

FRONT SIGHT



SCI
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

April - June 2015, Issue 30



Eric Chesney's Buck
by Daniel Reinke
Reinke Photography
(Eric's Grandfather)

CHAPTER MAGAZINE AWARD - SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL
FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW



JOHAN PIETERSE SAFARIS



SOUTH AFRICA
ZIMBABWE
MOZAMBIQUE



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In This Issue - April - June 2015

- 2 Chapter Officers and Board Members
- 2 Meeting Schedule
- 3 Your President
- 3 Editor's Message
- 3 Application for Membership
- 4 SCI Record Book Instructions
by Josh Christensen
- 6 Big Buck Night
- 8 Beal City's Big Buck Night
by Mary Harter
- 9 Last Day Buck
by Tim Torpey
- 10 Veterans Hunts
by Randy Raymond
- 13 Proud Youth Hunter - Eric Chesney
by Randy Raymond
- 14 A New Twist on Texas Exotics
by Joseph Vorro
- 18 Vocatio Suprema, Excellence Requires Passion
by Dick Stockmar
- 22 Why Didn't I Buy a Lottery Ticket with my License?
by Lee Slagell
- 24 Russian Moose Hunt
by Roger Card
- 27 Looking on the Bright Side
by Michael L. Richie D.C.
- 28 A Truck Load of Bucks
by Robert Mills
- 30 A Couple of Decent Mule Deer
by Steve Marshall
- 34 Conservation Affairs
by Larry Witte
- 35 Sportsmen Against Hunger Program
by Mike Strobe, Chairman
- 36 Looking Ahead



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 2506 and changes yearly on February 15th. Please carry membership identification on you when you visit the range.



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Chairmen are listed first

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

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In order to help us bolster new membership, Jay's Sporting Goods of Clare and Gaylord is generously offering a \$35.00 gift card for every new member to our local chapter. Contact Kevin Chamberlain for more information.

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President's Message

What a busy time of the year for your Chapter. I just recently returned from the National SCI Convention in Las Vegas in early February. If you have not ever participated in this event you should really consider attending. Next year's National SCI Convention will be held February 3rd through the 6th, 2016. You can attend one through all 4 days. It is very hard to describe both the size of the facility and the environment. There are over 2000 vendors from jewelry, clothing, firearms and of course outfitters from every corner of the globe.

Upon returning home we immediately continued working with your Board planning the final details for the fundraiser the end of February. This is where the many months of soliciting auction items all come together for your fundraiser. This year's fundraiser is shaping up as potentially one of the best ever. We will have over 70 vendors on site; about half will be outfitters from around the world; mostly America, but also Africa, Mexico, Canada, New Zealand and Spain and the remainder vendors such as, property consultants, implement dealers, archery and firearm vendors, safe and optic vendors. While there is much work left to do during your fundraiser, I would like to take the time to thank all the individuals for both their effort and time putting your fundraiser together and ask for volunteers from the membership to consider helping in next year's fundraiser which will be the last weekend in February 2016.

Sincerely,

Joseph H. Mulders
Joe Mulders

President, Mid-Michigan Chapter of SCI

Editor's Message

Just got back from the International Convention in Las Vegas. Such a whirlwind of activities with five special dinners in a row. On Wednesday, we received the Chapter Magazine Award for the fifth year in a row. On Saturday, all of our children and grandchildren spent the day on the convention floor followed by the Evening Dinner where I received the Diana Award, the 2015 International Woman Hunter of the Year with a filmed presentation followed by my speech. There will be pictures of convention happenings in the next issue.

Our chapter convention is right before this and goes to press so pictures of those activities will be in the next issue, also.

SCI certainly keeps us busy. We attend several other Michigan chapter conventions and will be presenting the story of our Eastern Cape South African hunt again for the Michigan Chapter on April 9. If any of you are interested, give Stony Bing (Region Rep. on previous page) a call for a reservation. We will be at the Pinnacle in Grandville.

Hope many of you are planning to hunt turkeys. We certainly are. No matter how much other hunting we do, calling turkeys is still one of my favorites.

Keep Hunting,
Keep Writing,

Mary J. Harter

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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. ☐ EMAIL ADDRESS

☐ HOME

STREET _____

CITY _____

TELEPHONE _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

☐ BUSINESS

STREET _____

CITY _____

TELEPHONE _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE)

18 +

1 Year

\$ 35 National Dues

\$ 25 Local Dues

= \$ 60

3 Years

\$ 150 National Dues

\$ 75 Local Dues

= \$ 225

Life

\$1500 National Dues

\$300 Local Dues

= \$ 1,800

Over 60

\$1250 National Dues

\$200 Local Dues

= \$ 1,450

Check/Cash attached \$ _____

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

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____

EXPIRATION DATE _____

NAME ON THE CARD _____

APPLICANTS SIGNATURE _____

SPONSORS NAME _____

DATE OF APPLICATION _____

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SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

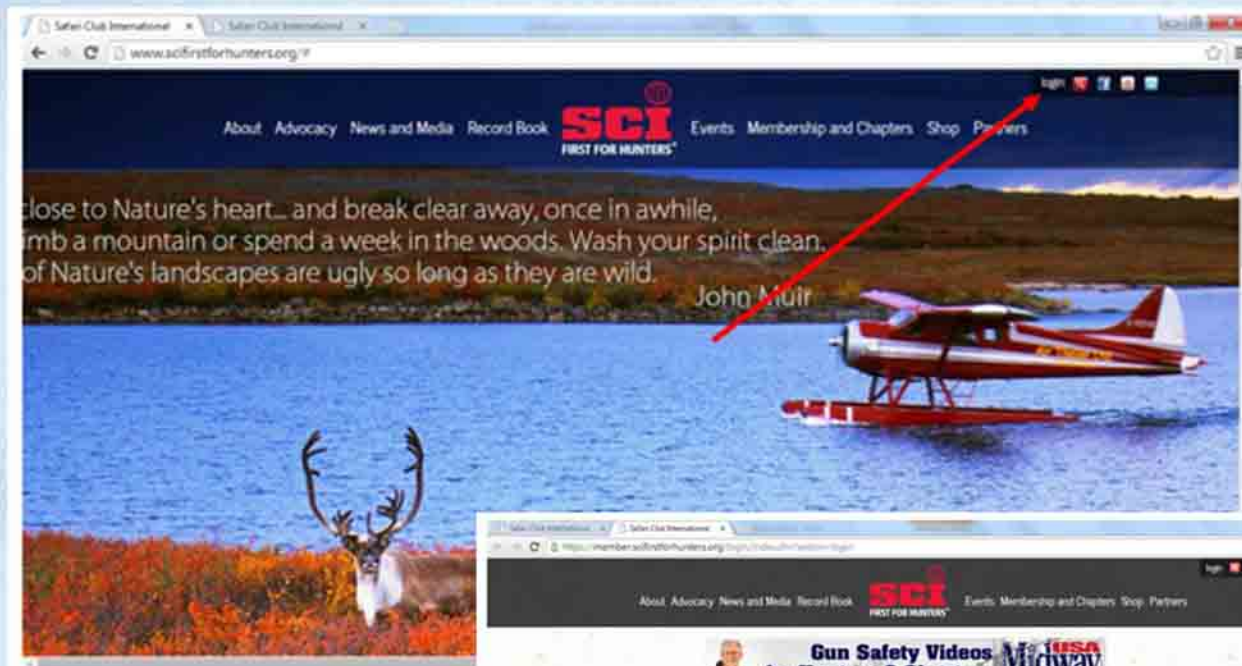
Date	Meeting Type	Time	Location
April 6	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
May 4	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
	Membership	6:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
June 1	Board	4:30 p.m.	Comfort Inn
August 3	Board/Budget	4:30 p.m.	Harter's
September 6	Membership Trap Shoot	1:00 p.m.	Camp Misery

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



SCI Record Book Instructions

by Josh Christensen



The purpose of this article is to inform you as SCI members that you have a free database of information at your finger tips to help you when deciding who you will take your next hunting trip with. That database is the SCI record book located on the SCI official website, www.scifirstforhunters.org. On this website you can read what other SCI members experienced while hunting with an outfitter as well as the animals they took. You can also write your own hunt report for other members to read. This is a great opportunity for us to help each other find the right outfitter for our next adventure. This database of information was launched only about a year ago, but many SCI members have begun to take advantage of it by posting their experiences. I wish this site would have been up and running long ago, due to a bad experience I had last year (This outfitter has a less than favorable



review from a fellow SCI member.) I ask you as hunters and members of this great organization to help all members by writing and submitting some of these hunt reports. They are easy to fill out and you will be doing a great service to members everywhere by doing so. Here are the steps to follow to get started.

First go to www.scifirstforhunters.org. Once there move your cursor over the "login" in the top right corner of the page. Click on this and it will take you to the login screen.

If you do not have a login yet it will prompt you to type your last name and your membership number to set up your login.

Once you have a login and are in your account scroll down the page until you see "Quick Links". The first link under this is "Online Record Book", click on this link.

Now you are on the record book page and can submit a hunt report by clicking on the "Hunt Reports" button toward the top of the page.

Click on "Submit New Report" and follow the directions from there.

If you ever want to return to the main record book page simply click on the "HOME" button in the upper right hand corner of the page.

If you would like to see a hunt report for a specific outfitter go back to the record book home page by clicking the "HOME" button. Once there you will see a "Browse By" section, within that section is an icon for "Hunting Company/Guide".

Click on this button, and then enter the name of the outfitter in the "Enter Keyword" blank. Not all of these outfitters have hunt reports yet but hopefully most of them will with the help of members like you.



Big Buck Night

January 10, 2015

PICTURES BY DANIEL REINKE. REINKE PHOTOGRAPHY

YOUTH WINNERS!



