

FRONT SIGHT

SCI
FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

January - March 2017, Issue 37



**Unexpected September Snow
while Elk Hunting in Wyoming**
Photo by Don Harter



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 5070 and changes yearly on February 15th. Please carry membership identification on you when you visit the range.



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The Front Sight is the official publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International, keeping club members informed about local club activities, and encouraging and defining good sportsmanship. The Front Sight Magazine is published quarterly: January, April, July and October. Distribution 400+.

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

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SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Type</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Jan. 14, 2017	Big Buck Night	5:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn
Feb. 1-4, 2017	Las Vegas Convention		Mandalay Bay
Feb. 24-25, 2017	Mid-Mich. Convention		Soaring Eagle

Reservations required. Please call and leave a message at 989-330-4463
or email Maxine Warner at maxiwar27@gmail.com



Book Review

by Josh Christensen

Title: SOMEDAY WE SHOULD GO BACK

Publisher: Hill and Hollow Publishing

Author: Rick Granger

Copyright: 2016

List Price: \$9.98

People who read every article of every issue of our Front Sight magazine might remember a story printed in April-June 2014, Issue 26 about a trip to climb the tallest summit in the continental United States; Mt. Whitney. I wrote that article about an adventure I shared with my old Army roommate, my brother and his very good friend. Well my Army roommate, who is also a writer, has one upped me by writing an entire book dedicated to our, as he calls it, "mid-life crisisish" trip.

Granger does an exquisite job explaining every aspect of the trip from the reason for it, to his physical and financial preparation. He paints an accurate and well detailed picture of the mountain as we ascended and descended, while adding tidbits of information along the way. Rick makes the book even more enjoyable by adding his thoughts, humor, and flashbacks from his previous climb up Mt. Whitney.

This is one of those books you won't want to put down and it is short enough to be the perfect traveling companion. Even the small dimensions of the book (4"x7") lends itself to being easily packed into your carry-on luggage or hunting pack.

So if you've never climbed a mountain but



wanted to, or if you have climbed a mountain and are looking for some else's perspective on climbing, this is the book for you.

This book gets 10 out of 10 bullseyes



MID-MICHIGAN SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS...



Sign Your Kids Up Here (9-15 years old) For FREE Hunter's Safety Classes Beginning June 1, 2017

YOU COULD WIN A NEW DEER RIFLE THAT NIGHT! Just by signing up to be a New Member of SCI!

BIG BUCK NIGHT

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
LIMITED SEATING

2017

RSVP BY DEC. 30TH
Maxine @ 989-330-4463

**Saturday, January 14th at the Comfort Inn
2424 S. Mission • Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858**

Call 989-330-4463 for TICKETS • Adults \$25 • Kids 12 and under \$20 • Under 5 years FREE

*Bring your rack that you shot in 2016 and get it PROFESSIONALLY SCORED!
PLUS... Get in the FREE gun drawing with your scored rack!*

WHITETAIL AND MULE DEER
Trophies for Non-Members • Two Prize Gun Drawings
Youth Hunters Awards • Awards for Members & Non-Members
Special Guest Speakers • Reduced Rate on Rooms • Free Membership Drawing

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 4PM • DINNER AT 7PM
Dinner includes two entree buffet, salad bar and dessert table
Cash Bar • Free Soda For Kids

ALL TICKETS ARE PRE-SOLD!!

MUST HAVE A TICKET FROM TO EVENT!

For Hotel Room Reservations, call the Comfort Inn at 989-772-4000
For More Information Contact: Mike Stroe @ 989-506-1113 • mstropecustombuilder@gmail.com



Don't Miss It!

37th Annual Awards & Hunter's Convention

Our Biggest Ever!

Friday & Saturday, February 24 & 25, 2017

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

Now with more room in the Entertainment Hall!

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

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



Sponsored by:
Safari Club International
Mid-Michigan Chapter



Friday, February 24, 2017

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

Saturday, February 25, 2017

Outfitters, Exhibitors, Banquet and Auction

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. • Registration

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

6:00 p.m. - Close Live Auction

For more information, contact Joe Mulders: (989) 450-8727

Tentative list of live auction items:

Check our website at: www.midmichigansci.org - for updates!

