBABWE
MOZAMBIQUE**



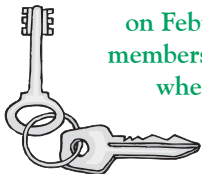
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Members of Mid-Michigan SCI or Isabella County Sportsman's Club may use the shooting range located at 2872 W. Millbrook Road just east of Winn Road. The lock combination is 4560 and changes yearly on February 15th. Please carry membership identification on you when you visit the range.



Standing Committees

Chairmen are listed first

Chapter Trophy Awards - Joanne Witte, Larry Witte, Tim Becker, Roger Card, Brad Eldred, Roger Froling, Don Harter, Larry Higgins, Scott Holmes, Mark Marlette, Joe Mulders, Bill Shelt, Art Street.

Conservation/Govt. Affairs - Larry Witte, Jim Walker

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Matching Grants - Jon Ziemann

Front Sight Publication - Mary Harter

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Nominating - Don Harter, Kevin Unger, Joe Mulders

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Special Events - Kevin Unger, Tim Schafer, Scott Holmes, Jim Walker, Randy Raymond, Mike Strobe

Annual Awards Banquet/Fundraiser - Joe Mulders, Abby Mulders, Don Harter, Mary Harter, Bill Shelt, Tim Schafer, Mike Strobe, Kevin Unger, Joanne Witte, Larry Witte

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Shooting Sports - Tim Schafer

Humanitarian Services -

Handicapped Youth Hunt - Randy Raymond

Sportsmen Against Hunger - Mike Strobe

Veteran's Hunt - Bill Shelt, Randy Raymond

Public Relations - Jim Walker

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 website for copies of the Front Sight, listing of events, and fundraiser auction items.

Please support our sponsors! Call or write them for catalogs and information on their products and services. Make sure you tell them you saw their information in **The Front Sight**.

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SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Type</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
October 7, 2013	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
December 2, 2013	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
January 11, 2014	Board	3:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
January 11, 2014	Big Buck Night	5:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn
February 5-8, 2014	International Convention		Las Vegas
February 21-22, 2014	Chapter Convention		Soaring Eagle

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

Your President - Kevin Unger

I would like to start out by thanking our members for casting their votes on our current election. I was voted in to serve you for one more year as your president. I am honored to serve for one more year. Mary Harter, Randy Raymond, and Larry Witte were also reelected. I have appointed three new board members for this year for a one year term, Chad Sterns, Mike Johnston, and Mike MacEachron. I look forward to working with each one of these new board members and I believe all of them will be valuable to our club.



Kevin Unger

We just conducted our budget meeting for 2013 and our budget is looking very good. We plan on continuing to support shooting sports and education by sending kids to hunter's safety and sending teachers to the AWLS program in Jackson Hole, WY. this is an exciting time of the year with fall getting closer each day. With the recent cool weather we have had everyone is getting the itch to get back into the woods. Small game season opened September 15th and archery season opens October 1st. I have been getting all of my stands up and cutting shooting lanes and I anticipate another successful season.

You are always welcome to any of our board meetings and please feel free to invite guests to any of our regular meetings, especially Big Buck Night and our Chapter Convention.

Editor's Message

As you read this it will probably be time for the Youth Hunt for deer in Michigan, September 21 and 22, and we will be out hunting with our grandchildren. Please send me pictures of your successes.

In July, we spent 8 days whitewater rafting on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon with our whole family (10) traveling 280 miles, usually very wet. We didn't shoot anything but what a wonderful time we had!



Mary's Wild Boar in Turkey

Don went to the SCI Board Meeting in Tucson in August as he is on several national committees.

We are looking forward to hunting our deer seasons in Michigan and hope everyone else has a safe and successful hunt.

Keep writing,

Mid - Michigan Chapter Safari Club International • 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. ☐ _____

☐ HOME ☐ BUSINESS EMAIL ADDRESS
STREET _____ STREET _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
TELEPHONE _____ TELEPHONE _____

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	\$200 Local Dues	= \$ 1,550

Check/Cash attached \$ _____

Bill my credit card: VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE)

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____ NAME ON THE CARD _____

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SPONSORS NAME _____

DATE OF APPLICATION _____

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Mid-Michigan SCI
P.O. Box 486
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0486



Book Review

by Josh Christensen

Title: WHY TRAVEL WHEN YOU
CAN LIVE THERE? THAILAND

Copyright: 2012

List Price: \$16.99 on amazon.com

Author: Rick Granger

I love hunting, but a close second is traveling to far off lands to experience new and exotic cultures. There has always been a part of me that has yearned for knowledge and understanding of these places and their people. Of course the opportunity to do this on an average hunt is crammed into a shorter time frame than I would like. That's why this book was such a good read, it allowed me to enjoy another culture from the comfort of my own home.

Why Travel When You Could Live There? Thailand, is a book about one man, and his newly wed wife, who decided to spend over a year of their lives in Southeast Asia in the town of Chiang Mai, Thailand. As a couple, the author and his wife, worked with more than one hundred teenagers from over a dozen countries living in Chiang Mai.

Throughout this book Rick leads us on a journey through the Thai culture and how he and his wife adapted to life in a culture totally different from what they experienced growing up in rural Pennsylvania. His vivid detail and first-hand accounts are captivating and often make you feel as if you were there with him. His observations of a westerner in a Southeast Asian country are eye opening.

This was the type of book that kept my interest and made me wonder what was going to happen next. I found that as I approached the conclusion of the adventure I began to put it down more and more because I didn't want it to end. If you've ever wondered what it would be like to live in a far off land this would be a perfect read for you.

This book gets 10 out of 10 bullseyes



PARTNERING FOR THE ISABELLA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION DAY

by Mary Harter



On Friday, May 17, at the Chipp-a-Water Park in Mt. Pleasant, Kevin Unger, Don and Mary Harter from our chapter met up with Stony and Alma Bing, Dennis and Michelle Sprick from the Michigan Chapter who had brought their Sensory Safari Mobile Wildlife Education Trailer to share with the Isabella County students that would be attending this event. This trailer is full of mounted animals that have been donated from generous individuals for the purpose of educating our youth. Numerous pelts were also available to feel. They were given bracelets, stickers, and pencils donated by the SCI Foundation. By the end of the day, 728 people had visited the trailer including students and adults.

Many other educational exhibits were on display including the robo buck used by Isabella County Conservation Officer, Jeremy Payne. It was purchased by our Mid-Michigan Chapter. The students were very interested in seeing the deer which Jeremy can move using a remote. The head moves, tail swings, and front leg picks up. Jeremy helped the children understand the problems of poaching and the importance of harvesting animals properly. They also were interested in Jeremy's bulletproof vest which he showed them.

Other exhibits included animals from the Amphibian and Reptile Nature Discovery Center, mushroom identification by the Mushrooming in Michigan organization, basket weaving by the Saginaw Chippewa tribe, exhibits of water quality, a trailer with exhibits from the Michigan Forest Association, and many others. Children were active participants and even took water samples from the Chippewa River to look at under microscopes.

Mike LaValley from the Natural Resources Commission makes this all happen and we certainly appreciated being invited again for this event.



Students looking at the Chippewa River



DNR Officer Jeremy Payne buttoning his shirt after showing students his bulletproof vest



Students checking out the pelts



The DNR's Robo Buck



Right: Inside the Sensory Safari Trailer with Alma Bing



Dennis Sprick, Alma Bing, and Don Harter

Changes to the Awards Program for North American Animals

by Joanne Witte

After careful consideration, your Mid-Michigan SCI Board has decided to change the award system for Major Awards for North American animals.

We will continue to give numbers one, two, and three awards for North American animals and to use the numerical method for deciding these awards. With this method the animals scoring closest to the top when compared with the International Record Book will receive the first, second, and third awards.

However, instead of including Estate animals and turkeys in the competition they will receive separate awards under certain conditions. If they score in the top 10% of the International Record Book, one or both of them could receive awards. Therefore, some years we might have four or even five awards for North American animals.

Our Cumulative Record Book includes the following categories for Estate animals—Northeastern Whitetail Deer-Typical, Northeastern Whitetail Deer-Non-Typical, South Eastern Whitetail Deer, Texas Whitetail Deer-Typical, Texas Whitetail Deer-Non-Typical, Rocky Mt. Elk-Typical, Rocky Mt. Elk-Non-Typical. In order to receive an award for an Estate Animal, the highest scoring animal (regardless of species) above 10% would receive the award. There will be years when no animal reaches this standard.

The same will hold true for Turkeys. Our categories for turkeys are—Eastern Turkey-Typical, Eastern Turkey-Multiple Beards, Gould's Turkey, Merriams Turkey, Ocellated Turkey, Osceola Turkey, Rio Grande Turkey. The highest scoring turkey (regardless of species) above 10% would receive an award.

As you can imagine some years no Estate animals or Turkeys may reach the 10% criteria. In any event we will never have more than one Estate animal and/or Turkey receive awards.

In recent years our club has done very well with high scoring Estate animals and Turkeys. However, because these animals are in general easier to hunt than many North American Big Game animals, we have decided to have separate categories for them and not include them in the overall competition for North American animals. Since our award system is designed to honor the animals taken we do want to recognize exceptional animals.

If you have questions please call me at 231-796-4927.

Remember to keep those score sheets coming!

Mike Strobe's Sloppy Joes

5 # burger (I use 1/2 venison and 1/2 beef)
 1 onion, chopped
 1 green pepper, chopped
 24 oz. ketchup
 4 Tbs. mustard
 8 Tbs. brown sugar
 6 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce

Brown your burger and drain. Make sure to drain the meat well or it will turn out runny instead of thick. Add onions and green pepper to burger and cook until to your liking. Last of all, add in the rest of ingredients. Continue to cook, mix well, then serve!

Mike brought a large crock pot of this to our Budget Meeting in August and it was enjoyed by all of us so much we wanted the recipe and were sure all of you would enjoy it as well.



Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation Report

by Mary Harter

Mt. Pleasant Area
community foundationSM

Our Mid-Michigan Safari Club International has been investing funds in this Foundation for several years now and donations have been received from several of our members. A donation to this Foundation is a good way to support a cause you care about, pay tribute to a friend or loved one, and qualify for a maximum tax advantage under federal law. Due to the type of investing they are allowed to participate in and the guidance of several great community leaders, this fund earns far above and beyond what savings are typically paying. Please consider a donation before year end.

We have received a report stating that we have earnings we can spend for our education projects but are leaving the funds invested to keep earning money. These funds help guarantee that our educational projects will continue even in hard times when we may not have the income to support them.

To donate to this fund just go to their website, www.mpacf.org, and it will direct you. Click on Organization/Designated Funds, choose Mid-Michigan SCI and you will find out about us. If you click on Mid-Michigan SCI, it will take you right to our website. Their address is 306 S. University, P.O. Box 1283, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-1283 or phone (989) 773-7322. Amanda A. Schafer is the Executive Director. This is a wonderful way to insure hunting related education for our youth and teachers for years to come.

Beal City's Big Buck Night

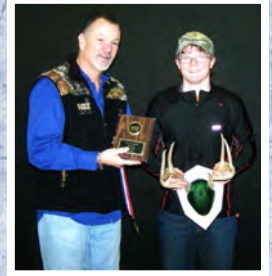
by Kevin Unger

This was our first Big Buck Night in the Beal City area. It was sponsored by Mid-Michigan SCI, Tim's Barber Shop and Dave Connors. To participate in the big buck contest, your buck had to be taken legally in the 2012 whitetail hunting season. It could have been harvested with a gun, bow, muzzleloader, handgun, or crossbow. It was the first year and we had 8 youth hunters participate. 11 year old Adam Pung shot a 5 point with a gun. 6 year old Alex Sytek shot a 6 point with a crossbow. 10 year old Ashlyn Sytek shot a doe with a gun. 16 year old Ryan Yuncker shot an 8 point with a gun. 8 year old Kayley Maeder shot a 10 point with a crossbow. 9 year old Jacob Fussman shot a 4 point with a rifle. 11 year old Alexandria Fussman shot a 5 point with a rifle. All of these hunters were awarded with a SCI youth hunting medal and a plaque. The awards were presented by Kevin Unger, President SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter, and other board members, Scott Holmes, Tim Schafer, Jim Walker, and Mike Strobe.

The awards for the top 4 biggest bucks were as follows:

- 1st place - John Maeder - 139 3/8
- 2nd place - Andy Gross - 135 3/8
- 3rd place - Nick Zeien - 132 7/8
- 4th place - Ryan Webber - 119 7/8

It was a very good turnout for the first year. We will be doing this again next year at Tim's Barber Shop in Beal City. With the upcoming youth season, if you shoot a buck, make sure you stop by Tim's and register it. I would personally like to congratulate everyone that participated and wish you good luck on the upcoming season.



ISABELLA COMMUNITY Soup Kitchen

YOUR DOUGH *plus* OUR SOUP equals THEIR HOPE

621 S. Adams Street P.O. Box 872
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0872 e-mail: soup.kitchen@winntel.net
(989) 772-7392 www.ICSK.org

June 4, 2013



SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter
Sportsmen Against Hunger Program
Attn: Committee Leader
Mike Strobe
1100 S. Bollman Drive
Mt. Pleasant MI 48858

Dear Friends at Safari Club International Mid-Michigan Chapter:

Thank you for your generous donation of check #1590 in the amount of \$400.00 along with 105 Lbs. of delicious and much needed venison to the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen. Congratulations on your successful hunt! It is heartwarming to know of your commitment to the needy; we are very grateful to you for choosing to assist those in need through the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen. Your donation is a reflection of the care and compassion you have for others.

The Soup Kitchen volunteers and staff are able to provide an average of 300 continental breakfasts and over 3,000 hot lunches monthly to its patrons seven days per week; all of this is possible thanks to the generosity of individuals, organizations, and businesses. Our patrons deeply appreciate our services.

It is a blessing to have your support, and it is greatly appreciated since it also helps provide a safe environment for many members of our community. The generous donations of individuals, organizations, and merchants, allow the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen to carry out its mission of compassion. We are a registered 501 C(3) non-profit organization. The full amount/value of your contribution to Isabella Community Soup Kitchen is tax deductible with no portion being payment for personal goods or services. Thank you for your continued support. May God bless all of our friends at SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Sportsmen Against Hunger Program.

Sincerely,

Genny Sobaski

Genny Sobaski, I.C.S.K. Director

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WALLEYES FOR WARRIORS

by Jim Walker

SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter was represented at the third annual Walleyes for Warriors event held June 15 and 16, 2012 at Veterans Park in Bay City, Michigan and it was an honor to be there.

Saturday, June 15th. Around 1 p.m. there was a Captains meeting which explained the rules and other vital information. This event pairs one or more Veterans with a Captain and First Mate for a fishing competition. Saturday was set-up day which involved finding a table for our display. The Vets started showing up about 2:30 p.m. The Vets were directed to their boat assignments meeting their boat Captains and crew and reviewing the rules. Dinner was provided with volunteers cooking 1,000 Koegel Viennas, chips, ice cold pop, and popcorn. After dinner the Vets departed for the evening.

Sunday, June 16th (Father's Day) I arrived at 5:30 a.m. being greeted by a rainy morning with a stiff breeze blowing, but by the time they left it had cleared up and the waves were settling down. The boats were already being launched and the Vets started filtering in. There were 380 participants in the event. 98 boats were volunteered. The Vets lined up and each one received a box lunch donated by and prepared by the chefs of Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort and Saganing Eagles Landing Casino.

Launching a large number of boats can be a major headache, but with the volunteers guiding the process, it went very smoothly.

7:30 a.m. the boats lined up and were escorted to the mouth of the Saginaw River by the U.S. Coast Guard, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Bay County Sheriff's boats. All boats were to assemble at the river mouth at 1:30 p.m., again being escorted up river by the U.S.C.G., MDNR, and BCSP boats.

From the pictures you can see the Vets were very successful as they brought in a total of 1,001 walleyes.

Before dinner a live band played vintage tunes. After the band finished there was a prayer given by a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Ogichedaw Veterans and Warrior Society and an Honor Song by the Tribal Drum group. While more volunteers filleted the fish (each veteran received a bag of fillets) dinner was served and again provided by SECR, SELC and the chefs and staff of SECR food service.

The oldest veteran to fish was 96 years young and served in WW II. One boat was the winner with a 25" walleye. There were a few other species brought in that day, a 34" Northern pike, a 10# sheepshead. I'd like to thank and give a big salute to Nels Larson for organizing this event and to all the countless volunteers who gave up their Father's Day weekend to honor the Veterans who have served and defended this nation. As for a 4th Annual Walleyes for Warriors ---- Nels says --- YES!!







From No Wildebeest to Almost Three

Dave Brant and Woody Lehr's first taste of Africa

Woody Lehr and I have been business partners in Mt. Pleasant since 1970. We had both grown up in hunting families and we purchased our first hunting property west of Mt. Pleasant in 1987. The land was rolling, filled with oaks and a beautiful babbling stream named Indian Creek. We built a cabin there in 1988 and called it Indian Creek Lodge. Our sons had just begun to hunt and Woody and I had a lot of good times with the young bucks at the cabin. About that time Woody and I started going on yearly hunting trips that took us "West" for many years. Our next adventures took us to Quebec, Alaska, Newfoundland, and Spain. At the Chapter banquet in February 2012, we finally decided to go on a South Africa hunt. We signed up with Thormahlen & Cochran for a two day photo safari in Kruger Park followed by a 6 day plains game hunt. We decided not to duplicate animals and take only two animals each. So our plan included a Kudu, Impala, Blesbuck, and a Mountain Reedbuck. Notice I said plan.

September came fast and after surviving the 16 hour plane ride from Atlanta to Johannesburg, we

were warmly greeted by Ruan, one of their P.H's, who took us to the Afton Guest House for the night. We left early the next morning for Kruger Park and saw many memorable sites from modern cities to large areas of poverty. Much of the country side was rugged, spotted with mining operations and agricultural areas with miles of orange groves and cane fields. Just before Kruger Park we stopped at a unique restaurant for lunch and saw an intriguing display of African animals that would look great in our conference room. It was an arrangement of five skull mounts one of which was a large Wildebeest. At that point our hunting plans began to change and Ruan helped us with a skull mount arrangement of a Wildebeest, Impala, Blesbuck and Reedbuck. The two days at Kruger Park were fantastic, we left our camp gate at 6am and Ruan knew just where to go. Twelve hours later we returned just as the gate was being locked and had seen a marvelous display of God's creation. By the end of the second day, with one night safari we had photographed hundreds of animals including the big five twice. From Kruger Park, Ruan took us to Leeuspruit Safaris where we met our P.H.,

Wimpy, his wife Louise, and their two children. They are a wonderful family and we enjoyed their company while getting a taste of some of their favorite African style meals.

We discussed our change of animals with Wimpy and he said “no problem, except you can’t come to Africa without shooting a Kudu”, so needless to say we switched out the Reedbuck for a Kudu. With that decided we headed to the rifle range so he could see how close he needed to get us to the game to make a good shot (I think he was pleasantly surprised). From there we picked up our tracker and headed out for our first taste of hunting in Africa. Our first animal on the list was a Blue Wildebeest and after spotting a possible trophy we took off on our first stalk. Wimpy suddenly realized he had forgotten the shooting sticks so he immediately improvised and fitted Woody with a genuine field made shooting stick. In the process of getting a better look at the “beest”, Wimpy spotted a very respectable Impala and Woody grabbed the shooting stick. Next came the congratulations and the pictures. After lunch it was my turn and we thought it best to pursue the “Grey Ghost”, as Wimpy had informed us, it could be our biggest challenge. He was right, we spotted a heard upon arrival and the chase went on until dark without ever seeing them again. We returned to camp and enjoyed telling Louise about the day around



the camp fire.