BIG BUCK NIGHT AWARDS

- Overall Biggest Youth Buck - Ben Fath
- (All Youth Hunters received Medals)
- Biggest In State Rifle - Mike Strobe
- Biggest In State Bow - Randy Raymond
- Biggest Out of State Rifle - Brian Schafer
- Biggest Out of State Bow - Kyle Rechsteiner
- Biggest Estate Buck - Dawn Manthei
- Youth Estate Buck - Eric Chesney
- Biggest In State Muzzleloader - Dan Deboer
- Biggest In State Crossbow - Scott Holmes
- Biggest Out of State Mule Deer - Allen Taylor
- Biggest Out of State Muzzleloader - Mark Holdship
- Biggest Buck Taken by a Woman - Lindsey Ames and Joanne Witte
- Overall Biggest Buck in the State - Brian Schafer
- Biggest Non Member Deer - Joe Stalter (Received a Free Membership)
- Also present were two of our Veterans who spoke about their wonderful experiences hunting, Teal Saylor and Joe McLosky, and we learned that our Pathfinders chairman, Randy Raymond is known as "the string guy". You will just have to ask him about that.
- Jim Walker won the gun drawing for a 30-30 Marlin
- Mary Harter won the reverse bingo contest

THANK YOU MEASURERS

By Joanne Witte, Awards Chairperson

Many thanks to the measurers for Big Buck Night on Jan. 10, 2015 at the Comfort Inn in Mt. Pleasant. Without the measurers Big Buck Night could not happen. The following members and non-members gave of their time and delayed their enjoyment of the camaraderie and the meal to measure whitetail and mule deer brought in by members and non-members.

Bill Shelt	Nick Guiliani	Travis Wood
Jake DeVuyst	Chris Manthei	Mike Johnston
Brian Ames	Don Harter	Joanne Witte
	Owen Eldred	

It is especially fun to watch the youngsters who come to the event. It is obvious they are waiting for the time when they can hunt for the first time or hunt again. Thank you again measurers!

Beal City's Big Buck Night

by Mary Harter

This was the third year for a Big Buck Event at Tim's Barbershop in Beal City. It was sponsored by Mid-Michigan SCI and Dave Connors, owner of Tim's Barbershop. To participate in the big buck contest, your buck had to be taken legally in the 2014 whitetail hunting season and harvested with a gun, bow, muzzleloader, handgun, or crossbow.

All hunters, both youth and adult, were to register at the barbershop so we could anticipate how many would be present on January 10 for the award ceremony. As you can see, several successful hunters participated.

This will be done again next year. All lucky hunters, be sure to stop by Tim's Barbershop and register your buck. We would love to see all of the successful hunters and their rewards. Congratulations to everyone that participated and we wish you good luck on the upcoming season.



Last Day Buck

by Tim Torpey

A few years ago I decided to challenge myself on trying to take all of the "North American 29". The last deer species that I had left was the Sitka Blacktail Deer. This little deer is found in south east Alaska. I booked a hunt with Scott Newman of Alaska Bear Guides. The hunt was booked for the end of November. This is the best time to hunt because the deer are in the fall rut.

When I arrived the weather was warm and the deer were not moving much. The style of hunting was stalking through the dense forest. The forest was made up of Sitka spruce, hemlock and cedar. The brush was alder brush, willow and devils club. In some spots you could only see 5-10yds and some spots would open up to 60-70yds. The going was very slow so we would not spook the deer before we could look at them. Sometimes we would only move 10yds in 15 minutes. Each step was carefully placed so we did not snap a stick or crunch a leaf. My guide, Logan Canton, was a pro at moving silently through the forest while I sounded like a dump truck.

This was only a four day hunt. By the end of day 3 we had only seen 3 does and no bucks. I was a little worried that I may have to come back to finish this hunt. The forecast was calling for cooler weather so I hoped that would get the deer moving.

The last day the air had definitely cooled down and everything was covered in a very heavy frost. This made the forest floor very noisy to walk on. About an hour into our stalk Logan spotted a deer about 45yds ahead. We could not see if it was a buck because he was standing in a low spot. When he raised his head I could see the antlers and a small piece of his neck so



I shot. The buck went down instantly. It is amazing how one's outlook can change with a little success.

I have gained a whole new respect for the stalking style of hunting. The thick brush and dense forest are unlike what I have experienced in my previous hunts.

This was a fun experience and I enjoyed the hunt. I also enjoyed living on a boat during the hunt and boating to and from the shore and the big boat every day. Scott Newman has super equipment and takes care to make sure you have everything you need to be successful. Scott also hunts Mountain Goat and Brown Bear.

VETERANS HUNTS

by Randy Raymond

Sissy Taylor Hollon

(U. S. Army Veteran - 25 years) -

On Saturday, October 11th, a frosty cold 29 degree morning, we arrived at A.J. Wildlife ready for hunting. The weather was perfect, cool with the possibility of warming to around 56 degrees. There was not much wind. Sissy Hollon couldn't ask for a better day. She was well prepared, armed with a single shot, scoped, .243, a gift from her father who had just passed away a few days before this hunt.

I had shooting sticks because this was going to be an open hunt meaning no blinds. We visited with Dr. Bogai making a plan on trying to have a good encounter with a buck. Everyone knows you have to have a plan.

Mark Newcomb and his son, Ryan, from MM Meats had met us at A.J. Wildlife to help in any way that we needed.

We went out to hunt and it wasn't long and a buck came sneaking through the thick cover. Sissy was ready resting her rifle on the shooting sticks. The buck passed by offering no shot and stopped out of sight. Minutes passed by seeming like hours and the buck finally showed himself in a small opening. I stopped him with a grunt and he stared in our direction. Carefully Sissy aimed and fired. The buck jumped in the air and went forward out of sight into thick cover. Sissy turned and said, "Did I get him?" "Yes," I said, "the way he reacted to your shot, you hit him perfectly. Let's give him a few minutes and we can settle ourselves down and go look for him." Some time passed and we went over to where



she shot. We all began the job of tracking. This didn't take long. Sissy's buck only made it fifteen yards. What a happy lady! Her reward was a fourteen point buck. Ryan and Mark Newcomb from MM Meats started dragging. Too soon this hunt was over.

After many photos and congratulations, Mark and Ryan loaded the buck into the back of their pickup and were off. Mark made all of the taxidermy arrangements at Randy Recreations for Sissy.

Joe McLosky

(U. S. Army Veteran) -

Joe was going on an archery hunt. The first time out was a good one since three awesome bucks came out but they never gave Joe a good angle for a perfect shot. I respect Joe for waiting for a perfect arrow placement. No one wants any animal to suffer or end up a lost trophy.

October 20 was going to be our next hunt and I met Joe at Jays in Clare at 1:30 p.m. We were meeting Leon Low at 2:30 p.m. to start Joe's hunt at 3:00 p.m. at Leon's

Trophy Whitetail Ranch near Falmouth.

Another perfect day for hunting. The wind was in our favor and it was cool. The bucks were showing more interest in the does. We hadn't sat very long in the blind when we started seeing deer movement. Off to our left a large ten point was making his way towards a shooting lane. Minutes seemed like hours. Joe held his composure waiting for that

perfect angle to place his arrow. While slowly drawing his compound bow, the buck turned and gave Joe a perfect quartering away angle. Joe released the arrow. The buck took off like a rocket. He ran about twenty yards and fell to the ground, got back up, stumbled, and fell dead all within three



or four seconds. That's when Joe lost it. What a rush! His excitement was something to see. Joe had his big ten point with a bow. Unbelievable what a two blade

Rage and a man with a bow can accomplish.

Many photos were taken and Leon field dressed the buck. Then the buck was off for weighing and to Leon's cooler and then on his way to MM Meats for processing.

Teal Saylor

(U. S. Army Veteran) -



On another great hunting day, Teal was hunting with a custom .270 scoped Remington rifle. We arrived at Leon Low's around 2:00 in the afternoon. Leon told us the bucks had started to chase the does. We should be in for a real exciting hunt.

On our way to the blind, Leon had prepared earlier, Teal was commenting on how thick the habitat was and the number of large buck rubs. Soon we were in the blind with Leon. He had a heater and three office chairs waiting. It was a very comfortable and well

manufactured blind. Leon Low's property is very well set up. It's not a over browsed open country area. These deer are human shy. They see you or smell you and they are gone. I would say the deer there are harder to hunt than a farm field deer or deer in a private land area. I think they kind of know you are after them.

An hour passed by fast before our first deer was spotted. A doe was traveling fast through the thick cover. A few minutes later a buck was on her tail. Then another larger buck, a shooter. They made their way out of sight. Then the doe circled back and crossed a shooting lane. The large buck was on her trail. As he entered the shooting lane, he stopped perfectly in the center of this opening and Teal aimed his rifle. Leon said, "Shoot him if you want but there are bigger ones." This buck just stood there staring. Just as quick as he appeared, he was gone in hot pursuit of that doe. Teal turned slowly and said, "I hope I don't regret that. That's the biggest buck I've ever seen."

Another hour passed and a large doe came down the oak ridge and following her was a buck but not the one Teal was waiting for. Another doe and another buck. This one was a giant but there was no chance for a shot. They moved quickly through an opening. Teal was waiting for a shot opportunity but they did not stop. Another 20 yards and the buck stopped behind a large oak. No chance for a shot. He just stood looking around. There was no way he winded us. What was he waiting for? Then he slowly stepped into an open spot only to turn and start walking fast straight away in the direction the doe had gone. I



let out a loud blat. He stopped and turned perfectly broadside. Teal took his shot. The buck took off like a rocket, straight away, the same way the doe had gone. Teal asked "Did I miss him? I couldn't have. I think I missed him."

Leon and I both reassured Teal that we thought his shot was good. We waited awhile. It was getting darker and harder to see. Soon we broke out the flashlights and located the area where we thought the buck was standing when Teal had shot. No blood. We started looking around and off to our right by a large maple lay Teal's giant, a buck of a lifetime. What an awesome sight! These

deer are truly amazing. Their body size is incredible. The buck had traveled around seventy yards with a perfect shot placement behind the shoulder. Leon called for help because dragging the buck out to a good loading spot was going to be a job.

Leon weighs every deer and field dresses them for every hunter. More photos and we were on our way home. The next day we went to the Trophy Room at Jay's in Clare where Jake caped out Teal's deer, making all the proper measurements. Then we were off to MM Meats for processing.

Special thanks to Doc Bogai of A.J. Wildlife for hugely discounting the price of his hunts and to Leon Low of Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch for his large discounts as well as a 100% donation for our Youth Hunt. They also allowed for the harvest of much larger bucks than promised. Another special thank you to MM Meats for discounting the cost of processing the meat. Thanks to everyone else involved in making these hunts happen.