- New Zealand Trophy Hunting - Carla Lucas - Red Stag
- Tails A Waggin' Acres - Chuck Connell - Pheasant Hunt - Marion, Michigan
- Tom Deharde, Central Michigan Goose Hunt
- Leon Low - Whitetail Deer Hunt - Falmouth, Michigan
- Fish Hunt Charters - David James - Salmon Fishing on Lake Michigan
- Spinner'n Spoons Fishing Charters, Captain Paul Bolling - Fishing Trip out of Monroe, Michigan
- Lost Creek Outfitters, Griz Turner - Wyoming Mountain Lion Hunt
- Mile High Outfitters, Miles Hatter, Grangeville, Idaho, Trophy Mule Deer and Wolf
- Hidden Horns Game Ranch, Brent Fisk, Whitetail Deer Hunt, Howard City, MI
- Majestic Mountain Outfitters, Jeff Chadd - Montana Antelope Hunt
- Majestic Mountain Outfitters, Jeff Chadd, Wrangell Mountains, Alaska, Dall Sheep
- Central Coast Outfitters, Alfred Luis, Bobcat and Quail Hunt in California
- Morani River Ranch, Uvalde, Texas, Exotics, many species
- Scalp Creek Outfitters - Alberta, Canada - Big Horn Sheep, Elk, and Wolf Hunt
- Whittrick Outfitters, Alaska, Brian Simpson, Spring Grizzly or Brown Bear
- Balam Outfitters, Alfred Lamadrid, Campeche, Mexico - Three Species
- Crocodile Bay Sport Fishing and Expeditions for two anglers, Costa Rica
- Aaron Volkmar, Tails of the Hunt - Iowa Whitetail Deer Hunt
- Safari Art - Serbia - Roe Deer, Golden Jackal, Mouflon Sheep
- Hepburn Lake Lodges, Arlee Thideman - Black Bear and Fishing in Saskatchewan
- North 49 Outfitting and Wilderness Tours - Saskatchewan, Whitetail Deer
- Leuenberger's Baldy Mountain Outfitters - British Columbia - Mountain Goat
- Leaf River Lodge, Alain Tardif - Quebec, Canada - Caribou and Black Bear
- Numzaan Safaris, South Africa, Sable Antelope plus many others
- Roger and Sherri Froling, Ionia, Michigan, Youth Deer, Buffalo, and Spring Turkeys
- Iskut River Outfitters, British Columbia, Canada, Mountain Goat and Wolf Hunt
- Jim Walker, Small Mouth Bass on the Tittabawassee River, Michigan
- Take Down Sport Fishing, Cody Dutcher, Kenai River or Kasilof River, Alaska
- Action Outdoor Adventures, Muennink - Hondo, Texas - Exotics - 50 species
- Wycon Safari, Inc., Wynn Condict - Antelope in Wyoming
- Wycon Safari, Inc., Wynn Condict - Archery Elk in Colorado
- Campeau Guiding, Alvin and Mike Campeau, Saskatchewan Trophy Whitetail Deer
- Marvels Whitetail Hunts - Jeff Theisen - Rodney, Michigan
- Rick Dickson, Wawa, Canada, Black Bear Hunts
- Northern Adventures Guide Service, Captain Chris, Traverse City Fishing
- Bow and Barrel Outfitters at Lewis Lodge, Missouri - Whitetail Deer, Turkey Hunt
- Hunt 180 Outdoors, Matt Wonsler - SE Kansas, Whitetail Deer and Coyote Hunt
- Daniel Bell, Bell Wildlife Specialties, Harveyville, Kansas, Whitetails and Turkeys
- Wild Spirit Guide Service, Dan Kirschner, Powers, Michigan, Bobcats, Bear, and Wolves
- Legends Ranch, Robert Sergi, Bitely, Michigan, Whitetail Deer Hunt
- L - 4 Ranch, Chris Ortwein, Michigan, Whitetail Deer and Elk
- Cascade Furs, John Hayes, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Fur Coats
- Johan Pieterse Safaris, South Africa, Kudu, Blue Wildebeest, Impala, Warthog, plus many more
- Ultimate Firearms - Ken Johnston - Custom Muzzleloader
- Shikar Safaris - Kaan Karakaya - Mongolian Gazelle
- Sam Fejes - Tsiu River Lodge, Cordova, Alaska, Mountain Goat
- Caza Pampa, Argentina, Luis Managanaro - Red Stag, Water Buffalo, Sheep
- Mike Carlson, Larsen Bay, Kodiak Island, Alaska, Sika Deer, Fishing
- RB Outfitters - New Mexico - Elk
- Rivers South Safaris - New Zealand, many species
- Kevin Downer - Sporting Consultants - English Roe Deer
- Zula Nyala - Photo Safaris to South Africa
- Webber's Lodges - Manitoba - Barren Ground Caribou
- Baranof Expeditions - Alaska - Brown Bear
- Goodhand - Australia - Buffalo plus others