Day two of hunting came fast and we were off after the elusive Kudu and at noon we still hadn’t connected. Wimpy was on the phone making arrangements to hunt on a much larger concession after lunch. On the way Wimpy was telling us how special this property was. 65 square miles of all kinds of terrain, spotted with several large reservoirs, mountains, and animals equivalent to Kruger Park. Needless to say we were pumped! Wimpy had recently seen a 50” Kudu on this concession and we soon figured out that he was determined to find him. We passed up Kudu after Kudu until finally he was sure he had spotted him. He knew where they were heading so hurried up to get set up and waited for them. Of course there was lots of cover with several bulls in the herd and quite a bit of anticipation by the time they started moving into an opening. Woody had the video camera going and Wimpy was whispering instructions on which one to shoot. The one he pointed out was standing behind clumps of tall grass. I hesitated for a moment but when I heard Wimpy say, take him, the shot was fired, but the results were questionable. Wimpy kept his cool and we piled into the Land Rover to try for a second chance. Now that we all had a good look at him it wouldn’t be hard to spot him if we could find the herd. Shortly we parked and slipped out in the direction they had fled. We spot-



ted them, they spotted us, and instantly I took a running shot and connected. Now it was time for more congratulations and moving the animal to a perfect spot to take some impressive photos as the sun was approaching the horizon. Day two of hunting had ended with a beautiful 50" Kudu! That night the campfire stories were plentiful but Woody and I both began to wonder what will we do for several days if we both get our animals tomorrow.



That afternoon the weather went from overcast to drizzle. We searched for the herd of wildebeest but every time we neared them they took off with the wild zebras.

Mid afternoon we came across a herd of blesbuck that were seeking shelter under some trees in an open grassy area. They weren't anxious to move so we had plenty of time to find a keeper and get set up for a

shot. It was my turn and I had him in my sights. As the shot fired they were out of the starting gates crossing the trail directly in front of us. We were all in shock that nothing had dropped. They passed through some brush and trees and stopped! I was about to squeeze the trigger when our trackers, who were on top the Land Rover yelled, "he's down"! The blesbuck went down just as he had entered the brushy area. The congratulations were in order but the photo shoot was cut short due to inclement conditions. Day three ended with more surprises than we had ever imagined.

Day four looked like a very raining day so rain gear was in order as we headed out to find the wounded wildebeest. Our mission was now focused on one animal that has a noticeable limp, an unusual track, and enough stamina to stay with the herd. It seemed like a long morning of searching and wondering, but Wimpy stayed very optimistic. Finally we came upon a heard of wildebeest, and Wimpy was sure he spotted him. Wimpy decided that he would take just Woody and soon they were out of sight. I'm not sure how much time had passed when we heard a shot and then a second! I was certain now that our hunt had ended and was excited that Woody got his wildebeest. When I and the tracker arrived I could tell something was wrong.

Day three started in pursuit of Woody's Blue Wildebeest which seemed to like the more densely covered areas. After passing on a couple herds we spotted what Wimpy thought to be a trophy. It was a bit overcast with a chilly breeze so it was difficult to determine how to dress for the stalk that might be 30 minutes or 3 hours. Wimpy and the tracker were experts when it came to deciphering which track to stay on and to track where it seemed like there no tracks. We got a glimpse of some zebras that were running with the herd of wildebeest we were after so we knew we were close; then we came face to face with a mother Rhino and her calf. Our mission took on a new direction as we tried to avoid any potential conflicts. Thankfully the Wildebeests had found something to feed on which allowed us to get within shooting range. The shooting sticks were up, the camera was rolling and the shot fired! Wimpy, excitedly said, we've got him. He wasn't surprised when the "beest" kicked and took off and he was sure it would be a short track. At the site of blood Wimpy was even more convinced. When we stopped for lunch we were all a bit exhausted and a little disappointed.

Wimpy felt terrible, he was sure this was the wounded wildebeest until he saw him down. He was very apologetic and told us not to worry about this he would take care of it and we would find "the wildebeest".

Day four ended, we sat down to another special dinner, returned thanks for the day and the wonderful meal prepared for us. That night

Woody and I reminisced over the day's events and were convinced that nobody but God knows how this hunt will end. At least there was no more wondering what we would do to occupy our time for the rest of the hunt.

Day five, weather was less than desirable and with all the rain there were roads we could not even travel on. The Land Rover is great for most conditions but due to its weight and narrow tires, the slimy mud made it a challenge. This day was all hunting and no finding. Wimpy did spot what he said to be an unusual find, at least in this area, and with much coaching Woody and I finally spotted it in the dense brush. It was a white faced wildebeest, and Woody with his trusty "Canon" zoomed in and got a great picture. The evening discussion had changed from a few days ago and now we were wondering if time would run out before we could get the wildebeest we had been hunting almost non-stop for three days.

Day six, weather still rainy with no end in sight. We hadn't heard a word from Wimpy that even suggested we might not find "the beast". As the day wore on Woody and I kept telling Wimpy how pleased we were and that if we don't get him, we are totally satisfied. It was after 4 pm and normally we would be working our way out so that we would be out by 5. Today was dif-



ferent, we stayed in the area where he was sure the wildebeest were at and approximately 4:30 he stops gets out his glasses and says, "there he is"! He couldn't believe his eyes, they were moving away from us and Wimpy sprung into action. He told Woody to chamber a bullet as they took off on a run. Within 15 minutes we heard a shot and could hardly wait to get there.

We gathered around to

admire the animal while our trackers brought the vehicle as close as they could. Meanwhile Wimpy had called the concessions manager to tell him what had happened as it was dark now and we should have been done hunting. As we were waiting on the manager Wimpy was desperately searching for the wound on the animals front shoulder but it was no where to be found. Could it be that now we had three wildebeest?! While all this was going on the trackers had the Land Rover buried and were trying to winch it out. We took some pictures with lots of smiles as Wimpy still believed this was "the wildebeest" we had wounded 4 days ago. After much ado they got the Land Rover back to the animal. Because it was so late we took the animal back to camp without having the concessions' staff process it. Next morning we were off to catch our flight and it wasn't until we reached the airport that Wimpy got word that he was right, we didn't shoot three wildebeest. Everyone was relieved and elated to say the least. Wimpy and Ruan were great P.H.s, very professional, men of integrity, and made us feel like long time friends. Their hospitality and services were outstanding. It was a very memorable trip thanks to Thormahlen & Cochran and all the fine people they had taking care of us.

SCI's Role in Michigan Politics for Sportsmen

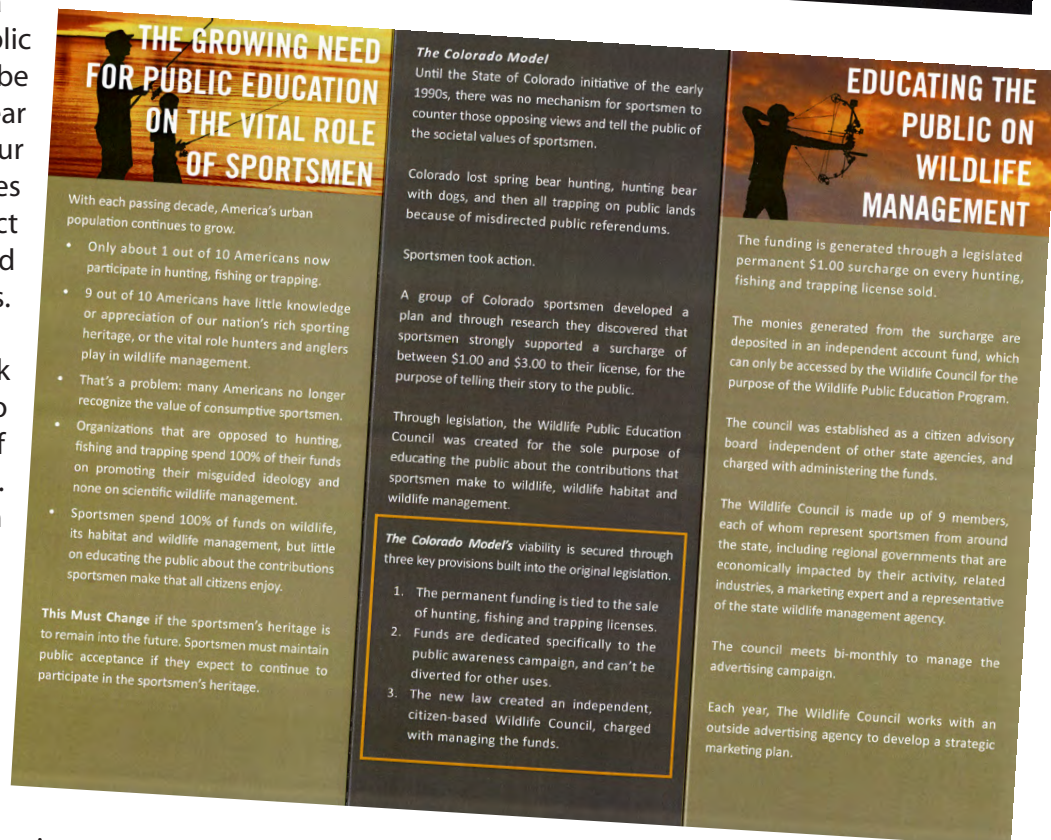
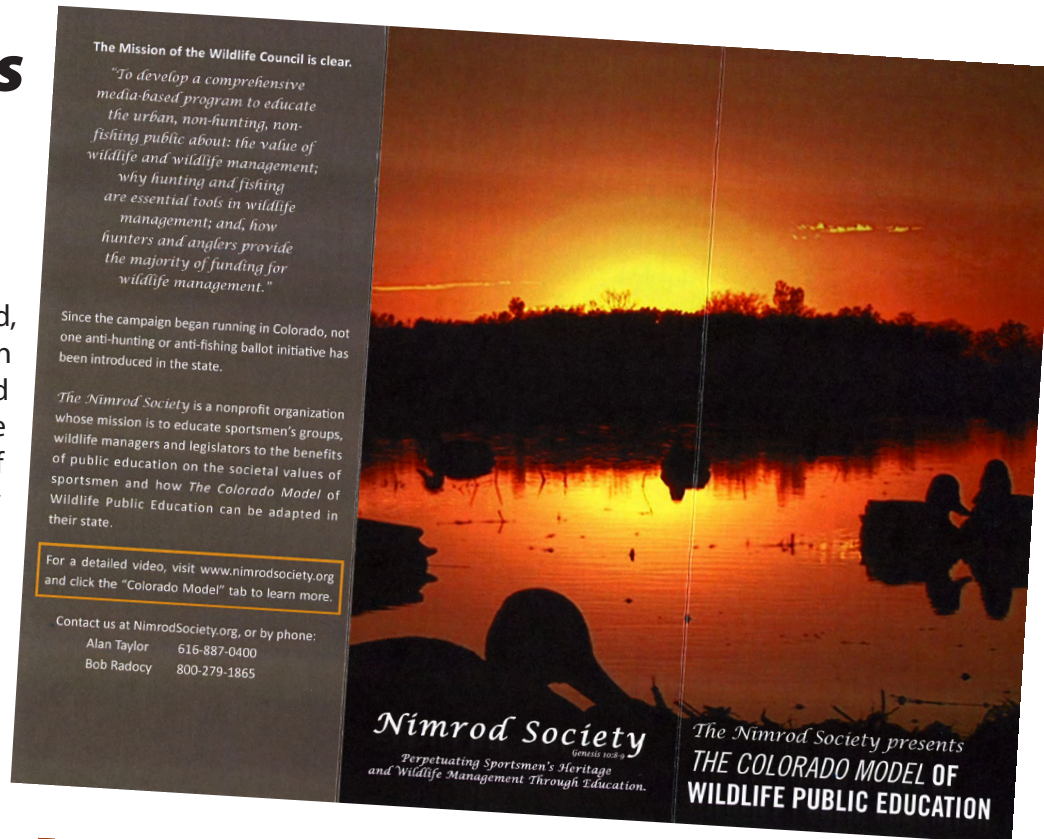
by Mary Harter