Proud Youth Hunter - Eric Chesney

by Randy Raymond

Eric Chesney was our youth hunter this past year. Once again we were hunting at Leon Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch and this hunt was a 100% donation from Leon. Eric's grandfather, Dan Reinke, was also along on this hunt. The weather was cooperating. It was a good day for hunting.

Leon had a blind all set up for Eric with a heater, if needed. It wasn't long and we started to see deer. Bucks came in, large bucks after a doe. A big ten point came close to the blind and stopped in a clearing. Eric said, "Can I shoot him?" Leon said, "No, he's too big." Eric was watching the deer and shaking his head wishing he could shoot this buck. The deer looked back towards the way he had come from and out came another buck, a smaller seven point. Eric looked at Leon. "Can I shoot that one?" Leon said, "Yes, wait for a broadside shot." This deer wouldn't turn sideways for anything. Poor Eric was put to the test. More deer came out, too many deer walking back and forth in front and behind this buck, never giving him a chance for a clear shot. This was very nerve racking for Eric but we explained this is hunting. Leon told Eric, "Come on back next week and we will try this again." This sounded good and worked with everyone's schedules.

One week later we were back at Leon Low's heading to a different area, new blind, new set up. Leon told Eric, "This should be good but we will just have to wait and see." In the blind we went and everyone was nice and comfortable. We got Eric in the proper position for a shot. A couple of hours passed and no deer. A few Granola bars were in Eric, some water, but no deer. The weather forecasted rain in the evening. Things weren't looking good for Eric's hunt. Then Eric's grandfather said, "There's a deer walking in from our right." It was a large buck and fifty yards behind him was another larger buck. Eric saw them and said, "I can't shoot them either. Nope, they are too big." Eric just shook his head and watched them milling around a scrape. About five minutes had passed when Leon leaned over and whispered in my ear, "Will the one on the right work?" It was the biggest of the two. I said, "Are you sure?" Leon nodded, "Yes." I leaned over to Eric and whispered, "You can shoot the one on the right." Eric slowly raised his rifle and carefully placed it out the window and waited for this buck to turn perfectly broadside. When the buck was broadside, Eric placed his shot and down went his deer. What a buck, a deer of a lifetime!

Photos, of course, were first on the list, then the work began getting this guy into the back of the truck. More photos at Leon's cooler. Leon dressed out Eric's buck showing him how it's done. More pictures and off to MM Meats for special discounted processing. What a hunt! Wonderful memories for everyone. Many stories for Eric's friends and family. A very special thank you to Leon Low for this 100% donated hunt with a much larger buck than promised. What a happy hunter! (Be sure to check out cover photo.)



A New Twist on Texas Exotics – A Concierge Hunting Service

by Joseph Vorro

There's a great deal of truth to professional humorist and prize winning American author Dave Barry's quote, "... never be afraid to try something new, remember that a lone amateur built the Ark, a large group of professionals built the Titanic." It's that spirit of trying "something new" that spurred me to find a fresh twist to a Texas exotic animal hunt - specifically, to find the best blackbuck antelope to hunt.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) indicates the earliest release of exotics there were nilgai antelope. The King Ranch purchased nilgai between 1930 and 1941 from the San Diego Zoo to stock on the ranch's south Texas rangelands. About that same time, blackbuck, axis, sika, and sambar deer also were released. Later, in the 1940s and 50s, mouflon sheep, eland antelope, red deer, barasingha and other species also were released.

Since then, Texas ranchers and conservationists have imported exotics from all over the planet. Numbers of these many species now in Texas actually surpass populations found in their native lands. Much of this

can be attributed to Texas climate, habitat, animal husbandry expertise, and available space. However, it also is clear that the presence of successful exotics in Texas is directly related to their economic impact on the hunting industry, in addition to income from nature-based tourism.

When researching my blackbuck hunt, I used a variety of resources, including back issues of SCI's "Safari Magazine", the WWW, "The Hunting Report," and many hunting magazine tear-outs that I've collected for years. These resources were helpful, but they didn't reveal anything new or different until I discovered Estate Trophy Hunts, David Blankman's concierge hunting service.

Estimates and surveys indicate that Texas has more than 250,000 exotic animals of over 125 different species - either free-ranging or behind fences. Further, the Wildlife Division of the TPWD indicates that exotic species occur in over half of Texas counties - an area totaling more than 2 million acres, or nearly the total acreage of the state of Rhode Island. Further, approximately 68% of all confined exotics were found

in the Edwards Plateau (the Texas Hill country), while south Texas accounted for the bulk of free-ranging exotics (about 51% of the statewide total).

Given the myriad options available for a hunt, all it took was one phone conversation with David to tell me he was the outfitter/guide I was looking for.

I told David that I didn't need a special lodge, a large group of hunters or a ranch where blackbucks had recently been stocked. Instead, I desired a ranch with modest accommodations. I also wanted an outfitter who understood that I chose to shoot a particular blackbuck, not one in a small pasture or behind a barn. David understood my requirements and agreed to connect me with the best blackbuck possible.

If you've hunted in South Africa with a professional outfitter/PH, you've likely experienced a hunting concierge. It's a simple concept: in this case, David delivers pre-scouted hunts for the species and quality of species that you desire, and it's all done in Texas. In doing so, he matches the best ranches, ranch locations and hunting details with the ethical and aesthetic considerations of your choice.

Over the course of the next few months, David scouted numerous Texas ranches to locate animals that fit my description, and related to me the results of his



search, including photographs of appropriate blackbucks, costs and ranch details.

The ranch we decided on is spectacular - just over 2,000 acres of fenced, rolling terrain with diverse topography. The vegetation consists of mesquite, cedar, oak, cultivated

land, and the remainder of the ranch had healthy native brush, pastures and lakes. The ranch is a weekend home for its owners, but also functions as a prominent

whitetail deer breeding facility. The facility, pens and barns are well conceived, and their deer program concentrates on breeding, raising and hunting exceptional whitetail deer. The careful attention to wildlife preservation by the owners makes the ranch a sanctuary.

Conversely, the blackbucks there are something of an afterthought - they aren't fed, managed or purposely breed, but merely exist as part of the overall aesthetic plan. They're occasionally hunted, but otherwise are left alone.

We got settled in the guesthouse in time to check my rifle at the range, and still be able to hunt in the late afternoon. After that, we enjoyed a nice dinner, spirited conversation and then it was time for bed.

David and I left early the next morning to hunt. We eventually located a blackbuck herd that included a good-looking male. However, the wind direction





made an approach impossible. All we could do was watch as they roamed away. We relocated, and I eventually spotted two excellent blackbuck males only in time to watch them disappear almost immediately. We continued to hunt until early afternoon without success.

David looked pensive at lunch. We discussed our options, and went back and forth about how to construct the evening hunt. David decided that with temperature being so high that it would be best to wait until the heat dissipated, and the blackbucks needed to drink. So as the day grew shorter, we concentrated our efforts around the ranch's water sources.

About 5:00 p.m., we set up in a large open area that gave us the broadest view of the ranch. The wind had picked up, and I could clearly feel the drop in temperature. As if on cue, blackbucks started to melt out of the shadows, and we could see them headed toward a particular area. We made a big loop around the

ranch, covering a mile or more in order to get situated at a good vantage point. There we sat for quite a while before spotting a group of at least a dozen females and young ones, and one good male - they had coalesced into a herd and were headed our way.

They didn't take a direct course, however, and I had to move several times. Once we could see the male clearly, David confirmed it was the one we were looking for. The buck wasn't in a hurry. He stopped many times to test the wind and listen for noises.