- 14 KY Yellow Gold Ladies Ring, 8 x 6 Oval Tanzanite, 34 diamonds = .50 ctw (see picture)
- Jan Oelofse Hunting Safaris, Namibia - Plains Game



Celebrating 3 Generations of Female Hunters



Annual Fundraising Event

Friday and Saturday | Feb. 10-11th

The Pinnacle Center | 3330 Highland Dr. | Hudsonville 49426

Friday: Lady Hunter Symposium

1:00 - 3:00 pm

- Panel discussion, appetizers, mimosas, auction, raffles & more!
- Cost: \$10 – Limited seating; For reservations, e-mail MikeKwast@SCIMichigan.org

Friday: Free Outfitters' Family Night

5:00 - 9:00 pm

- Meet outfitters from around the world, auction, raffles, archery shoot, autographs & more!

Saturday: Fundraiser

Doors Open @ Noon

- 12:30 - 2:00 pm: Celebrity female hunters' presentation.
- 2:00 - 10:00 pm: Raffles, games, dinner, auction & more!
- Cost: \$90 – (Must have ticket to enter); e-mail Michele@SCIMichigan.org



Kendall Jones

Kendall skyrocketed to fame after her Africa hunt posts created a storm of criticism from mainstream media and support from hunters and conservationists around the world.

An SCI 2014 Youth Hunter of the Year.



Diana Rupp

Editor-in-Chief, Sports Afield

Over a career in outdoor publishing spanning nearly twenty-five years, Diana has worked for a variety of national and regional outdoor magazines.



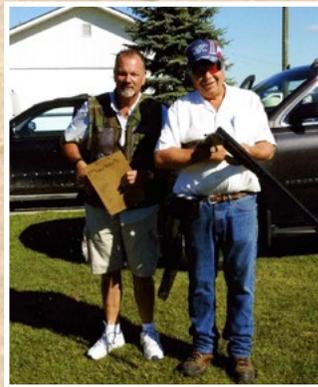
Mary Harter

Mary, who, over the last 46 years, has hunted 6 continents, has taken 15 dangerous game, and has 94 record book entries, is SCI's 2015 Diana Award winner.

Learn More & Register At: SCIMichigan.org!



**Pictures from the
Sporting Clay Shoot
Monday, September 12, 2016
at the
Isabella County Sportsman's Club**



**After a delicious dinner
prepared by the Jeff Harrison Family,
Dan Catlin presented
Moments, Memories, and Mounts**



OUR UNFORGETTABLE TURKEY HUNT

BY JOANNE WITTE

On May 15, 2016 I shot a turkey that Larry called in for me. What happened before is the interesting part.

For the month of April Larry had been in terrible pain in his chest and back. In fact it was so bad that for 3 weeks he could not sleep in bed. He spent his days and nights hunched over in a chair. We made many visits to our family doctor and finally on April 22 (my birthday) they put Larry in Blodgett hospital to withdraw fluid from his chest. A drain was put in and 3 liters of fluid were drawn off in the first 24 hours. The fluid was tested and the result was Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. He was transferred to Butterworth hospital in Grand Rapids and more tests were done. On April 28 a port was put in his chest and he received his first round of chemotherapy.

Finally he felt relief from pain. He came home on May 3. After that we had to drive to Reed City where we have a very good cancer center that is part of Spectrum Health hospitals. That means a 20 mile trip to receive treatment instead of frequent trips to Grand Rapids. For the first 2 weeks he was home he had a doctor appointment every day either at Reed City or in Big Rapids.

We did have one day off— Sunday May 15. It was cold and rainy but Larry felt good enough to accompany me to a tent blind on our hunting property. Because of the port

he could not shoot a shotgun. Needless to say we do not get up and running very early in the morning so we went out after lunch.

I packed a snack and we set off. I drove him to the tent blind and unloaded all our equipment. Then I drove the truck back to the woods, hid it, and walked back to the blind. By now it was about 2:00pm.

We settled down with our calls and Larry began calling. Of course we had books so we read and dozed a little too. About 3:30 a turkey appeared. My gosh; it had a beard! False alarm! It was a bearded hen. We have seen a bearded hen almost every year we have



hunted on our property. The beard was short and skinny and the turkey did not act like a tom. She stayed around for at least half an hour. She pecked at the grass and ambled here and there and finally disappeared in a sand pit at the far end of the field.

Well that was fun! More reading and calling ensued.

Larry had a new call that was a tom clucking. Just as he was calling we heard a gobble. It sounded like it was directly behind us. Another gobble! This time it sounded like it was right beside us. We did not want to stick our heads out and look. He called again. Still another gobble— this time very loud. Where was that bird? Then we saw it. It was directly in front of us walking away. He must have thought his rival was in front of him.