In August I accompanied my husband, Don Harter, to a special meeting in Lansing held for Chapter Presidents and other interested persons called by Merle Shepherd. Merle is a Past President of Safari Club International and we are very lucky that he is from Michigan and is very involved in helping our authorities with many hunting decisions. Also at this meeting was Bill Moritz, DNR Deputy Director, who also used to work for SCI.

Many things were discussed but the most interesting to me was a new approach to educating the public on wildlife management. You will be hearing more about this in the near future, especially when you buy your hunting, fishing, or trapping licenses next year. The funding for this project is being generated by a legislated permanent \$1.00 fee on these licenses.

The Nimrod Society (check Biblical reference) began a project to educate the public on the vital role of sportsmen and wildlife management. They began in Colorado after much lost hunting due to misdirected public referendums. In Colorado, sportsmen took action, developed a plan, and a way of funding it. Since then, no more anti-hunting or anti-fishing ballot initiatives have been introduced.

Check out this copy of their brochure and their website at nimrodsociety.org.



CONSERVATION AFFAIRS

By Larry Witte

EXPANDED BOBCAT HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The Natural Resources Commission approved two new Bobcat Management Units (BMU) in June that expands harvest opportunities in the Lower Peninsula. Seasons in BMUs, E and F run from December 10-20 for foothold traps and January 1-11 for hunting on public and private land.

BMU E includes Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Manistee, Mason and Lake counties. BMU F includes Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland and parts of Bay and Arenac counties.

ANTLERLESS LICENSES 2013

Multiple outbreaks of EHD and years of effective antlerless management strategies have resulted in reduced numbers of does in the southern lower peninsula. Therefore DNR proposed a substantial reduction in antlerless permits in the southern Lower Peninsula. Recommendations would reduce private land permits from 514,650 in 2012 to 345,500 for 2013, and down from 33,950 public land permits in 2012 to 30,150.

Due to several mild winters deer numbers in the northern Lower Peninsula have increased. Private land antlerless permits would be increased from 97,000 in 2012 to 122,700 for 2013. Public land antlerless permits would be increased from 30,900 in 2012 to 35,200.

MUCC HONORS SCI'S MICHIGAN CHAPTERS

Michigan's SCI chapters were collectively selected earlier this year for MUCC's most prestigious award—CONSERVATIONIST ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR.

SCI PROVIDES GRANTS TO SAVE HUNTING

South Africa—This year SCI has provided \$20,000 to the Professional Hunter's Association of South Africa (PHASA) to help with a public relations campaign to educate the general public and to combat the efforts of anti-hunters.

Alaska—This year SCI gave a grant of \$25,000 to the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) to assist in their efforts to preserve hunters' rights.

ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS DO LITTLE FOR LIONS

An SCI Foundation report released this summer found that animal rights groups keep the lion's share of donations "plowing the money into bloated overhead rather than into science and conservation of African

wildlife." The Humane Society of the United States (USUS), Humane Society International (HSI), (IFAW), and Born Free USA collectively raised \$151 million and spent about 1 cent in Africa for every dollar raised.

SCIMITAR HORNED ORYX, DAMA GAZELLE, AND ADDDAX

SCI perseveres to ensure that private conservation efforts will continue for these three captive African antelope species. Congressman John Carter of Texas along with his staff are working with SCI to reinstate less intrusive government regulations.

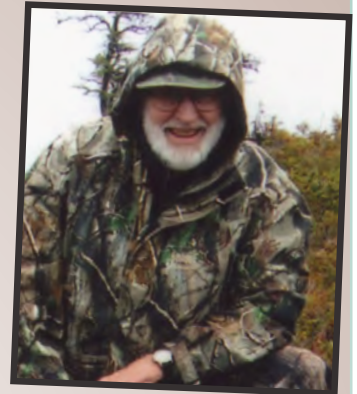
RECORD LEVEL FIREARM AND AMMUNITION SALES BENEFIT CONSERVATION

Federal excise taxes earmarked for conservation and paid on sales of firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment reached \$500million in FY 2012. Tax rates for long guns, ammunition and archery equipment are 11 percent and 10 percent for handguns. The threat of new stricter regulation continues to push firearms and ammunition sales to record levels.

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act divides the money among all 50 state wildlife agencies based in part on the number of license sales for each state. The money allocated requires a 25 percent state match and can be used for wildlife research, land acquisition, and habitat improvement.

AMMUNITION SHORTAGES

Record increases in firearms sales together with increased interest in shooting is causing shortages in available ammunition at local gun shops as well as national retailers. Popular rounds like .22, .223, .30-30, .30-06, 9mm, .380, .40 and .45 are difficult to find. Manufacturers facing high demands are working hard to increase production. National chains waiting for supplies say that they just can't get as much ammunition as their customers want. Some local shops are limiting the amount of ammo one person may buy (one box); others may sell you ammo as part of a firearms purchase. With the continuing high demand and some people stockpiling it appears that shortages may be with us for some time.



A TOUGH SLOG

By Joanne Witte



Russ and Wanda's house

Finally we got two good Merriam's turkeys!

We hunted in Wyoming and South Dakota with Western Gateway Outfitters owned by Russ and Wanda Roberts from April 27 to May 1, 2013. Last year we hunted with them but were defeated by weather that was too warm. Larry did shoot a jake last year but we decided then to return in 2013 and try for mature birds.

After a long drive we arrived at Hulett Wyoming, not too far from the Black Hills, on Sat. afternoon. There were four other hunters there from Tennessee. They were young, energetic, eager, and lots of fun. However most of the time we could not understand a word they said due to their heavy accents. With Russ the turkey hunt is for 4 days but he has people go out on Sat. afternoon so the hunt is really 4 ½ days. A hunter can shoot three birds—one in Wyoming and two in South Dakota. There were 3 guides, Russ, Dennis, and a young man. Dennis who was in his 70's just like us was our guide. Russ and the other young guide were with the young guys from Tennessee.

Sat. was a beautiful day—warm but not too hot. Dennis, Larry and I embarked on a long drive to an area where Dennis had seen lots of turkeys while scouting. Unfortunately we heard a few turkeys but did not see any. With Russ the hunters hunt until dark which is about 8:00PM, get back to camp after 9:30 and are finishing dinner about 10:00PM. The sun rises early there so we got up about 3:30AM and were off by

4:30 so we could be settled down and ready to hunt by sunrise. One of the most difficult parts of the hunt is lack of sleep. We usually got about 4 ½ hours a night.

The next day, Sun., the four guys from Tennessee had three birds by noon. We struck out again in the morning so Russ decided to go out with us and Dennis in the afternoon. He had a good spot.

Unfortunately it started to sprinkle while we were on the way. Russ drove us to the top of a mountain almost to the exact spot he wanted to hunt. After we got settled it started to rain harder. Russ said he would have to move the truck to get it out of the farmer's field because if it rained hard he would ruin the farmer's road getting out.

We were wet and freezing by then! We had lightweight clothes on with lightweight rain suits. The weather report said we would have weather in the mid 70's. Ha! I was freezing just walking to the hunting spot before even beginning. Russ walked back to where we were after moving the truck and I asked him how we would get out of there. He said we would walk down a two track. I have never been so cold in my life. By now it was raining really hard and I was shivering so much that I did not think I could shoot even if I saw a turkey. I found out later the other three guys were just as wet and cold as I was. Finally about 8:00 the rain stopped and we started down that lovely washed out former two track in the dark.

It was horrible! It was bentonite clay and we slid and slipped more than we walked. In some places the trail was almost vertical and rock strewn. Staying upright was a real challenge. Larry used two walking sticks and the two guides were holding on to him and carrying his shotgun. At one point Russ told me to stop and wait for them to come back to get me.

I guess deer and elk hunters out west have experienced the wet clay before but this was a first for me. The stuff clumped on my shoes and just got bigger and bigger until it felt like I was walking with cement shoes. Occasionally I tried to scrape some of it off but it was too slippery to get to the edge of the gulley to a spot that might work.