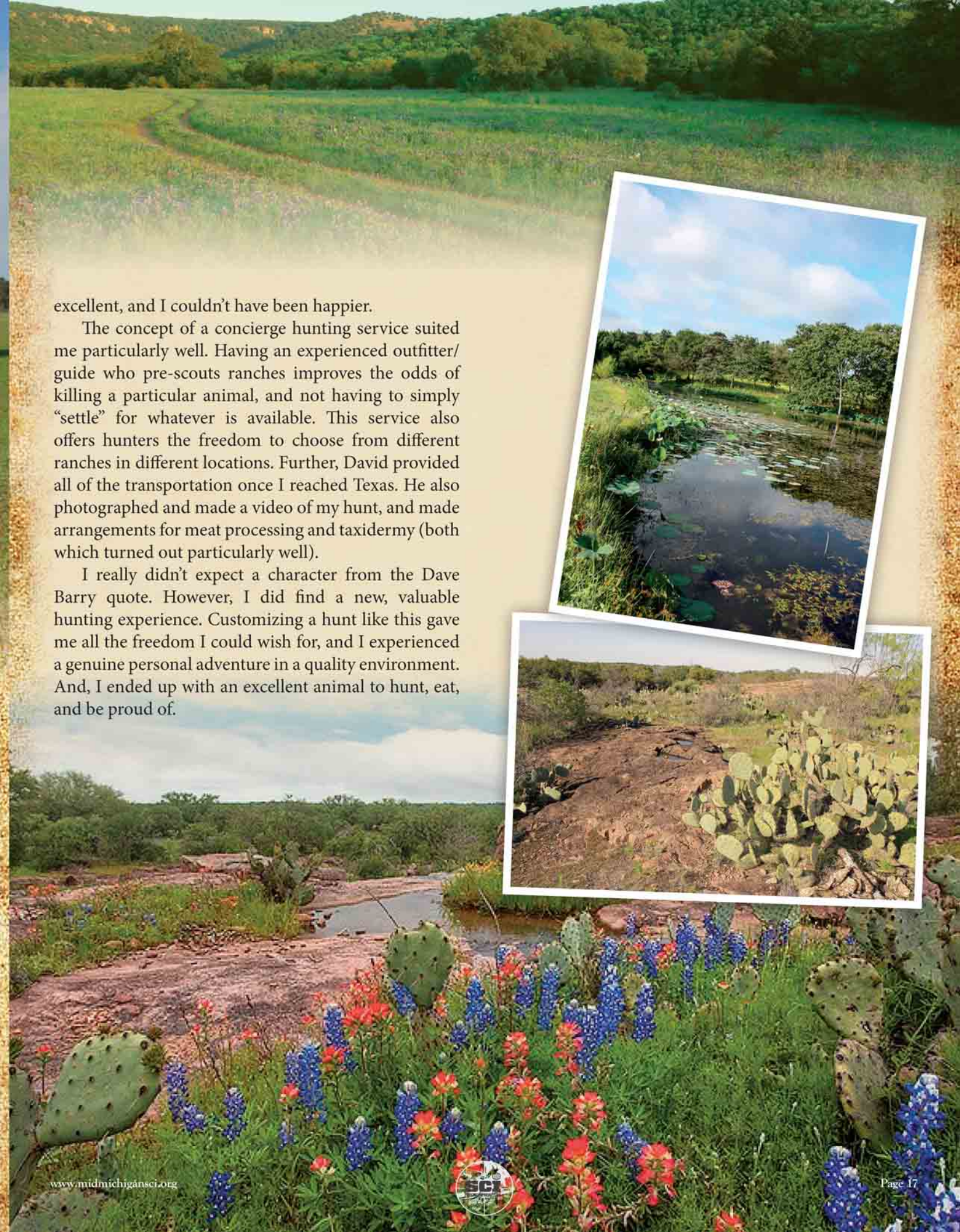
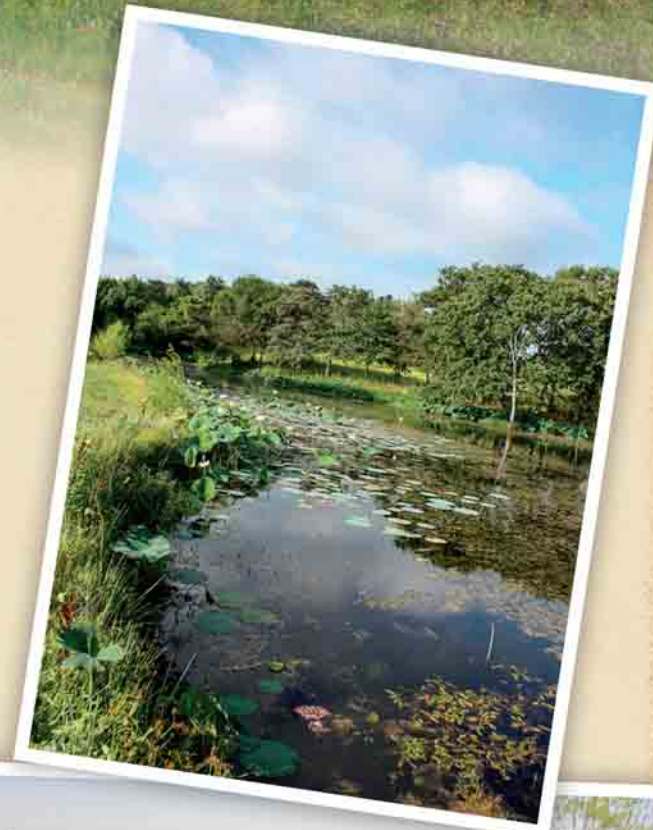
Finally, as he approached a small opening, he stopped. I judged the distance to be about 110 yards, aimed and squeezed the trigger. The 110gr., 25.06-caliber hand-load from my Remington 700 zipped between his ribs. He took a few steps and piled-up.

The ranch had a designated place to dress the animal and cool the meat, and once that was done, we settled back at the guesthouse to enjoy the hospitality. Overall, my hunt was delightful, the blackbuck was

excellent, and I couldn't have been happier.

The concept of a concierge hunting service suited me particularly well. Having an experienced outfitter/guide who pre-scouts ranches improves the odds of killing a particular animal, and not having to simply "settle" for whatever is available. This service also offers hunters the freedom to choose from different ranches in different locations. Further, David provided all of the transportation once I reached Texas. He also photographed and made a video of my hunt, and made arrangements for meat processing and taxidermy (both which turned out particularly well).

I really didn't expect a character from the Dave Barry quote. However, I did find a new, valuable hunting experience. Customizing a hunt like this gave me all the freedom I could wish for, and I experienced a genuine personal adventure in a quality environment. And, I ended up with an excellent animal to hunt, eat, and be proud of.



Vocatio Suprema

Excellence Requires Passion

by Dick Stockmar

We slowly still hunted up the backside of Heart Attack Hill; we took three to five steps and then carefully glassed all of the area around us hoping to spot the big buck before he saw us. As we neared the top of the ridge, we slowly entered some of the high grasses that line the timber. I was looking one direction and Jeff the other; we hoped that we were ahead of the buck. As we slowly glassed, Jeff quietly said "Here he comes up the hill; he is only about 50 yards from us." I ducked and tried to slowly turn and get my rifle in place for a shot. The buck saw movement, stopped briefly and then turned and started to jog away from us.

In 2011, I started to get the urge to reattach myself to the whitetail industry. I had ventured into the mule deer industry and was working for a ranch in New Mexico that was breaking new ground and successfully managing a herd of desert mule deer. I had hunted whitetail for over fifty-five years and had been an intricate part of that industry for over twenty years. I watched as the industry bloomed in Michigan as well as in other states. Maturity and supplemental feeding programs were major advancements throughout the 80s and 90s. We managed the herd to allow the bucks to mature while making sure that they had good nutrition available. A pelletized food which provided minerals and other important nutrient that were not present in the ground was an important advancement. Food crops designed to meet the taste buds and nutritional needs of deer were implemented in most successful herd management programs.

At the hunting conventions in 2012, I started talking



to all of the major outfitters that offered great whitetail hunts and had a record of good success. I explained that I wanted a big main frame, mostly typical buck that would exceed the 200 inches of antler. Over that past ten to twelve years, advancement in whitetail herd management included engineering the gene pool of the herd. So antler size has had a continuing upward spiral with many of the highest scoring deer being very non-typical. I wanted a typical frame that had a lot of mass. Most of the breeders were now managing their genetics to produce such bucks and acknowledged that non-typical antlers would always be a portion of their programs.

After much consideration and discussion, I elected to hunt Timberghost. I had little doubt that several of the outfitters could guide me to a successful hunt. I selected Timberghost for the following reasons: 1. I have known Mike Hine for over twenty years and had worked with him for a number of years prior to his starting at Timberghost. He had the knowledge, experience and fortitude to create a pristine habitat

and haven for whitetail deer. 2. I have also known many of his staff for an equivalent amount of time. 3. Mike and his staff have an extreme passion for hunting hard for monster whitetail deer. 4. I had talked to many hunters, and all highly recommended Timberghost for the best whitetail hunting experience. 5. Iowa is well known for having great whitetail genes and habitat that will allow the bucks to potentiate their antler growth.

Now some of you may be surprised that Iowa is such a great whitetail destination. Timberghost is in a southeast county of the state. It is in an area known as the bluffs area of the state above the Mississippi River. It is located in part of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain. "Most of the southern half of Iowa was last glaciated by the Pre-Illinoian glacier, approximately 600,000 years ago. This part of Iowa is a mature landscape, historically fairly heavily wooded. Today, the central portion still contains a significant proportion of Iowa's remaining woodlands. The extreme eastern extension of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain is a rugged part of Iowa and is replete with flat uplands historically covered by prairie species, with scenic entrenched rivers, wooded ravines, and many rock outcrops."1. Additionally, the growing season in this section of the country is fairly long at over 170 days with an average annual rainfall of over 34 inches. The upland open areas are ideal for food plots. I would be hunting the heavily wooded hollows and impenetrable creek bottoms of Southeast Iowa that provide a hunting experience of a lifetime for mature trophy bucks.

I arrived in Burlington, Iowa early on October 8, 2014. I had driven the 1225 miles from New Mexico without much sleep. I was so amped up with anticipation of the hunt that I could not sleep. I checked into the Comfort Inn very early; I must say that they were extremely accommodating. Following a big meal, I fell sound asleep.

After a good night of sleep, I began following the



map to the ranch. On the drive in, I met other hunters who just happened to be from Stanwood, Michigan close to my home in that state. We were greeted at the lodge by smiling faces; staff helped carry my gear to my room. We were told to relax for a little while because lunch would be served when other hunters arrived. This gave me a

chance to prepare my gear for the evening hunt. It also gave me the opportunity to admire the lodge and all of the fantastic whitetail trophies on the walls. I was very much struck by the whole wall dedication to good friend Bill Backman. It is a magnificent collection!

After taking a little time to view the inside of the lodge, I stepped out onto the balcony. A magnificent view of the type of fields and terrain was an indication of the hunt that was evolving. It was pristine to say the least. Thick lush-green food plots covered the open field, tall prairie grass bordered the field and the forest, and the leaves on the oaks and maples were just beginning the fall change. I was greeted on the balcony by Jeff Eaton. Jeff would be my guide on the hunt. I was very please because I had worked with Jeff for a number of years back in Michigan. He really understands whitetails and is an excellent hunter. He is one of Mike's staff that was instrumental in creating Timberghost. Jeff was also at the booth when I described the type of deer I wanted to hunt...typical frame with a lot of mass. He assured me that his scouting indicated that there were a number of bucks that would electrify my trigger finger.

Following a good lunch, I dressed for the hunt, and we headed to the rifle range. I had brought my MG Arms ultra-light chambered in 7mm 08 Remington. The rifle would prove to be a good choice as we still hunted the steep hills and ridge-tops. I only needed one shot at the range; I had it zeroed at 200 yards... about 1.5 inches high at 100 yards. The muzzle velocity of the Nosler Accubond 140 grain bullet was measured at 2925 ft/sec and shot groups of about 0.5 inches. I

was confident in the rifle.

Jeff had selected "Short Field" for the evening hunt. As we sneaked into the blind, several deer were already at the far end. The food plot was sugar beets surrounded by very high prairie grass. Another section was planted in soy beans. Within a short time we started seeing some bucks. One giant non-typical was bedded in the tall grass on the edge of the field and soon got up and started feeding toward us. Jeff did a really good job of calming me and encouraging me to wait for the kind of big framed deer I had been dreaming of. He described two fairly typical deer with some non-typical points that he had been seeing in this area. I was sure that either deer that he described in detail would ignite my trigger finger. As the evening progressed, big deer after big deer filtered into the field. With Jeff's encouragement I kept the powder dry. We counted seven bucks that evening that would easily break the 200 inches of antler. As we returned to the lodge, I told Mike that I was just like a kid in a candy shop. I have been hunting for over fifty seven years and never seen such a show.