I got the gun up and shot. He dropped and by 4:00pm it was all over. It had stopped raining and the sun even came out for pictures. Success!

It is a good thing we went hunting that day because by Monday it was back to more doctor appointments and tests.

Little did we know it at the time but this was to be our last hunt. Larry returned to Butterworth Hospital on May 19 for 4 days of chemotherapy. It had been decided that he had a very aggressive form of Lymphoma and a more aggressive drug was needed. After 5 days at home during which Larry lost more and more of his ability to function physically he returned to Butterworth on May 28. He stayed there until June 2 at which time he was transferred to Mary Free Bed Hospital for intense therapy. He did not make progress so the staff began to work on equipment he could use so he could come home.

On July 5 he came home with a hospital bed, and a Hoyer lift to move him from place to place. He no longer had use of his hands, arms, or legs. He used a motorized wheel chair. Therapy continued at home but he made little progress.



We were blessed to have our daughter, Janice, take a leave from her job and stay with us for 3 months. She is an R.N. and works at Children's Hospital in St. Louis, MO. Having her with us was a great help.

Larry was home until Oct. 20 when he moved to Royal View Assisted Living near Canadian Lakes. His address is Royal View, Room 104, at 9100 Buchanan Road, Mecosta MI. 48640 and his phone number is 231-250-5538. He can answer his phone now and change the channel on the TV—both big accomplishments. He loves having visitors.

I visit him every day and we watch lots of TV.

At the time of our turkey hunt we had no idea that would be our last hunt. We have many memories of wonderful hunts and interesting conversations about hunting with all our Safari Club friends and our many guides, Professional Hunters, and people we have met on our trips.

We wish you many great hunts and visits with friends. Keep in touch.

A letter from the Wittes

November 11, 2016
Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter Board of Directors
Joe Mulders, President

It is with profound regret that we find it necessary to resign from the Mid-Michigan SCI Board of Directors. We both have enjoyed our time on the Board very much, Larry especially liked writing his column on Conservation Affairs and Joanne especially liked being on the Awards Chair.

We will miss being involved in the day to day decisions and camaraderie of the Board. We will be thinking of you at the Soaring Eagle during the 2017 Fund Raiser.

Larry is now living at Royal View Assisted Living near Canadian Lakes. His health is not expected to improve, nor is his need for total care after having chemotherapy for lymphoma. At the moment he has no sign of cancer. His address is 9100 Buchanan Road, Mecosta, MI 48640 and his phone number is 231-250-5538. He enjoys having visitors very much and can now answer his phone. He also receives email at witte1939@charter.net.

Joanne spends most days at Royal View and is beginning to wonder if the other residents think she lives there too.

Best of luck to all of you and good luck in raising lots of money at the Fund Raiser.

*Sincerely,
Larry and Joanne Witte*

One of our board members, Doug Chapin, receives an award

Leona Chapin, center, is the matriarch of this Mecosta County farm family, which recently earned the Centennial Farm designation. With her are her son Douglas and daughter-in-law Cheri, at right, and their son Sam and daughter-in-law Micah, along with great-granddaughters Marian, left, and Melanie. The original 180 acres were purchased in 1911 by Douglas' great-grandparents, William J. and Mary A. (Merriman) Chapin. The farm has since grown to 675 acres, with milk, hay and corn as its major products.



Reprinted from the magazine ~ Michigan Country Lines

Archery Elk in the Snow

by Don Harter

I bought this archery elk hunt with Tim Hockhalter of Timber Creek Outfitters at our chapter auction four years ago. It has taken me four years to draw a tag. Wyoming Fish and Game had combined Wilderness Area 51 with Non Wilderness Areas 52 and 53. What used to be almost a 100% draw, became very difficult. Starting this year, they have separated Area 51 back out. We don't have to compete with areas hunters can drive to. Anyway Tim Schafer and I now have our elk tags. It had been an exciting year planning the trip. Tim shot a 7 x 7 in this same area when we hunted four years ago. We planned to go in on the 6 1/2 hour horseback ride September 10th, the same date as our last hunt. Between us and our guide we were confident the bulls would be in the rut like the last hunt.



Tim Schafer had never been to Yellowstone National Park so we drove out to Cody, Wyoming, a couple days early to visit the Park. On the 40 mile drive from Cody to Yellowstone we saw some good size herds of elk with some bulls herding their cows. It looked like the rut was getting started and our timing was good. We also saw a grizzly bear very close to the road before getting to the Park. Our first stop in the Park was the Visitor Center. They told us what attractions were a must to see and also that there were five fires still burning inside the Park. We saw two of them on our drive through. Of course, we stopped at Old Faithful and waited for it to erupt. It's always a spectacular sight. We spent the entire day driving through the Park. We saw lots of animals: buffalo, elk, moose, and bear. We saw some spectacular waterfalls and lots of hot springs. I was surprised at how many tourists were there since it was September 8th. Tim got to see the Park but if you go it would be nice to take three days or more to tour so you can hike to many highlights in the Park.