Larry made it to the bottom of the hill. I have no idea how much his clay laden boots must have weighed but his boots and braces alone weigh about 9 pounds. Ironically he fell when he got to

the base of the hill while trying to get to the car. I made it to the car eventually. Boy did that heater feel good!

After we got back to the lodge we had to find places to hang our wet clothes. All of the chairs and some of the mounts in the lodge were holding our wet clothes. Wanda and Dennis scraped the worst of the mud off our boots. They had to use knives.

continued on next page



My turkey - see blind in the right corner



Larry at the General Store in Allodin



Russ, owner, Larry, and Dennis, our guide

At dinner Russ announced that we would leave at 3:30 AM the next morning for South Dakota for the second phase of the hunt. That meant getting up at 2:30AM. Larry and I had talked earlier and we both said, "We are not going in the morning. All of our clothes are wet and we are too tired." Dennis heaved a sigh of relief too.

The next morning we had a good breakfast, showers, and a leisurely drive to St. Onge, South Dakota. On the way we went through Alladdin, Wyoming, where Larry, his Dad, and his brother had purchased their mule deer licenses for their first hunt in Wyoming 49 years ago.

Before going to St. Onge, which was about 50 miles from Hulet, Wanda had to clean the lodge, change beds and do washing, for the next group of hunters. She also had to get supplies for the next leg of the hunt. In St. Onge we stayed at Russ and Wanda's house which is very nice. The basement is set up for hunters with three bedrooms for a maximum of 6 hunters, a bathroom and a living room/dining room area.

That afternoon Larry and I sat in a blind very comfortably with our books, candy bars, and chairs. We took a .223 rifle with us because in South Dakota it is legal to shoot turkeys with a rifle. Last year we saw several turkeys that we could have taken with a rifle. Finally about 6:30PM we saw and heard three jakes come into view. Dennis was behind us calling. We said, "One, two, three" and we both shot and had two jakes. What fun! We were thrilled. After not even seeing turkey we finally got two.

The next day Dennis took us up behind the lodge one at a time on his 4 wheeler. It was 20 degrees that morning and we wore all our heavy Michigan hunting coats, pants, and long underwear. Luckily before leaving home at the last minute we threw in our heavy clothes. Little did we know at the time how happy that would make us. I told Dennis that the weather report we saw before we came said the weather would be great

but he said that did not mean anything there. We still did not see any turkeys even though we heard some.

That afternoon we returned to the blind. About 6:30PM we saw three mature birds jousting with each other and moving toward us. It was supposed to be my turn to shoot and what followed was a comedy of errors. I said the birds were moving away and I would have to use the rifle. Larry and I switched chairs and tried to get more windows open while I was going from rifle to shotgun and back and saying I can't get the bird in the scope. Finally Larry said, "Give me the rifle. I can shoot it." So I did and he did. It was moving away when he shot it at about 100 yards. It was a great bird.

We returned to the blind hoping a bird would come in for me but the wind began to blow so hard that we thought the blind would be blown away. Then the rain came horizontally like needles so Dennis raced back to the lodge on the 4 wheeler with us one at a time. With all the excitement we neglected to get a picture of Larry with his bird.

The last day we drove to another spot early in the morning and listened for gobbles as it got light but didn't hear anything so we headed back to the lodge without even setting up. In the afternoon we went back to our trusty blind. This time we set out two decoys and Larry did some calling from inside the blind. At about 6:30 again the turkeys streamed in. There must have been two dozen birds in groups of hens and jakes with two good toms in one group. One came right toward me and I had a good shot and got it. This time we got some pictures.

This was no easy hunt. The food and lodging were great and so were the guides. They worked really hard for us. But, the weather was terrible with the cold, wind, and driving rain. To make things even worse the birds were not cooperating but in the end we had our Merriam's turkeys. Now we just have the Gould's to go to complete our slam of North American turkeys.

Thank you!

Thank you SCI for sending me to Michigan Out of Doors Youth Camp! The last two summers I went to a different camp, but this camp was so much more fun! This camp was the best! I made lots of friends, went canoeing, and learned a lot about nature on long hikes through the woods. My sister and I slept in a log cabin with 10 other girls and two counselors, but on one night we got to pitch a tent and sleep outside in the tent! That night was so fun because after the campfire we caught fireflies and got to stay up late. We learned survival skills and had to build our own shelter out of what we could find on the forest floor. (My sister and I built the best one because it actually would keep you dry!) I also learned how to shoot and be safe with a compound bow and a .22 rifle! The best part is that at the end of camp we took our Hunter's Safety test and I passed it, so this year I can hunt for real!

Thank you so much for the best summer ever! I want to go back to this camp every year!

Sincerely,
Melanie Shelt, age 9
Granddaughter of Bill Shelt

Michigan Out of Doors Youth Camp is the BEST CAMP EVER! I made lots of friends and the counselors were so much fun. I loved all of the activities that we did there like making birdhouses, fishing, canoeing, walking to the nature museum, archery, shooting guns, making and sleeping in tents, and best of all, we had a campfire every night! At the campfires we always did funny skits (I got to be in some of them) and we learned lots of silly camp songs. The food at camp was really good. I also learned about Hunter's Safety. We did Hunter's Safety class twice a day and I learned so much. We studied the whole week and took our test at the end. I scored 100% on my Hunter's Safety test and now I have my Hunter's Safety License! I'm really looking forward to going deer hunting for my first time this fall!

It's all thanks to Safari Club International that I got to go to this camp! Thank you SCI! You're the best! I'll never forget all of the fun experiences I had at this camp that you sent me to! I hope you keep on sending girls like me to camps like this one!

Sincerely,
Aimee Shelt, age 11
Granddaughter of Bill Shelt



On Top of the World

by Mary Harter



Beautiful scenery while driving
along Afghanistan border

On November 15, 2012, we left a houseful of deer hunters to travel to Turkey and Tajikistan. We already had venison in the freezer from Don's bow kill which we cut up on the 14th besides cooking three meals ahead for our eleven hunters.

Off we were headed for Grand Rapids to Chicago to Istanbul, Turkey. It was poor timing by Michigan hunting standards but perfect timing for the hunting we had planned.

We were meeting up with our African PH, Ivan Carter, and photographer, Simon. The outfitter, Kaan Karakaya, from Shikar Safaris was also joining us and both Ivan and Kaan were hunting, too. Besides Turkey, and Tajikistan, Kaan's Shikar Safaris also have hunts available in Pakistan, Iran, China, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kamchatka, Magadha, Turkmenistan, Caucasus, Azerbaijan and along the Mediterranean from a cruise ship. So many areas I had never even heard of. Kaan had not been to this Hot Springs Camp in Tajikistan in over five years.

We had a five hour layover in Chicago where we

had to reclaim our guns and take them to Turkish Airlines. Ten hours and forty-five minutes after we took off we were in Istanbul with a seven hour time change. We met up with Ivan at the Swissotel where we stayed and ate our first Turkish dinner at a buffet with a variety of choices. Istanbul, formerly Constantinople, is a huge city of over 15 million people and we had a beautiful view of the waterfront from our room. The lights on the bridge across the Bosphorus Sea to Europe changed colors from blue to pink to yellow to green, etc. This sea is between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea.

Breakfast was a huge buffet followed by a tour of Istanbul. Ivan went spear fishing for tuna with Kaan down on the Mediterranean. Our guide/driver was Arda and during the next two days we saw the highlights of a huge, ancient city that is on two continents, Asia and Europe. We crossed the bridge several times during our tour and never had to show papers or anything because we were in the same city, in the same country, even though we were changing continents.

Turkey is 98% Muslim which made me very appre-

hensive of this trip but they are wonderful people who are not like most Muslims are portrayed. We were in two mosques that are now museums, Chora Church Museum which was from the Byzantine times, and Hagia Sophis Museum built in the 6th century, and the signs of former Christianity were everywhere. When we visited the Ahmed Mosque (the Blue Mosque) we took off our shoes and I wore a scarf, which the guide said wasn't needed because I was a tourist, but you could tell he appreciated that I was courteous to his religion. In an active church the men pray up front and the women pray in the back of the church. The women wore colorful scarves but I saw no burkas! Two women in the airport wore long, black outfits but without their faces covered. We had to get back to the U.S. to see women wearing burkas with the screens to look out through.

Istanbul has about 15 million people and over 3,000 mosques or temples. The TL (Turkish lira) equals 1.79 U.S. Gasoline is about \$11.00 per gallon with a 200% government tax. The streets are cleaned every three hours. The Muslims pray five times a day at the call to prayer on a rug and towards Mecca. They cannot pray in an area where a pet lives as it is forbidden but

sometimes a cat is an exception. They go to a mosque to pray at noon on Friday.

For dinner we ate fresh sea bass which they presented to us whole before cleaning and cooking. We were in the Grand Bazaar (the largest covered market in the world), spice markets, saw the fruits, vegetables, and seafood offered for sale, and, of course, were pressured to buy a Turkish rug which we didn't. Then we were on another redeye with Ivan, Kaan, and Simon headed for Tajikistan.

We flew to Dushanbe and then drove on for two days to camp. The first day was sixteen hours of driving unkempt roads through rugged mountains, and finally following a river bordering Afghanistan for a long ways. We passed many check stations but often the driver was waved on because Shikar Safaris were well known in the area. The check stations were mainly to keep drugs out and it was known that we were hunting. There were civilian and military check stations and once we had to show our passports. Never did I feel unsafe. Our driver was very familiar with the terrible roads and we spent almost as much time driving on the sides of the road as we did in the middle. I don't think anything

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Don with his Mid Asian Ibex



Snow covered, windswept mountains



Simon and Don with children outside their yurt



Don with Afghanistan the backg

had been repaired since they had become independent from Russia. Tajikistan is the poorest of the “stans” and it certainly showed in their roads.

But the scenery was worth it! Kodak moments with rugged mountains were around every corner. Simon was kept very busy as were we all trying to capture these memories.

The roads were ice covered in a few shaded areas but basically clear - just full of ruts and places where the sometimes found asphalt had buckled many times in a huge ridge right down the center of the road. We passed a lot of white trucks that were Chinese.