The first evening a truck from New London arrived with a beautiful deer in the back. The hunter is an archer from Georgia. The New London property is set for the Adventure hunts. A cross between a Timberghost free range archery hunts and the preserve trophy hunts, these hunts are designed for the serious archery hunter that wants a real opportunity at world class bucks with better odds than free range hunts can provide. It is for bow hunters only. So an archer can hunt with a bow every year and have a chance to kill a giant Iowa whitetail. This buck was well into the 170+ inches with a drop tine.

The next morning came quickly following dreams of big bucks. We headed to "Ridge Top" blind located not too far from where we sat the night before. As the dawn brought light into the field, we could see several younger bucks. I couldn't believe the antlers on some of the younger deer. They are obviously headed for the Trophy Hunt of the future. As we sat quietly in the



washes with lots of cover for any deer to hide. We were successful in sneaking up on several beautiful deer... just not the kind of buck we were looking for. It is really challenging to climb the steep hills, spot and stalk and catch your breath if a shot presents itself. Jeff was good in moving slowly so I could accomplish that goal.

On the drive back to the lodge for lunch, we watched a massive big deer feeding on the edge of the timber. Jeff indicated that the buck was rarely seen in any of the fields and most likely remained in the timber feeding on acorns and browse. He was Jeff's plan B.

The evening hunt came quickly following a rest from the still hunting in the morning. We headed to another area that they call "Long Park". It was several ridges and ravines from "Short Field" that we had hunted the night before. We were still hunting the big typical that Jeff had described. Again as we approached the blind from the creek bottom, we noted several deer at the far end. The field is appropriately named. The bucks were between 380 and 400 yards. After seeing them through my spotting scope and ranging them, I took the cap off my Hushemaw drop-compensating scope. My trigger finger was getting itchy. Jeff again encouraged me to hold off and be patient. Soon the field began to get very busy. In addition to a number of beautiful young bucks, we counted eleven bucks with over 200 inches of antler. Several were very tempting. With about an hour left of daylight, all of the deer from both fields cleared. We still do not know what spooked them. As the deer filtered back into the field we heard on the radio that the big deer we were hunting was down. I was really anxious to get back to the lodge and see the deer.

blind, we heard a shot from the nearby field. One of the bucks we were hunting had stepped out in front of the guide and hunter. It didn't take the hunter long to decide to harvest that buck. Jeff was right, I would not have hesitated.

We decided to still hunt for the rest of the morning hunt. The area we were in had very steep hills and deep

The big "non-typical" typical buck is magnificent. As you look at him from the front, he is a good 27 inches of inside spread with almost matching non-typical points on a massive frame. Additionally, the brow tine is bladed like a shovel on a caribou. We toasted with the happy hunter from Arkansas. And Jeff was right again; I would not have hesitated.

Several other hunters came in that night with big bucks. Jeff and I would be the only hunters for the morning hunt. Jeff decided to implement plan B. We would hunt the massive buck we had seen near the barn.

On Saturday morning we headed out toward the barn and took the road past the barn to a steep hill. The plan was to hunt a small field below a number of high hills and ridges. I like small fields for morning sits because they tend to hold deer longer. We saw a number of bucks mostly very young. With the cold night, some of the younger bucks were beginning to spar. The smarter more dominant buck would get on the uphill side to gain a big advantage. Nature is so fascinating to witness.

About 7:30, Jeff decided to get out and start still hunting for the big buck. He was quite sure he would be in this general area feeding on the acorns. The big oaks had dropped a large number of acorns. We slowly still hunted for several hours, working into the wind, taking small steps followed by glassing. We saw a number of deer bedded but not the one we were after. Jeff decided to go back to the truck and drive around to a different location. The area had tall grasses for several hundred yards. The grasses gave way to tall mature forest some of which had been selectively cut. As we approached the timber, Jeff spotted movement on the ridge about 300 yards from us. It was him! He was walking the ridge top away from us.

There simply was no opportunity for a shot in that cover and distance. Jeff decided that we should jog back to the truck, drive way around and try to get in front of the buck. It took a good

fifteen to twenty minutes to get back to the truck and drive around that wooded lot. Finally, Jeff explained how we would slowly climb "heart-attack" hill while glassing the entire time...now for the rest of the story.

The mass on this buck was clearly visible with the naked eye. He had sensed something wrong but didn't really know what had alerted him. As he trotted down the hill Jeff whistled/called loudly. At about 150 yards, the buck stopped and turned broadside. I was on the tripod and as he turned, I instinctively shot. I knew I had only seconds to react. Yep, I shot through some tree limbs and was very fortunate to see the buck fall. Jeff yelled that he was down. I bolted another round and was ready for a second shot. Jeff told me that I hit him in the spine, and that we should walk down to him. As we walked closer, there was no shrinkage...he got even bigger. I was so jubilant, I am sure they heard me all the way to Michigan. It wasn't a great shot, but I had gotten lucky and hit him in the spine. As my African Ph use to say..."You can't get any deadier than dead."

His mass is truly impressive. He has 52 6/8 inches of mass. The scoring systems are a tool for us to evaluate and compare animals that we harvest. In this case the SCI score doesn't give the buck credit for all he grew. His first tine on the right beam has a circumference of 5 6/8"; that is bigger than many main beams. He has a total SCI NT score of 228, well in excess to any of my dreams. He definitely filled a passion for whitetail and causes me to continue to dream of future hunts.

Thank you Mike, Jeff and all the staff for a wonderful whitetail experience.

PS. I didn't have a heart attack, however, my heart rate sure got high!



Credits: 1. The Vascular Plants of Iowa
An Annotated Checklist and Natural History; University of Iowa Press Digital Edition
<http://uiopress.lib.uiowa.edu/vpi/IowaFlora.aspx>

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Why Didn't I Buy A Lottery Ticket With My License?

I am what you would call an avid Michigan White Tail Deer Hunter. The last few years I have mostly used my bow, enjoying the increased challenge of harvesting a deer. I am very proud of the fact I take only clean, ethical shots that have a very high rate of success. I've never released an arrow on a deer I did not find. Since retirement, I have more available time to hunt and I started thinking of something new and different. A Canadian black bear seemed the next logical step, so I began the decision-making process in the Winter of 2013. I inquired of a friend at a large taxidermy shop about who was sending them nice black bear. He recommended Gary and Maggie Dorian, at the Hillsport Hillton, in Hillton, Ontario. They have a very good web site and, based on the pictures they were showing and my friends recommendation, I pulled the trigger on an August 2014 hunt.

I am not real clear on the town of Hillsport. It seems to be a mostly abandoned, tiny village that sits next to a railroad spur, about six hours drive northwest of Sault Ste. Marie. There are approximately twenty-five houses and cabins, apparently now only used for hunting purposes. Gary and Maggie's camp, "Hillsport Hillton," is a play on words, not a five star, luxury hotel. It is a small, clean and neat collection of hunting lodges, with cooking facilities and hot showers in each cabin. The main lodge has seating for twenty, if you choose their American plan and let them provide and prepare all the food. I did, in fact, book the American Plan, rather than the Economy Plan, and my only complaint was the amount of food was overwhelming. No one forced me to eat it, but when you've been outside all day and the steaks, pork loin and chicken are accompanied with potatoes and gravy, followed by pie - It is hard to say, "No, thank you." Do not expect to loose weight if you choose this option!



Gary has leased 500,000 acres from the Canadian Government and he has erected one hundred thirty-five tree stands, each having a bait barrel strategically placed, about twenty yards out front. Perfect for bow hunters. Maintaining such a large number of stands, it is possible to place hunters quite a distance apart and not over-hunt any one area. The bottom line is the Dorian's have lots of land in prime black bear country, nice safe stands, a good baiting program and clean accommodations with fantastic food.

The Hunt: I know, when telling hunting stories, we are supposed to try and build excitement while retelling the event, however, its not so easy in my case. The hunting in 2014 was very difficult in this area. The seasons were running behind schedule and the woods were loaded with berries—black berries, blue berries, thimble berries, mountain ash berries—they were everywhere. This meant the bears were full, not hitting the baits like normal, so the hunt was slow, to say the least. It was also warm, getting into the seventies each day.

Why I should have bought a lottery ticket: Remember, I am a virgin bear hunter - on the third day of the hunt, the first bear I have ever seen, while hunting, wanders directly into my bait area, stands broadside, licking grease from the top of my bait barrel and offers a perfect shot. He holds this position while I take careful aim. Trying to focus on a single hair, I released the arrow and smacked him!! He ran about thirty yards, before piling up.

According to a little internet research, about one in a thousand North American black bears are born with different color phases. A small percentage of these are the elusive, much desired "Chocolate." As luck would have it, the first and only bear I have seen while hunting, presenting the perfect shot, was a gorgeous Chocolate! I have been made keenly aware that many



long- time, serious bear hunters have never seen a chocolate in the wild, let alone have a shooting opportunity. I had both, on my third day of the hunt. Lucky me!! I had come well prepared, as I practice a lot with my bow and feel very confident in it's accuracy, but still, what are the odds?

That night, after the bear had been retrieved and hung on the bear pole, word spread about my "chocolate" and several envious hunters showed up, to look at my trophy. It was only then I began to realize how unique this bear was. One man said he had taken twenty-six bear and made special attempts, over the years, to book outfitters with better success on coloreds, but he'd never caught a glance of one.

The Dorians were gracious hosts, bear hunting was the rush I had hoped it would be, and I could not be happier with my trophy. I have had it caped for a full mount, and over the years will probably learn to embellish the story just a little, for more thrills and excitement. I highly recommend the Hillsport

Hillton and look forward to returning in the future.

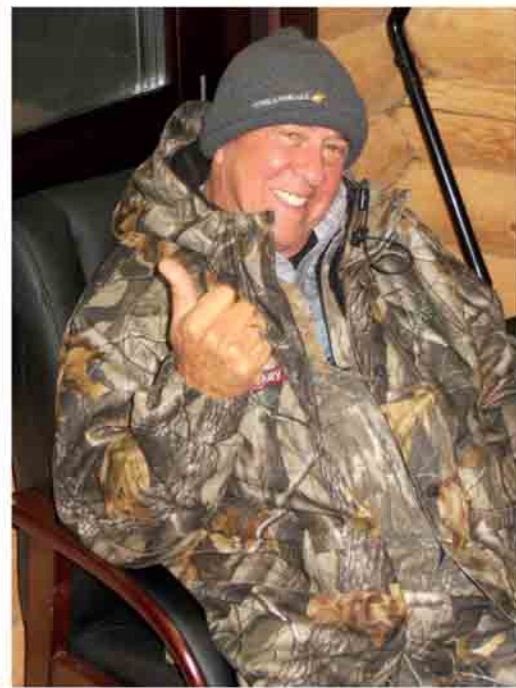
My only regret is I didn't buy that lottery ticket with my license. It was my lucky day!!