Now back to the hunting. Our horse ride in was long. We stopped once half way at what they call Fish Camp. There is excellent trout fishing on the river. We talked to two fly fishing guys from Minnesota who said they catch and release over 100 trout each per day. We got a chance to stretch our legs and have lunch. At this point

we had been riding for three hours and felt pretty good. They say if your stirrups are too long your butt hurts. If they are too short your knees hurt. If when you get to camp both your knees and your butt hurts, your stirrups are just right. Mine must have been just right.

After we left from our lunch break, we rode along a rock slide for a whole hour. It is not a place you want to slip and fall as it is several hundred feet to the river below. We just gave our horses his head; he has four feet and doesn't want to fall. It was nice looking down at the river watching the trout dart here and there. We have six pack horses loaded with our gear, supplies, and tents. We are the only ones who drew tags so this will be the only camp here this year.

We arrived at 6 p.m. and had to unload the pack horses and set up an electric fence to contain them. One horse was actually staked out on a long rope in case the others somehow got out of the fenced area. We would still have a horse to go and get them with. After the horses were secured we began setting up our tents. They went up fairly fast as this has been done many times. Now time for dinner. A stew was made and brought up to camp so all we had to do was warm it up.

The next morning we were up long before daylight and had coffee, eggs, bacon, and toast. Then we got on the horses to ride further up the mountain. The temperature wasn't bad, low 30s, but the wind was blowing hard. We tied up the horses and started hunting. Trying to hear any bulls bugling was impossible because it was so windy. The wind had to be 40 mph with higher gusts. Sometimes it was hard to stand up straight. Anyway, no elk. We surmised our weather must be changing. We thought we were in for some rain.

After dinner it was starting to get colder and we were off to bed. It was hard to sleep with the cow bells ringing on four of the horses to scare away the bears. It started raining around midnight but it stopped around 3 a.m. We got up around 5:30 a.m. Nothing had stopped! The rain had changed to snow. It was only the 12th of September. We went to have coffee and there were 4 to 5 inches of snow on the ground.

As it was getting daylight, the snow was coming so hard you couldn't see the mountain in front of us. It made no sense to go up the mountain. We had to wait it out in camp. It kept snowing all day and in to the night. We spent the day collecting and cutting up fire wood. Remember this is a

wilderness area so no chain saws are allowed.

The next morning we awoke to 16 to 18" of snow. We had breakfast and then went off to hunt. We were worried the higher we went the more snow we would encounter but it was about the same. There were no bugles and no elk today. It was sort of beautiful with all that snow. (See cover photos.)

The next day the sun came out and it started to warm up a bit. The snow was melting. We hunted eight days, saw a few elk, but nothing close enough for a bow shot. They were not bugling and would not answer our calls. One day while sitting and glassing we had six cows come within 40 yards of us followed by a 6 x 6 bull. Our guide said to get ready and he would cow call to get him to stop. He did. The bull stopped at 50 yards quartering at us and I would not take a chance with that shot. He never gave us another shot.

We had a great experience but no elk. It was hunting and I love to hunt. I would go back and do it all over again.

Reference: Tim Hockhalter,
Timber Creek Outfitters
644 South Fork Road
Cody, Wyoming, 82414
307-899-3667.

BEAR CITY, ONTARIO

BY MICHAEL RITCHIE

As I see the black form silently approaching I ask myself, "how can he get this close without me hearing him?" Bears have a reputation of being quiet. Unlike the crunch you hear as a deer approaches, bear are on you before know it. I fumbled to turn on my bow mounted video camera and studied the bear to see if it was a shooter.

The trip had been planned since 2013 when I took a nice 275 pound bruin at the same camp. Their bear hunts are limited and high demand so I reserved nine tags for 2016 season and felt confident I could fill the spots. The area we were hunting north of Thunder Bay had a bear density of 6 per square KM. The ministry of fish and wildlife only allows one bear to be taken every 15 square KM which means access to 90 bears per hunter. Each hunter has access to 2 active baits and the dominant bear in the area usually claims the bait site for his own. This means that the



Hunters who like to fish - Mike Ritchie and Jonah Schutte provide dinner for the other bear hunters.



Jonah Schutte (350#) and Mike Ritchie (300#)

patient hunter will have a chance at a big male bear.