We spent the first night in Khorugh in a hotel on the grounds of the president of the province and were not to take any pictures. We left at 11:00 a.m., ate lunch at the home of Zafar, manager of the camp at Hot Springs. Zafar and his wife have three children and his

mother came to meet us. They had a very nice, modern home with a regular sofa and chairs seating area and then another area with cushions around a rug on the floor. His wife taught at the school and had never been out to camp.

We left Khorugh at 1:00 p.m. and traveled four hours until we met vehicles bringing successful hunters out from camp. We exchanged vehicles and continued another 2 1/2 hours to camp.

We kept climbing higher and higher. We were in the Pamir Mountains known as “The Roof of the World”. Eventually we were just following tracks of the previous vehicles across wasteland. We saw herds of goats, sheep, and yaks, all with their shepherds to watch them, some walking and some on horseback or on donkeys. These shepherds and their families live in yurts which are much like our Indian’s teepees but flat



Kaan and China in
ground



Inside the yurt



Mary and Ivan with their Marco Polos

on top and with floors of skins. Shepherds are needed to protect their animals from the many wolves in the areas.

We arrived at camp and were royally welcomed and settled into our rooms. Don and I had our own bedroom, Ivan and Simon another, and Kaan had his own. There was a living room and a bathroom with a flush toilet, sink, and shower. There was a large entry way where we kept a lot of hunting gear and off of it was a huge hot, hot, hot tub. Kaan, Ivan, Simon, and Don used the hot tub and then rushed out into the snowy out-of-doors to cool off but I didn't join them. The hot springs flow through this hot tub and warm our building and the others in this complex with the hot water in pipes circulating around the exterior.

This camp was at 13,500 feet elevation so we took 250 units of Diamox daily which helps your body use

less oxygen because the air is so thin at this altitude. We traveled up to 16,000 feet while hunting and any exertion made you breathe heavier and tired you out more easily. Your muscles burn from lack of oxygen. We had a nurse in camp, Sonja, who took our blood pressure morning and night and kept track of our health. Ivan and Don had attended a seminar at the Reno SCI Convention about hunting at high altitudes and we were prepared. We drank lots of liquids and green tea. Your blood pressure is lower at the high altitude.

After a good night's sleep we ate breakfast, checked our gun's accuracy, and were off to hunt. I was very fortunate to have Zafar as my guide. Karim was my gun bearer. Names were very unfamiliar and hard to pronounce and their English was sparse so it was a little hard to communicate but we all understood "shoot".

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The first day we traveled over 100 miles on snowy, icy, bumpy trails and usually were off road driving across frozen rivers and through snow drifts. We saw lots of Marco Polo sheep, over 500 with over 150 rams, but some herds were just uncountable. I rode in front with Zafar driving and Karim was in the back seat with my rifle and another fellow who spoke no English. They were eagle eyes spotting sheep that were hard for me to even see with my binoculars. Time and time again we stopped to glass the surrounding mountains and occasionally they would get out a spotting scope.

Once they were all quite excited, had me get out, Karim handed me my gun and told me to shoot the third from the left, so I thought. The sheep were all jumbled up and running up hill and the third from the left that I could see had no horns. By the time I could get on a ram, they were over 600 yards away so I didn't take a shot.

This is very hurried shooting at animals running away in a herd constantly changing positions so it is not as easy as shooting at a target where you can take your time, check your yardage, wind, change your scope, etc. My gun has a turret on the scope to set for distance and by the time you look at the sheep, have someone range it for you, then look at the turret and turn it and refocus on the sheep, and then try and figure the wind, you have lost your shot as the sheep have run another 200 to 300 yards or more and changed positions several times. You need to be able to just pull up and shoot.

We drove around some more and during the day got stuck twice, popped a tire, and tore off a running board on a rock. When something happened, out came the shovels or jack and we were back driving in no time. The vehicles were in very good shape and comfortable despite what they have been through. Some were Land Rovers, Dodge Rams, 4-wheel drive SUVs, etc.

Finally we found a nice herd of Marco Polo rams,

they were checked with the spotting scope, out came my gun and I tried to aim off the hood of the truck. It was too high so I knelt down on one knee and shot off the guard on the front of the truck which was very awkward. I shot at a ram as it turned broadside at 450 yards. They kept saying, "Shoot, shoot!" so I shot again holding a little higher as he was even further away. He flinched that time but kept running. Then they said I had hit him on the first shot. They all loaded back in the vehicle and said we would find him dead on the other side of the mountain. We drove around and glassed for a long time looking for the herd we had seen. Finally we saw them, out came the spotting scope, we could see the injured sheep but they go back over the mountain. The herd had stayed with the injured ram. It was starting to get dark so we headed back to camp.

At camp, Don's group hadn't seen any shooters, Ivan had a shot and missed, and no one else had any luck. At one point Don was high in the mountains seeing both China and Afghanistan.

We had wonderful Marco Polo mutton for dinner with French fries, tomatoes, and vegetable soup.

We were up and ready to hunt by 6:30 a.m. but my guides suggested I stay back and they would climb to find my ram which should be dead somewhere on the mountain. They also have a tracking dog.

They come back before noon with my Marco Polo. What a beauty!! They yelled, "Congratulations!" and I quickly put on warm clothes to go and see. They showed me where my shot had hit him - a little too far back to be dead on the spot - and said the wolves would have eaten him soon. Some of the herd had stayed with him but most had moved on. I went back to add my white camo and get my camera.

Soon Ivan and his group came in with Ivan's nice

Don and Kaan with Don's Marco Polo



Marco Pole and we set up for some photos and filming together. They took samples from both animals to send to a biologist for testing. Without the funding from hunters and cooperation of the outfitters with testing, these animals wouldn't exist. When Tajikistan was under Soviet rule, poachers took many of these magnificent animals but they have come back a long ways since they have had a conservation plan in place.

After lunch I went out for Mid-Asian Ibex. Simon went with me to film. We drove to a new area and saw lots. Finally we saw a shooter, set up, and as I was pulling the trigger realized the safety was still on. After readjusting for distance I shot but too quickly and missed. At least I didn't have an injured animal still alive this time. I would rather have a good clean miss if I don't have a good clean kill.

We drove back to camp through the river flats surrounded by huge mountains and saw seven wolves. These flats are flooded in the spring. We passed herds of yaks and saw the herdsman's yurts. The roads were marked occasionally by piles of stones to show the way when they would get snow. They can't get very much snow in the flats as the stone piles weren't very high.

When Don returned, he had a nice Marco Polo. He had also visited the home of a shepherd and his family. He got to see the inside of their yurt and they were very friendly. They didn't speak any English but the guides interpreted for Don. What a simple life they lead.

Tonight we eat delicious back straps from a Marco Polo.

Out again for ibex but today Shodi is my guide and driver. He is a former KGB and lost an eye and part of his face when a gun he was shooting blew up. He understands a lot of English. Before 8:00 a.m. we find a herd of ibex with four males so we pursue. When we are in position to shoot they tell me to shoot the black one but to me they all look black. I looked for horns but they all looked almost the same. I looked for the largest bodied one and shot. By now they are over 400 years away and running and I miss and they are gone before I can get off another shot.

About a half hour later we find another herd and as we approach they split. I shoot at one and miss. I fol-



low him up the mountain but never get another shot as he goes over the top. I give Shodi a "now what" look and he directs me to another and I shoot. They all cheer as it falls. They murmur back and forth at the distance and I asked how far it was. 510 yards. The ibex has fallen and kicks and they think they

can see a piece of him in the spotting scope but aren't sure. He is clear up at the very top. We drive around the mountain and as the other ibex run off, he is not with them. They spot again but can't see him. Shodi takes my gun and along with another, climb to see if they can find him. They want to take my gun and tell me a wounded ibex is more dangerous than a wounded Marco Polo because of the shape of their horns.

They radioed for Karim to bring the vehicle further down around the mountain to meet up with them. Then we drove back to camp to get more help plus a couple of dogs to help find my ibex. It took awhile to drive back to camp, drive out again, climb the mountain, find my ibex, and drive back to camp but they arrived back about 4:00 p.m.

Don shot an ibex this day also but his dropped in its tracks.

Since we all have been successful, we decide to leave for Khorog the next morning. We drove 6 1/2 hours to Zafar's home where we again have a wonderful lunch and they spend the night in the same hotel where we stayed on our way in.

Since we have good weather we decide to book tickets to fly from Khorog to Dushambe which only takes one hour compared to the rough 16 hour drive we had done on the way in. Often flying conditions are too bad but today conditions were good. The only thing, we have to pay for the seats for the plane to come from Dushambe to Khorog and then our seats to fly out. It will be split five ways so we agreed to do it. We flew Turkish Airlines and I know we were sometimes flying over parts of Afghanistan. We were flying quite close to beautiful snow cover mountains.

From Dushambe we flew to Istanbul and then on to Antalya which is right on the Mediterranean Sea. On the whole flight from Istanbul to Antalya we were never as high as where we hunted in the Pamirs in Tajikistan. Our Turkish hunt will be continued in the next issue.

WORTH THE WAIT

By Michael Ritchie D.C.

Mike on the skyline

My moose quest started thirteen years ago when my friend Dave Riffel D.C. and I began to put in for Shiras moose tags in Wyoming. Each year I was drawing a preference point and falling farther and farther behind as the Yellowstone wolves started leaving the park boundaries, and the number of available moose tags slowly became fewer and fewer. For those who have never heard of a Shiras, they are the smallest subspecies of moose with the Canadian being the next largest and the Alaskan-Yukon moose being the moya grande of all North Americas largest deer. With less than maximum points my lucky friend drew a random tag in 2005 and we went moose hunting. The result was a nice 33" bull on the wall and a pile of meat in the freezer. Seven long years have passed until I received the "successful" response on my draw results. The plan was the same but the roles switched. Dave would be the caller and I the shooter. Dave is a private pilot and he wanted to combine his two favorite pastimes: flying and hunting. Steve Malek, a friend and sky diving thrill



Steve Malek and
David Riffel flying

seeker would ride copilot and help us on our moose hunt. I drove out with two friends, rented a truck and picked up my friends from Laramie. We then headed to our moose spot just south of Jackson, Wyoming. Arriving in the afternoon we set up camp and went hunting. That night we spotted 3 cow and 3 calf moose. I have always heard that if you call at night the bull will be waiting for you in the morning. After a good night sleep we hiked to "moose valley" which was blanketed in fog as the sun came over the mountains. Steve, who has exceptionally good eyesight (although color blind) spotted a moose across the river at about 550 yards. "It's a bull" I confirmed after looking him over. I moved forward as close to the river as the 12 foot willows would allow and my callers set up in the open so that when the bull came through the willows he would walk right past my ambush position. When we didn't get a response Dave ran up the hill to see if he was coming and he saw a bull coming from behind us. I turned to see Dave and Steve repositioning and heard the bull coming.