Lee Slagell

RUSSIAN MOOSE HUNT

BY ROGER CARD

Forty years ago I started a fun habit of putting a pin in my world map, for each of my hunting locations. There have been many reasons why I choose one hunt over another. In the early years I wanted to complete the North American 27, then it was the African Big 5. SCI Diamond levels of different species soon followed, with the World Hunting Award and World Conservation Hunting Award after that. Sometimes I chose hunts simply because I was accompanying friends, but wherever I go, I have faithfully stuck a pin in my map, after returning home. A few years



ago, a huge vacant area without a single pin - Russia - started to get my attention.

As I began to explore options for Russia, a complication soon presented itself - it is not a problem to take rifles into Russia for hunting, however they will not allow you to go sightseeing if you have a gun. I'd need my gun for the moose hunt, but when it was over I wanted to see some of the country before I returned home. Last year I located an outfitter that would provide good rifles for the hunt, solving my dilemma.

Once I had the rifle situation

solved, I contacted my hunting partner, Rod Merchant, and we began making plans for a moose hunt in Russia, in the fall of 2014. I knew little about the "Hunt in Europe Safaris" but they soon proved themselves as one of the best outfitters I have ever worked with. "Hunt In Europe" is based in Madrid, Spain and the owners, Sonja and Srdja Dimitrijevic, are Serbian. They both speak fluent English, as well as Russian, and in very short order they had completely organized our hunt in Russia. The visa and licensing process is somewhat complicated, but Sonja soon had us fully documented and ready to depart.

We took the overnight Aeroflot flight from JFK on September 25th. Upon arrival in Moscow, we discovered we had somehow booked the wrong hotel. We soon straightened that little issue out and eventually got some sleep. Our guide, Sergej, collected us at 6 a.m. the following morning and drove us about seven hours north of Moscow. Sergej spoke enough English to communicate and he was a wonderful guide and ambassador for his country.

Our first "Moose Camp" was an extremely old, very rustic house, every door being no more than four feet, ten inches high. There were four small, newer cabins for the hunters. All were neat, clean, dry and warm. Each cabin had nice beds and a bathroom with a hot shower.

Unfortunately, the method used for hunting at this camp was to hook a wagon on the back of a tractor and drive to different fields, hoping to spot a moose before they saw us. The owner of the property noisily followed us on his Suzuki four-wheeler.

It was cold, raining and miserable in the trailer the first day. I was bruised, bumped, tossed, cut and scraped. We never saw a moose or even a track of one.

In the late afternoon of the second day, just as we were entering prime hunting time, we hit a huge, water-

covered rut, tearing the right wheel assembly out from under the wagon. Everyone and everything on board was unceremoniously hurled into the water and mud. The accident was instantaneous and violent. It took a couple minutes for us to reconnoiter and realize what had happened. We crawled out of the mud, cleared the cobwebs from our brains and took a head count, making sure everyone on board was okay. After it was established there were no serious injuries, we waded back into the water to retrieve our rifles, binoculars, shells and other miscellaneous gear. (Boy, was I happy it wasn't my own rifle!)



The farm owner returned to the camp on his four-wheeler and we were eventually rescued with an old, military troop-mover. This whole ordeal took about three hours. We were soaked to the skin, covered in mud and had been standing there, shivering in a steady 40° rain, for a lot longer than I would have thought possible.

Upon our return to camp, Sergej instructed us to get a hot shower and pack, as we would be leaving right after we ate supper. The broken trailer ended the hunt there and he had made arrangements with another outfitter.

As promised, as soon as we finished eating, he loaded us up and drove a couple hours further north to a "real" hunting lodge. It was a newer, log cabin structure that had wonderful mounts and pictures of successful past hunts on every wall. Our favorite was a shoulder mount of what had to have been a six or seven hundred pound wild boar. Just a monster!

The next three days we were up before dawn and hunted hard, until dark. They also used the method of driving to the edge of a field and glassing, before moving out to the next field or clearing. We were riding in an old, four-passenger military jeep that was much more comfortable and quieter than the prior



tractor and wagon fiasco. We covered about a hundred miles a day, and did see many cows and calves. Unfortunately, when we finally spotted a bull, I could not get in a position for a shot.

On the night before our last day, things changed. Up to this point, Rod and I had been the only two in camp and the hunt had been all about us. The first of October is the first day of moose

season for the local hunters and our camp population swelled by a dozen new arrivals. They were excited, laughing, joking, eating mounds of food and enjoying their vodka. It was just like the deer camps of old, on November 14th, in Michigan. The locals generously invited me to join them in their hunt the following morning and, I have to say, it was really a lot of fun. We were transported in an old, tracked, military troop-mover (see picture). Again, there were huge amounts of laughter and gamesmanship. The group was divided into shooters and drivers and, lucky for me, they made me a shooter. The shooters were dropped off at strategic locations, about a quarter of a mile apart, and the drivers were delivered by tractor and wagon, about three miles away, to the far side of the property. What happened next was basically a good, old-fashioned Michigan deer drive!

All of the Russians were meat hunters so, if it was brown, it was down. The first morning they collected two small bulls and one cow. They explained that ALL hunters shared in the meat, regardless of who got what.

After the morning hunt we were returned to the lodge for a huge feast of fresh liver and heart, ceremoniously cubed and fried with lots of butter and onions in tremendous, cast-iron frying pans. The only side dish was of fresh mushrooms, picked by the drivers. It was all washed down with an amazing amount of vodka. Rod and I discovered we are light-weights, in Russian vodka drinking.



Rod is quite an accomplished magician and he kept the whole camp in hysterical laughter. The Russian language barrier certainly was an issue, however the excitement and camaraderie of hunting camp bridged all problems of communication. We had our hands shook, shoulders grabbed, and were bear-hugged continuously, leaving no doubt of their

warmth and gratitude of us sharing their opening day with them.

After the feast, Rod, Sergej and I had a meeting and we decide to return to Moscow early. We were taking up three of the beds in the lodge and some of the locals were forced to sleep on the floor. They never complained, but it was the right thing to do. We packed our gear, said our good byes and headed out for the eight-hour trip back to Moscow. After many toasts of "New friends," "Hunting companions!," "Good bye!," "You are welcome back!" and our favorite, "Love you like a brother!," Rod and I had consumed so much vodka we probably would have missed the next couple drives, anyway.

While translating the toasts, Sergej had abstained from all this merriment, and returned us safely to a downtown Moscow hotel for a couple days of sightseeing, before catching our Aeroflot flight back to Michigan.

I hope I am never of a mind-set where taking an animal is the litmus test of a successful hunt. Sergej our guide and Sonja, of "Hunt Europe" were two of the best people I have ever worked with, and I enjoyed my Russian hunt as much as any hunt in recent memory.

If anyone has an interest in doing a Russian or European hunt, please feel free to contact me, as I would be happy to share more details of a wonderful experience.

Roger Card

Looking on the Bright Side

by Michael L. Ritchie D.C.



Light comes over the horizon and I feel a chill
Lasts only a few minutes, trying to be still

The sun is opening the shades on a brand new day
Sort of painful, wouldn't have any other way

The tops of the maples are first to catch on fire
White pine so straight it is looking like a spire

Summer is gone and October has arrived
The Michigan woods are coming alive

I'm finally feeling the warmth of the sun
Feels like I'm home, am I the only one?

Simple, real, full of color, just me alone in nature
Way it was meant to be, deigned by our Creator

It is opening day of bow season and
I'm looking on the bright side!

Michael L. Ritchie D.C. 10/30/2014

Psalm 96:11-13 New International Version (NIV)

11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;

let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;

let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

13 Let all creation rejoice before the Lord

Fawn in the rye field.

A Truck Load of Bucks

02 03 04 1972 05 06 07
PINE HILL CLUB - BUCK POLE

by Bob Mills

Buck Pole on Opening Day.
Eleven Bucks Harvested.

The November 15th weather was ideal for hunting in NW Isabella County. A glaze of snow was on the ground and temperatures in the mid-20's greeted hunters at the Pine Hill Club. Everyone at the camp was excited about opening day and the prospects of tagging a big buck.

Opening morning coffee was ready at 4:00 a.m. and the cooks were busy preparing breakfast for the twenty plus hunters in the club. Breakfast is served at 5:30 a.m. and hunters leave for their blinds by 5:45 a.m. Much joking and deer camp banter is exchanged as hunters prepare for opening day in the woods. The morning is a "bee hive" of activity with everyone in a good mood for opening day.

The fireplace held a roaring fire as the hunters woke for the morning hunt. Sack lunches were packed the night before and everyone was excited about the beginning of rifle hunting season. Most members have had many openers during the 42 years of camp operation. Members range in age from 88 to 14. Veteran hunters have tagged many bucks over the years, while novice hunters hope to score on a big buck.

Every new season brings renewed challenge to even the most veteran white-tail hunter.

Breakfast consists of large quantities of ham, eggs, toast, pancakes, juice and gallons of coffee. All hunters enjoy a hearty breakfast and then ready thermos jugs for "extras" for their day in the woods. Five large coffee pots are used to brew the coffee for opening morning and members quickly drain the contents to help with the all-day sit in their blind. Pine Hill Club hunters spend the entire day in their hunting blind. They take their lunch, candy bars, coffee/juice/water, etc. All blinds have a stove, carpet, and swivel chair. No hunter is cold or wet as blinds are enclosed with windows that open as needed. It is a very comfortable way to spend the day in the woods. Hunting blinds are situated throughout the 720 acres of property and are located with safety in mind. Each hunter has their own special blind that they use every year. Some hunters have hunted in the same location for 30 plus years.

In years past many hunters used "walkie-talkies" to communicate with one another. Today cell phones and text messaging have replaced most of the old-fashioned

communication devices. Still a few hunters in camp like the "walkie-talkies". All members today carry cell phones and text each other or send pictures of bucks harvested.