I had our spots filled and deposits were in and the anticipation was high as the August 26th hunt date approached. We were to have 5 gun hunters who would be positioned in chairs within 40-80 yards of the baits. Bow hunters would use ladder stands and be 12 foot off

the ground. The 15-20 yard distance from the baits means that the hunter will have close encounters with these large mammals.

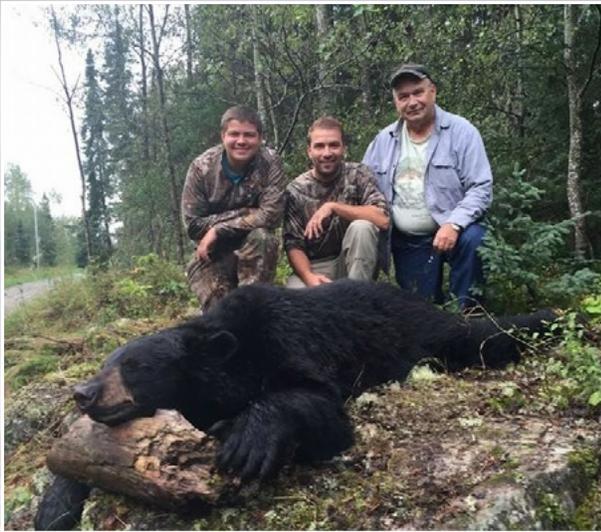
The group of nine consisted of a father and son from South Dakota. Two friends from Kentucky, two from Illinois, and three from Roscommon, MI. We would have 5 men along that would just be fishing.

The key to the outfitters success was the low hunting pressure. Only one hunter per site per year. Even with 10 bear hitting a bait, no more than one hunter per year resulted in bears that hardly ever saw human beings.

I have hunted in Michigan and bear feel pressure from squirrel, rabbit and grouse hunters in the woods. You get walkers and hunters scouting for deer sign. All of these human encounters turn the bear nocturnal. Success rates plummet.

I had been in the stand only 15 minutes when the first bear came in. The outfitter said "there is a big bear coming into this stand and he has a 5 1/2" track. This usually means a mature 300 lb. Bear. Although this bear was nice at a little over 200 lbs., he was not the big one I was looking for. I was content to film him on my bow mounted smart phone. He looked around and went straight for the food which consisted of marshmallows (from lucky charms cereal), fryer grease, bread and anything else they could throw into the 50 gallon barrel.

He ate his fill and exited into the darkness of the thick swamp. My goal was to shoot a bear over 200 lbs. and then take advantage of the great walleye fishing the area provided. After all I call myself a "hunter that likes to fish." My travel companion and County Sheriff deputy Jonah's moto was "Bowhunt or die". He had drawn the short straw for the stand that had a



John Dankert (Roscommon) with his son Dillon (left) and Ted his Dad (right)

monster bear hitting the bait. Since I drew that stand and I had killed two bear in the past I gave him the opportunity. It didn't take him long as the bear came in to feed an hour and a half after he climbed into his ladder stand. He released a "swacker broad head" the bear went only 30 feet and expired. It was trophy! The tall 16 year old bear was 6 1/2 feet nose to tail and his skull will likely make Boone and Crocket records. To boot



Jonah with a nice eater walleye

he had a beautiful white blase on his chest perfect for mounting.

After the smaller bear left I was questioning if I made right decision passing him up. Then Mr. Big quietly made his entrance. He walked like

he had not a care in the world working his way toward his evening meal. I drew my Matthews Z-9 tipped with Goldtip Gladiator mechanical heads on the carbon express arrow as he made his way out of thick cover. I'm not sure if he heard me or caught movement but the pumpkin headed monster paused and looked my way for a moment. He then relaxed, proceeded and I released the arrow.

We were the only two hunters that brought bear into camp that first night but most saw bear and chose to pass on them.

Over the next 5 days 7 more bear were taken and 7 of the 9 were over 200 lbs. The last two bear were taken on the last night and were both over 3 years old. Amazingly our group went 9 for 9 and all were male bears! The youngest Hunter was 17 and the oldest I guess was me at 58 years young. (which just occurred to me.)



Ted Dankert scored the largest walleye

Over the seven days many great meals were eaten, stories told, gaffs were exploited and laughed about. We all took home a limit of fish and I had the privilege of baptizing one of my good friends in a cold Ontario Lake.

Jonah and I were the last to leave camp holding out for another day of fishing . Besides many walleyes, Jonah caught a 37" pike! "You know I'm going to have to mount this fish," he said, "My wife is not going to let me go hunting with you again." I responded, "I don't think I will have trouble filling your spot," I said tongue in cheek. Many people ask where we shot these bears Wint and want the outfitters contact info. I just tell them Bear City, Ontario. I can't wait to go back.