Uruhh, Uruhh, he was closing fast but I couldn't see him. Scrambling to get in line ahead of the callers I knelt down 50 yards in front of Steve with the Renzo decoy. It is amazing how loud a bull moose sounds when they are coming. Being a very foggy morning I could barely see him at first. Then as he broke through the fog I saw he only had one paddle. They say never to pass on the first day what you would shoot on the last. My thought was if he gave me a 30 yd. shot I would take him.

Steve forever will be called the "decoy diva" because he drew that bull right in. A combination of raking and calling was used by Dave Riffel. With the decoy diva out front the love-sick bull had something to focus on other than me. As the bull approached to 30 yards I began to draw; unfortunately the bull picked up the movement and headed straight toward me. Realizing I may have to shoot him in the chest at 5 yd. I slid my single pin HHA sight from 35 to 20 yd. Just as a good caller should do, Dave gave his most excited plea to the

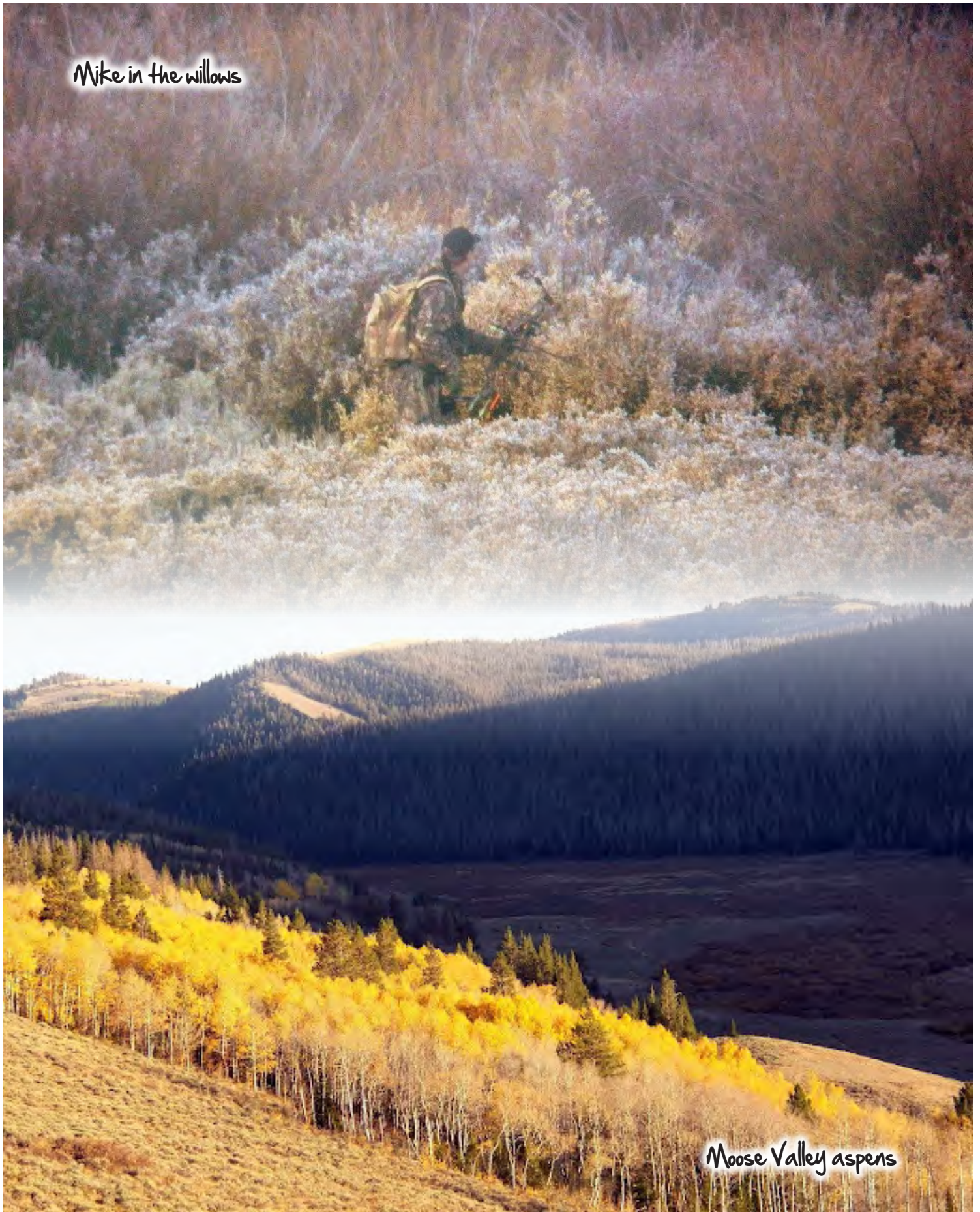


bull and turned him around 360 degrees. When his front leg cleared the vitals I released my arrow. The broadhead struck lower than I hoped and I realized that the bull had moved back out to 35 yd. when he spun around. The 800 pound beast ran off like a freight train and the waiting and worrying began.

You all know the feeling as you are confident in the shot, but you still have an uneasy feeling in the pit of your stomach. The only cure for this is to see him on the ground. Well, I played the shot over and over in my head, certain it was a good heart shot. We took a few photos of the area, re-enacted the decoy set-up and had a drink of water. We gave the moose an hour to expire. Finally I couldn't stand it any longer and we started blood-trailing my Wyoming trophy.



Mike in the willows



Moose Valley aspens



Dennis and Mike with antelope car

The trail led us into the heavy willows, and seeing the massive blood all over the place I began to realize that my 13 year dream was about to become true. Thirty yards into the willows laid the brown body looking so huge compared to a Michigan whitetail. The excitement was a combination of joy and thankfulness. Arriving less than 16 hours earlier to my hunting area it was now only 9 am and we got the job done. PTL! Pictures were



Tom Wall's buck

taken, hands of friendship given, the giving of thanks and the work began.

The nice thing about having guys along with you calling is that when you shoot something they are there to help pack it out. The butchering process was easy because shooting it in the early morning we had the whole day to pack it out. Nothing like trying to cut up and haul a big critter like a moose in the dark

with wolves howling and the threat of a grizzly bears in the area. It took us until 12:30 to finish the butchering job with Dave and I butchering and Steve hauling meat with the 4 wheeler. The hanging weight of the quartered out moose was 364 pounds when hung at the processor. As I started up the hill with the last load of meat I looked back and standing across the river was the big bull Steve had spotted earlier. It kind of put a smile on my face knowing he was still around. Although it took 13 years to draw a tag it was well worth the wait.



Lighted tent



African Anniversary Hunt

by Mike "Mac" MacEachron

Africa!!! As a young child I recall gathering at my grandparents' house for Sunday dinner with my cousins, aunts and uncles – and you dare not show up. Of course the women did their thing and the guys all gathered in front of the television for football, but more importantly for "The American Sportsman" tv show with Curt Gowdy.

We were all mesmerized by the exotic locations he visited. In particular, Africa!!! It was amazing all the variety of species on the Dark Continent. I'll never forget my uncles saying "Someday I'm going to go there". God bless em. Unfortunately they never made it.

Well here I was about to touch down in Windhoek, Namibia with my wife Sheila and son Michael to begin our first African Safari.

We would be hunting plains game with Stephan Jacobs of SMJ Safaris located in Grootenfein in Northern Namibia. Stephan offered a package hunt, all inclusive, for kudu, gemsbok, impala, springbok and warthog so Michael and I would each take that package. Sheila

would come as a nonhunter but would be able to shoot for trophy fees.

After clearing customs and taking care of firearm permits (for a first time hunt out of the country it's a unique experience) we were glad to see a placard with our name on it being held by Lowe, a guide for SMJ who was waiting for us.

After greetings and formalities we gathered our gear and packed everything into the land cruiser and enjoyed the scenery and beauty of our five hour drive to camp.

We saw kudu, giraffe, baboons, impala and springbok on the way. We were really in Africa. I wish my uncles could have made it.

Arriving at SMJ Lodge, we were greeted by Stephan, his wife Anza, Bennie (Stephan's brother-in-law and guide) and the staff that would make our trip memorable.

The camp was immaculate. Sheila and I had our own cabin. Michael had his own. Stephan never has

other hunting parties that are not part of your own party at the same time. There was an open pit for campfires and sharing stories. Meals were exquisite with a touch of South African flavor. The meats came from the back straps of harvested game. They were marinated and grilled over an open fire. My favorites were the Eland and Kudu

Each cabin had its own bathroom complete with hot showers. Generators and solar power provided electricity for the camp which is in the middle of nowhere.

It was the first of June. Winter in Namibia. Temperatures averaged in the mid-seventies. It was very comfortable. No snakes and no bugs!

After unpacking and settling in Stephan had us check the zero on our rifles to make sure they were still on. You never know with the airline handling and the bumpy roads.

Afterwards we had a wonderful dinner then sat back with our favorite beverages and enjoyed the campfire. Great stories and sounds of our first African evening.

I'd like to say after all the travel I was able to fall asleep right away but I immersed myself in the sounds of the bush. Waiting like a kid on Christmas morning.