The first shot rang out just after first light. My cell phone vibrated at 8:00 a.m. and I received a text from our son, Jeff, telling me that he had shot a very large buck. He was going to wait one hour before looking but believed he had a good hit. An hour later he text me to report he had killed a large 8 pointer. I responded with "good". Many shots were heard throughout the day and reports, via text messages, indicated that seven bucks had been harvested. We were off to a good start for the 2014 hunting season.

When darkness arrived, members returned to camp and the kill tally for opening day totaled eleven bucks. This number represents over 50 percent success for our hunters. Those not shooting a buck had passed on several smaller bucks and one hunter had shot a buck only to have it get up and run away. We would look later in the evening for this wounded deer.

Slowly the buck pole began to fill as successful hunters returned with their deer. The antlers this season were exceptional compared to past years. Most

FRONT SIGHT



Bob Mills with Otis and a Truck Load of Bucks.

bucks harvested were 8 pointers with two 9 pointers and one 10 point. One hunter had doubled up opening morning and then remained in his blind for the entire day and just counted deer. This hunter had killed a large 10 pointer and a big 8 pointer by 9:00 a.m. What a great day hunting for this camp member.

The bucks were loaded in a pick-up truck for a picture on the third day of season. In my 60 years of hunting the white-tail, I have never seen so many beautiful bucks taken from any property. We truly are blessed to have a game rich area at the Pine Hill Club. Our efforts to improve habitat, cultivate food plots, and restrict the number of does harvested appears to be paying off. In addition, we do not shoot "spike bucks", small does or button bucks on the property.

That evening the camp was alive with congratulations, good cheer, and many stories repeated about the success of the hunters. This truly was a season for a TRUCK LOAD OF BUCKS End of season totals were 18 bucks and 11 does harvested. Most members can't wait until next year. Until then we can only dream about another successful season. Sleep well.



Dave Mills with two bucks taken second morning. 6 point and an 8 point.

A Couple of Decent Mule Deer

By Steve Marshall

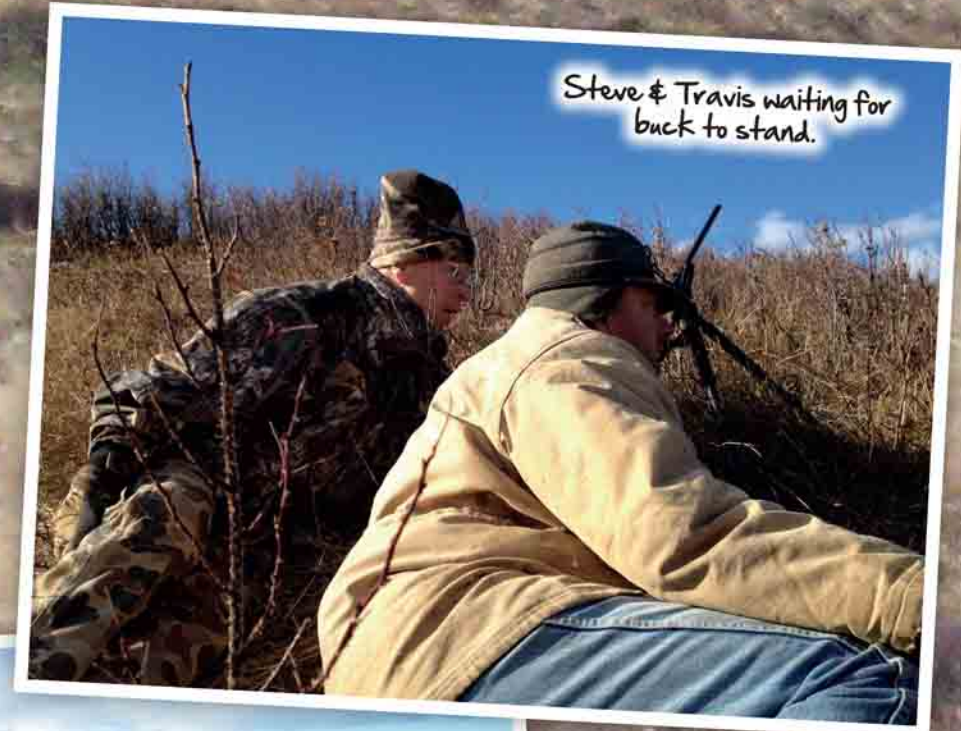
In over forty years of hunting, I've been extremely fortunate in taking some truly fine big game trophies. However, a good mule deer buck has not ranked among them in spite of multiple attempts. Mule deer have truly been my nemesis! So I was really excited to discover an opportunity in southern Alberta offering an excellent chance at bucks scoring 170 to 185 with a few going 190 and higher. Equally attractive, the hunt was described as being a relatively easy one. Although at about 5,000 foot elevation in the foot hills of the Rockies, the terrain was mostly rolling hilly native grassland and easy to navigate. (Important to me, as I'm 72 years old, have had a couple of minor strokes, and a recent total knee replacement surgery) After some further investigation, I booked the hunt along with my hunting buddy Al Taylor.

So late last October found Al and me and our guides Travis and Chase Simpson glassing the rolling foothills of Alberta for mulies. As before all of our hunts, we had told our guides that we weren't much into scoring and record books. While we didn't want to shoot dinks, we both would be very happy with a mature representative of the species that would look good hanging on a wall. On the morning of the very first day of hunting, Travis and Chase spotted a buck in the distance that they thought was worth a closer look. Taking a long circuitous route, we managed to close the range and put a hill between us and the buck for cover. By

side-hilling around, we managed to cut the distance to exactly 200 yards while keeping out of sight and downwind of the buck. Peering around the side of the hill and using his spotting scope, Travis confirmed that it was a very good buck indeed with deep forks, a wide spread, and decent mass.

However, there were two problems. First, the buck was bedded down in a coulee with his butt into the wind. It's almost never a good idea to shoot a bedded animal with his legs tucked under him. He presents a smaller target that is partially obscured by his legs; and more importantly, his vital organs are scrunched up and are not exactly in the place you'd expect them to be in a standing animal. Secondly, the hilltop and hillsides were covered in thick buck brush. In one way this was good as it allowed us to observe the buck undetected. And I had a narrow shooting alley through the brush. But when we set up my short tripod as a rest and I looked at the buck through my rifle scope, I could see a slight blurry movement of brush at the very bottom of the scope. Since a scope's line of sight lies about one and a half inches above the bore of the rifle, taking a shot, even with the cross hairs cleanly centered on target, would risk hitting a twig causing the bullet to deflect and miss, or worse, wound the animal.

The obvious solution to both problems was to wait for the buck to stand up. So we settled in, watched, and patiently waited; and then we watched



Steve & Travis waiting for buck to stand.



Steve and guides with nice mule deer.



Passed on this one to let him grow up.



Al and his non-typical mule deer.

Steve's buck.



and patiently waited some more. Over an hour later, we were still watching and patiently waiting. We finally concluded that the buck would certainly stand up within the next several minutes..... or the next several hours! It was clearly time for plan B. Travis and Chase decided on a course of action that involved Chase circling back around the hillside until he got slightly upwind of the buck at a good distance. The thinking was that allowing the buck to pick up just a hint of human odor would cause him to stand to check out the possible danger. This wasn't as easy as it sounded. If Chase got too close to the buck and he picked up a strong whiff of human scent, we ran the risk of blowing him out to escape on a dead run, offering a very difficult shot at best.

Wow, does it ever feel great when a well conceived and well executed plan actually works for a change! About twenty minutes after Chase left on his mission, the buck stood up, turned around to face into the wind to check out what was going on, and offered a classic broadside shot. I put the crosshairs just behind the

crease of his front leg and about a third of the way up from his brisket and carefully squeezed the trigger. The 150 grain Nosler partition from my 270 Winchester hit exactly where I was aiming. He took a couple of stumbling steps forward, went down, and never twitched. My mule deer curse was finally ended.

Three days later it was my buddy Al's turn. Chase spotted a super non-typical mulie. After a long difficult stalk, Al pulled off a great shot at 160 yards on the moving buck using his Primos tripod as a rest. We were both tagged out! Later the bucks were scored. My typical rack scored 192 B&C before deductions and was just a hair over thirty inches in outside spread. You could nest Al's rack inside mine with room to spare. But his non-typical rack sported fourteen points, including 23 inches worth of non-typical points; and it scored 211 B&C before deductions! For a couple of guys who just wanted "a mature representative of the species that would look good hanging on a wall", we done good!

The Simpsons are outstanding stewards of the land,

its wildlife, and quality hunting. They own or exclusively control some 30,000 acres of prime habitat (it is a working cattle ranch running 900 head of Angus). To say the least, they are extremely vigilant when it comes to trespassing. In spite of the vast acreage, they take just four mule deer hunters per year to maintain and improve the age class distribution of the deer herd. Further, they have almost no winter kill on the range due to a dry climate with light fluffy snow and Chinook winds that can drive the temperature into the sixties several times a winter. As hard as it is to believe, we saw between 30 and 60 bucks per day while hunting. A number

of times Al and I, with our untrained eyes, would spot a buck that would go into the 160's or so and would remark: "Wow, that's a nice deer". The response would be "Yeah, that's a real nice buck; but give him another year or two and he'll be a super buck". In addition to mule deer, other game was abundant. One day we saw 13 coyotes before noon. We saw elk daily; and once, while glassing from a high ridge, we saw a herd strung out below us that Travis estimated at 500 head or so (but very few bulls). They reminded me of a National Geographic video of wildebeests migrating across the Serengeti.

If you're interested in exploring booking a hunt, give Flint Simpson a call at 403-678-2608 (evenings, best) or on his cell at 403-678-8491. However there are a couple of things to be aware of. First, they limit the number of mule deer hunters to only four per year. That, coupled with repeat bookings and word of mouth advertising, means getting a spot can be difficult. Al and I waited for two years to get

Travis and Chase with Al's buck.



Steve and his mule deer.



in and I suspect the wait may be longer now. Also, be aware the Simpsons prefer to guide hunters that appreciate and enjoy all of the wonderful and varied aspects of the big game hunting experience, rather than judging hunt success solely on trophy score.