Hepburn Lake Lodge

FISHING AND HUNTING

with Arlee Thideman
Northern Sask. Canada

By Roger Froling

My good friend Mike Faulkner, avid fisherman and traveler, told me about the great fishing to be had in Northern Sask. Canada, catching hundreds of fish in just a few short days. Mike, and Jeff Harrison and Craig Haley were planning to go fishing and bear hunting the spring of 2016 and invited me along.

We met several times to plan the trip and get our gear figured for the trip. We were all very excited and looking forward to the trip. Jeff and Craig are going to hunt black bear and then after harvesting their bear, get to the Sea Port and take the float plane to camp. The fishing camp is only a 15 minute flight to the lodge. The extra nice thing is there are no roads or access to the lake. The only access is by snowmobile in the cold winter or by the float plane. This makes the fishing not good, but exceptional.

We left the airport in Michigan, flew to Minneapolis, connecting to Saskatoon, Canada. We picked up our rental suburban loaded all our gear and headed north. We got into the last large town with a motel, enjoyed a good meal and turned in for the night. Up early, we had coffee and some rolls and headed North again. We finally stopped at a truck stop gas station and restaurant. We were all starving and ordered a huge breakfast. The food was good or maybe we were just starving. The place was a long way from anywhere and had a little of everything so we looked around and bought some more fishing supplies.

Once on the road again we drove about another hour or so and arrived at the meeting spot where Arlee, his wife Darlene and the crew were waiting. We unloaded most of Jeff and

Craig's gear for they would be bear hunting. Getting out of the suburban, the first thing I noticed, was there were millions of bugs flying around you. I was a bit concerned that they could pick you up and carry you away.

The gear that was staying was loaded into the truck and Jeff and Craig got into their hunting attire.

We said our good luck "Bear Hunting Guys" and then we headed north to the sea plane base. We drove about an hour and arrived at the sea plane base. The load of food and gear was soon loaded on the plane and then we climbed in and the pilot fired up the turbo Otter and taxied down the lake, turned into the wind and we were swiftly air born. It was a beautiful flight, bright blue sky with hundreds of lakes and beautiful wilderness. We spotted several moose and a big black bear from the plane. It was only a few minutes and we were landing at the camp. The pilot taxied right up to the dock. They quickly unloaded all the gear and he was back in the air.

We got the gear up to the lodge and I got my fishing gear around and headed out fishing. My first fish came as I was boating away from the dock. It was a 26 inch lake trout. I was only fifty yards from the dock.

Every time I got a fish off and threw the line back into the lake, started out and bang I had another fish to fight. I could not go fifty yards, and I had another trout. They would fight like crazy, it was so much fun catching these beautiful trout one after another. I decided I would go to a spot Arlee told me could produce a nice great northern pike. I motored to the spot and on my first cast with a 8 inch five of diamonds spoon, as the

spoon hit the water it exploded right out of the water with a 38 inch Northern. I fought the pike, and once to the boat I released it and cast my five of diamonds back to the same location and



again it was attacked by another beautiful 36 inch Northern Pike. I fought this second fish until I got it in the net, and quickly and carefully got the hook out of its mouth. I took one more cast to the same location and I could not believe it, another nice northern. This was almost unbelievable, I have never caught fish like this anywhere that I have fished. I continued fishing like this for another hour catching lake trout and more northern. I released all the fish I caught since Darlene

said let them go today and we will have a great fish fry another day. The lake is 21 miles long and surrounded by evergreen forest and granite mountains coming right up out of the water and going up for several hundred feet. It is the most beautiful crystal clear water lake with beautiful surrounding scenery.

I was getting a bit worn out bringing in all the fish. I motored back to the dock, tied up the boat. Then I went up to the cabin and had a nice hot cup of coffee. The Lodge sits atop of a nice bluff overlooking the lake. It's a great view of the lake from the cabin.

Arlee had the generator running and the well hooked up so we had hot and cold running water, freezers for the fish, very comfortable. After a nice meal we turned in for the evening.

We had a great breakfast, bacon, eggs and potatoes, pancakes with Canadian Maple syrup. It was a very nice way to start the day. We got news that Jeff had shot a very nice color phase bear. Jeff planned to stay back at the other camp until Craig got his bear.