At first light the staff was busy preparing breakfast and getting the vehicles ready. Stephan knocked on



our doors and said breakfast was ready. During breakfast Stephan went over today's plans and how the hunt would be conducted. Stephan would guide Sheila and I and Bennie would guide Michael. After a hearty meal we gathered our gear and rifles and began our safari.

On our way into the bush we picked up our trackers whom I would be amazed at their abilities to spot specific tracks and game and then track an individual species in the maze of tracks in the sand.

Driving about we spotted various species including Black Wildebeest, Duiker and Springbok. Stephan asked what our main objective was. I said Kudu but we wouldn't pass on other trophies if the opportunity presented itself.

One of the rules at SMJ was no shooting from the truck. If we saw a trophy we would get out of the truck and stalk the animal. But the favored tactic was to find a track and have the trackers follow it until we came across the desired species. Also, we would check water holes for animals or tracks and, if desired, hunt from a blind.

We were out approximately an hour when a call came over the radio that Michael had shot a 54 inch Kudu. Bennie had spotted the bull hiding in the bush. They slowly stalked the bull. Michael said he had an





opening about the size of a basketball to shoot through on the bull's shoulder and the Kudu dropped with the shot.

Meanwhile, Stephan wanted to check a waterhole so we got out of the truck and made our way through the bush. As we approached the waterhole the tracker stopped and pointed to an area ahead. Stephan said, "Zebras"!

Sheila had Zebra on her bucket list and so Sheila and Stephan started the stalk. Franzen, our tracker, and I stayed back. I saw Sheila raise her rifle onto the shooting sticks. After about five minutes, eternity for Sheila, she shot. The Zebra only went about 50 yards.

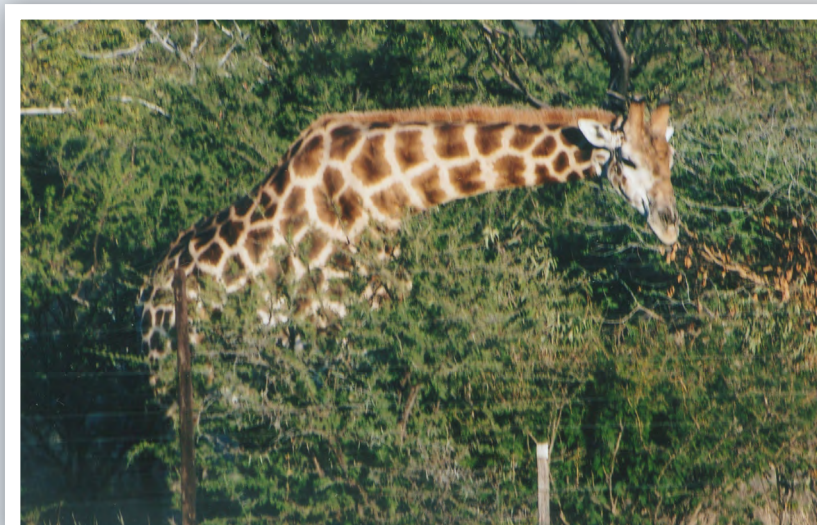
Sheila said there were 6 of them but they had to wait for the one Stephan said to shoot to come out of the bush. If you could put a price on smiles! What a first year anniversary gift for Sheila and I and a graduation gift for Michael

We loaded the Zebra and headed to the skinning shed. There we met Michael and Bennie. We left the animals for the skinners and headed back to camp for lunch and storytelling.

After lunch we found out that the

camp breaks off for a couple of hours to relax and get out of the hot sun. Then its gear up for the afternoon hunts. "Mac, let's go find you a big Kudu bull", Stephan said. "I know where a couple of big bulls hang out". Fine by me! Sure enough as we approached a water hole a 52 inch bull stood there with a couple cows drinking. At the shot the bull turned and ran. After an amazing tracking job by Franzen I was able to get a second shot on the big bull and I had my desired animal, the Grey Ghost of Africa. I was speechless.

The lights of the skinning shed showed activity when we arrived. Michael was standing next to a 35 inch Gembok. He said the tracker saw five bulls in the bush so they drove past the animals, gathered their gear and stalked back using the wind in their favor. Bennie picked out the biggest bull and Michael shot. The bull went about 75 yards.



Day 1: 1 Zebra, 1 Gembok and 2 Kudu. What a first day! I was a proud papa! On top of that, marinated Kudu back straps for dinner and great Bourbon by the campfire.

Day 2 started like the first. Stephan took us to another part of his concession. We

would be looking for Gemsbok and Blue Wildebeest. So we packed for an all day excursion. Driving along we saw so much game including Eland, Kudu, and Steenbok but not of Stephan's standards.

The area we were hunting was a lot more open than yesterday, with herds of Zebras and broken bands of Wildebeest.

Franzen tapped on the truck hood. He saw some Blue Wildebeest and said there were a couple of nice bulls in the group so Stephan and Sheila began the stalk using any available cover they could find. I stayed back – 2s company, 4s a crowd.

The shot caught me off guard. I had been watching the herd of Wildebeest when Sheila shot. So we made our way to the downed bull. A kiss, a handshake and more memories.

We broke for lunch under a large tree that afforded some shade. Sausage on an open fire, snacks and biltong which is seasoned meat hung in the sun to dry. I thought it was great. Sheila said no go.

After lunch it was back to the hunt. Again, lots of game. We were walking along the edge of a field where



Sheila shot her Wildebeest when Stephan stopped and said there was a large Gemsbok laying in the bush 125 yards away. So we waited until he stood up. To me it was a little too thick for a shot but Stephan insisted I shoot. At the shot the bull lurched and ran with us in hot pursuit through the prickly brush. He broke into an opening and my second shot dropped the 40

inch bull. Just call me ole 2 shot!

Dropping off the animals at the skinning shed there was no Michael so I was a little confused. So back to camp for dinner. Michael was in his cabin lying down. He seemed a little dejected. I asked what was up. He said his gun was off and he had missed an Impala and Springbok today. At dinner, Bennie said "ya, a couple of misses today". They did see a cervical cat catch a young Springbok and were able to video it. I said cool. So Bennie brought the camera over to show us. It showed Michael shooting an Impala and a Springbok. They had set me up! They both deserved an Oscar.

So Day 2: 1 Blue Wildebeest, 1 Gemsbok, 1 Impala



and 1 Springbok. Michael in two days had four of his package animals. How cool.

The next day I'm up before the crowd and out enjoying the cool African morning. A quick breakfast and we are off.

We tried a stalk on a group of Red Hartebeest but a Kudu cow blew and the Hartebeest got out of Dodge. So we continued through the bush and came upon a group of grazing Impala. Stephan said there was a nice ram in the group. A 75 yard shot and Stephan and I were standing over a gold medal ram.

Heading back to camp Stephan wanted to check a field for Springbok. Sure enough, there had to be 70 in the field with plenty of rams. We glassed the rams and found an exceptional one about 400 yards out. I prefer to get closer than that so we proceeded through the brush and closed the gap to 150 yards. The shot was true. Stephan was ecstatic. He said, "Mac, this is a top ten Springbok". I was happy to say the least.

So back to the skinning shed and then camp. During lunch a very large Warthog popped out of the brush at the waterhole a couple of hundred yards from camp. Stephan doesn't normally allow a shot that close to camp but this was an exceptional animal so he said OK. Michael grabbed his rifle and he and Bennie closed within 75 yards of the giant tusker. One shot, one kill. It was the largest Warthog taken in three years with SMJ Safaris. Michael had filled out in 3 days.

I had a Warthog left on my itinerary so I asked to sit on a waterhole for the afternoon to take it easy and also to tape and take pictures of anything that came in. Stephan said no problem and dropped Sheila and I off with Franzen.

We saw Kudu, Gemsbok, Hartebeest, Guinea Fowl and Doves. What was really cool were the giraffes. We were in an elevated blind in a tree top and when the giraffe came in they were still taller than us.

We saw lots of Warthogs but Franzen said they were all too small so we enjoyed the show.

Day 3: 1 Warthog, 1 Impala and 1 Springbok.

On the fourth day, Sheila and I wanted to go back to a waterhole and sit. It was relaxing and reminded us of hunting back home. So Stephan dropped us off with Franzen. Right away we saw Guinea Fowl and female Warthogs with young ones. Young Kudu bulls shuffled their way in then a group of 20 Zebra came in a sea of



white and black.

Stephan picked us up for lunch. There was a little excitement in camp. Stephan's brother has a sheep ranch close by and something was killing his sheep. One of the traps he had set was missing. So Stephan grabbed Michael to help with the bandit. The trackers followed the tracks and the trap to an Aardvark hole. In the hole was a very upset critter. Stephan told Michael to get ready. The trackers would prod above the hole and the bandit would emerge. Well, it did and Michael came face-to-face with a very angry hyena. Michael backed up a step or two then regained his composure and put down the hyena. He said it was a very unnerving experience but very exciting.

The last day we again sat at another waterhole. This time a large boar Warthog came out of the bush. Franzen gave me the OK. I did my Warthog dance!


I cannot really put into words the beauty of Africa and it's animals, birds and people. It was everything I had dreamed of and more. I gained a new appreciation of life and what it stands for. It's forever changed my views on life.

I would recommend a trip to SMJ Safaris or just to Africa. It is so affordable. There is no better bargain in the hunting world.

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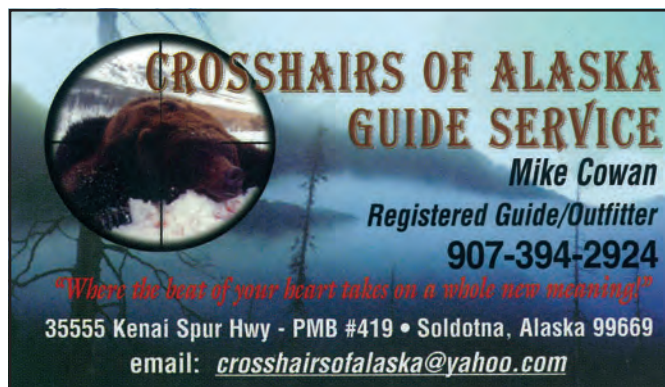
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