CONSERVATION AFFAIRS

By Larry Witte

DNR CONSERVATION OFFICER ACADEMY

Forty-four potential new conservation officers began an intensive 22 week training program in January. Recruits will complete 14 weeks of basic police training and 8 weeks of specialized conservation officer training. Four of the recruits are women and forty are men. Eleven of the new recruits are military veterans and two are previous law enforcement officers.

Twenty five of the 44 positions are new positions funded through a General Fund appropriation. Nine new positions are funded by the new hunting and fishing license structure. The remaining 10 positions were previously funded and are replacing officers who have left or retired.

DNR Conservation Officers serve a unique role as they are certified police officers with authority to enforce all Michigan criminal laws. In addition they have training related to protecting of Michigan's natural resources.

Academy graduates will be assigned throughout the state to provide more public contact and create a safer outdoor recreational experience. (DNR Press Release)

2014 MICHIGAN ELK SEASON

Almost thirty thousand Michigan hunters applied for 100 elk licenses last year. The elk hunt had two hunt periods—the early season included August 26-29, September 12-15 and September 26-29. The late season was December 6-14. Fifteen any-elk or bull licenses and 35 antlerless licenses were awarded for each of the two seasons. Early season hunters harvested 37 elk which included 13 bulls, 23 cows, and 1 calf. Late season hunters harvested 41 elk including 14 bulls and 27 cows.

Successful hunters experienced a one-of-a-kind hunting opportunity while helping with elk management responsibilities and filling freezers with delicious meat.

HARD WINTERS IN THE UP DEER STUDY AREA

Long lasting heavy snow and brutally cold weather the winters of 2012-13 and 2013-14 were very hard on UP deer survival. In the mid-snowfall area in Iron County north of the Michigamme Reservoir the snow was so deep that the deer had difficulty moving.

Of 45 pregnant does collared during the winter of 2013-14 only 11 were alive at fawning time. Predators accounted for at least 20 of the collared adult does. Wolves killed 9, coyotes 6 and bobcats 1. No determination could be made on the cause of 4 predations. Look for more information as the Predator-Prey project study continues in the UP through 2015.

(SCI Michigan Involvement Committee Joint Predator-Prey Study with DNR)

HERE WE GO AGAIN! WOLVES BACK ON THE FEDERAL ENDANGERED LIST

The US Fish and Wildlife Service gave up Federal protection for wolves in the Great Lakes Region after many years of study and turned them over to the state in 2012 for management. Recently a U.S. District Judge ruled that removal violated the federal endangered species act and was "arbitrary and capricious." The Judges decision blocks the ability of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to schedule further hunting and trapping seasons, until overturned.

Michigan DNR advises that wolves may only be killed when threatening human lives. Livestock and pets are fair game for wolves for the present. The judgment was the result of a lawsuit filed by the Humane Society of the United States and other animal rights groups. State officials are studying the ruling to determine a course of action.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (FWS) REJECTS ATTEMPTS TO STOP LION HUNTING

The FWS has decided that the African lion is not endangered but they propose to list the lion as threatened. The FWS determined that lion hunting is "not a threat to the species at this time" and that well-managed hunting can provide important conservation benefits for the lion. The FWS proposes to establish a rule which if finalized will "establish a permitting mechanism to allow importation of sport hunted African lion trophies into the United States provided that they are established as originating from countries with a scientifically sound management plan for African lions.

If finalized, the proposed rule will affect importation of hunted African lion trophies for 2016 and beyond. SCI will work vigorously to ensure hunters' ability to import lions from Africa.

(SCI In The Crosshairs)

SCI FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Ongoing efforts by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to stop hunting include their 2014 petition to Department of Interior demanding that rules be implemented to ban traditional ammunition containing lead on more than 160 million acres of public land managed by the National Park



Sportsmen Against Hunger Program THANK YOUS!

By Mike Strobe

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January 13, 2015

SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter
ATTN: Mike Strobe
1100 Bollman Dr.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Dear Mr. Strobe,

Please extend our sincere thanks to all of the members who participated in the Sportsmen Against Hunger program for the wonderful donation of 214 pounds of meats to our kitchen this year. The continued commitment your group toward easing the struggle of those who deal with issues of hunger is truly inspirational.

Your donation will allow us to continue to provide approximately 100 free hot lunches daily to our community. As a 501(c)(3) organization your entire donation is tax deductible.

Sincerely,

Kim Friedrich

Kim Friedrich
Executive Director

jj



Love In the Name of Christ of Clare County was blessed with 215 pounds of meat. We want to thank the SCI members and the Sportsmen Against Hunger Program for this generous donation. We have 3 now full because of you.

Love INC is a national Christian organization whose goal is to mobilize the Church to transform lives and communities in the name of Christ. Our local organization has 17 churches that we draw volunteers from and support. We do not duplicate existing support, but fill in gaps where we can. From the beginning 5 years ago, beds and furniture have been a major need in Clare County. Since then, we have given out over 1,000 new beds. We also give out donated furniture as it is given to us. We wrote a grant our first year and received \$5,000 for beds. Every year we spend around \$30,000 for new beds. We also try to give linens and blankets with our beds. All linen is donated whether it be new or nicely used. We also provide transportation to Dr. appointments and gas cards for people going to appointments. We help with some medical needs and personal products.

We have a laundry ministry that pays for people's laundry. We partner with MSU extension with a cooking class. We will be incorporating some recipes and tips for cooking venison in our next class. We offer budgeting support to our clients. We do some handyman help and partner with DHS, Community Action, United Way, Salvation Army and True North to help get outstanding bills paid.

We have a huge yard sale every year the second or third week of June at Brown Corners Church. We have made around \$10,000 every year. This is a great place to donate items you no longer need. We take furniture and linens anytime of the year.

Everything we do is dependent on support from others, whether that is money, volunteering, donating needed items, or praying for us. This is why your donation is such a blessing. Our pantries are heavily used and having fresh meat will enable our clients to have much needed protein. Again, we cannot thank you enough.

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January 22, 2015

Safari Club International Mid-Michigan Chapter,

On behalf of the Board, Staff and more importantly the clients of Women's Aid Service, Inc. I want to thank you for your recent donation. Your generous donation of 120 lbs. of ground beef and 55 lbs. of venison & pork is extremely helpful to Women's Aid Service. As you know we are a provider of safe shelter for domestic violence victims. Your generous donation helps us meet one of the basic needs of domestic violence victims.

Thank you for thinking of us and more importantly assisting victims of domestic violence.

Sincerely,

John R. Haycock
John R. Haycock
Executive Director
Women's Aid Service, Inc.

Love INC of Clare County
Office hours M.-TH. 10am-2pm
420 E. Main St. Farwell, MI 48622
Mailing Address
PO Box 351 Clare, MI 48617

(Continued on page 37)

Looking Ahead - to our Next Issues -

Ethiopia Dream Hunt
by Mary Harter

Roscommon Archery Club
by Brian Piccolo

Super Guide
by Dr. Peter Bucklin

Archery Elk Hunt in Wyoming
by Tim Schafer



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(Conservation Affairs continued from page 34)

Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Noted in its petition is the intention to expand the ammo ban to include BLM and National Forest Lands.

HSUS has said "We are going to use the ballot box and the democratic process to stop all hunting in the United States. We will take it species by species until all hunting is stopped in California. Then we will take it state by state."

SCI continues to represent hunters' interests on many fronts.

2015 MICHIGAN HUNTING LICENSES

Spring Turkey: If you didn't apply for a spring turkey license in January you still have options. Any limited-quota licenses remaining on March 16 may be purchased by any hunter who does not possess a spring turkey license. As an alternative you may purchase a license for Hunt 0234 (May 4-31 season) from March 16 through the entire spring hunt season over the counter.

Michigan Elk: May 1 to June 1 is the application period.

Black Bear: May 1 to June 1 is the application period. If you do not plan to hunt bear in 2015 consider applying for a preference point. You will have a better chance of drawing a tag in the future.

Antlerless Deer: July 15 to August 15 is the application

period. See the 2015 Michigan Antlerless hunting digest.

Fall Turkey: July 15 to August 15 is the application period.

Remember, a base license (small game license) is required for every person who hunts. Hunters must purchase a base license before they can purchase any hunting license.

PURE MICHIGAN HUNT APPLICATIONS

Consider buying a \$5.00 Pure Michigan Hunt Application at a licensed dealer. The Pure Michigan Hunt began in 2009 and each year since then 3 winners each year are drawn and win a package of hunting licenses and several thousand dollars in prizes. Winners receive a Michigan Elk, Bear, Spring and Fall Turkey and Deer licenses and a hunting spot on opening morning at any managed waterfowl area. Past winners have taken home shotguns, rifles, bow, guided hunts and more.

Applicants may apply as many times as they want for a \$5.00 fee. Each entry puts the applicants name in for the Pure Michigan Hunt drawing. Three winners are announced each January. Application funds are used for wildlife restoration and improvement projects by DNR.

WORD TO THE WISE (unknown)

"A gun is like a parachute. If you need one, and don't have one, you'll probably never need one again."

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.



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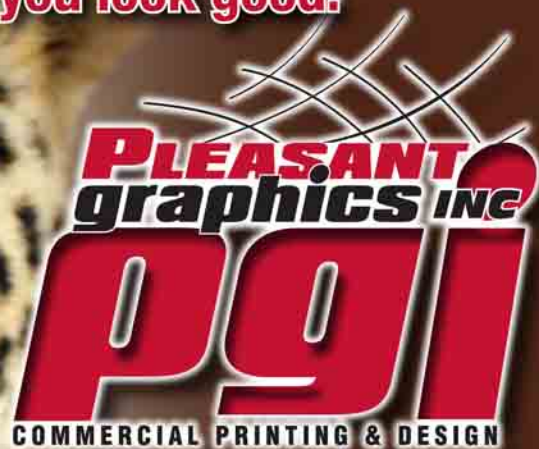
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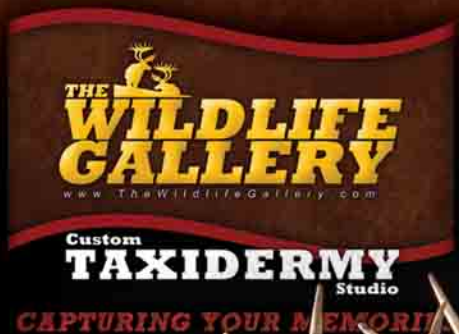


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