Arlee and I got the boat ready and fueled up, then I set out on another fabulous day of fishing. I caught and landed a fish every time I wet the line. I thought I would try two poles, one on each side of the boat. Since I was fishing alone, it turned

out to be just too much. I'd cast the lines out, set the drag and before I went fifty yards I had not one, but two lake trout, one on each pole. The action was just too much, one pole jerking and jumping as the fish tugged and fought to get away, while I reeled in the first pole I set the first fish free and reached for the second pole and reeled in the second fish. The action was fast and furious after repeating this a few more times I decided to stick to one pole. I was afraid that I might lose a one of the poles. I then decided to take a cruise up the lake and do some sight seeing. I went by an inlet that looked like a good pike location. I trolled around the inlet and I was right as a big northern hit the spoon. It fought and fought and finally I got it in the net and landed it. Arlee had sent a fish jaw spreader and it worked very well keeping the mouth spread and let me get the hook out of the mouth without needing surgery on my hands. The trout have very sharp teeth, but the northern pike's mouth is lined with several rows of very sharp teeth. You need to be very careful removing a hook for if the fish starts to jump around you can get ripped up pretty fast. I got the hook out and the big fish measured 42 inches, what a nice pike.

I continued fishing all day, catching fish everywhere I went. Once at the northern most end of the lake I caught walleye. This is really something to catch three different fish in the same lake in the same day.

I arrived back at the lodge and heard that Craig Haley had filled his bear tag and that Jeff and Craig would be flying in to the fishing camp the next morning. We all caught fish and had a great time fishing and eating shore lunches and fish fry at camp complete with French fries.

This is one of the fish stories that you don't have to say the big one got away. We caught and landed hundreds of fish and caught our limit of trout, northern pike and walleye to bring home and the memories of one of the best hunting and fishing trips imaginable.

Thanks to Arlee and Darlene Thideman
Hepburn Lake Lodge, Sask. Canada 1 3065473328



Elijah's Youth Hunt

A Shared Experience!

by Josh Christensen

September 17th marked the first day of the youth hunt in Michigan. I, like many fathers, took my son out into the woods in search of a deer. When I woke up at 5:30 I check my deer barometer to see that the deer should be moving. I then checked the temperature which read 63 degrees, not ideal but is what we had to work with.

I woke my son, Elijah, around 5:50 and let him know he had about ten minutes to get dressed before heading out to our blind. We had discussed the night before that he would eat his breakfast in the blind, so he could get as much sleep as possible. By 6:00 we were both ready to head out to the blind, the only problem was the skies opened up and it was raining. So many things raced through my mind at that moment...do I grab an umbrella, do we go back to sleep and go out in the afternoon, was the reading on the barometer high enough for us to get considerably wet walking out to the blind, will the rain stop soon...so many things.

Ultimately we decided to walk out to the blind. From our house to the blind we would need to walk through our field that had a small cornfield, a small Christmas tree farm, and a freshly tilled area that was recently planted with purple topped turnips. We walked through our yard and were almost to the small Christmas tree farm when Elijah was able to hear his first deer whistle. You know the one, it alarms all the deer that something is there that shouldn't be. Elijah quietly asked "What was that?"

Then we heard it one more time as we advanced past the Christmas trees and to the two track that would lead us closer to our blind.

Once in the blind we closed all the windows and unpacked our backpack to get ready for our hunt. I explained to Elijah he had just heard a deer whistle and what deer use it for. I also let him know the rain probably covered up most of the sound and we should still hopefully be alright to hunt. This all took about fifteen minutes and at 6:15 we still had about 45 minutes before shooting light. So we kept the windows closed for another twenty minutes so Elijah could play on his electronic device and his dad could play on his phone.

Around 6:45ish we opened the windows and waited. Once it started to get light we saw a few squirrels and one deer. Later in the morning we saw a group of five female turkeys. One of which had a small thin beard about six inches long.

At 7:30 I radioed to the house and asked my wife if any deer where in the field behind the house, i.e. between her and us. The reason I asked was we had been seeing deer in the field around that time and then around 8:00 they would show up on one of the trail cams near the blind we were sitting in. She radioed back to let me know she could see only see one deer and it was bedded down in the field.

By 8:30 Elijah was ready to go back to the house, but it was still raining so I told him when it stops raining

we would go in and if it didn't stop raining by 9:00 we would walk back in the rain; our clothes were still wet from the walk out to the blind. Well 9:00 rolled around and it was still raining so we got packed up and started walking back to the house. As we began to exit the woods along the two-track I spied something in the field between the Christmas trees and the wood line that wasn't usually there. We stopped and I glassed the object to find it was a doe bedded in the field looking into the woods/swampy area.

A plan was hatched at that moment; Elijah and I would back track down the two-track and follow it around this portion of woods to the other place where it entered the field. Coming out the other end of the two-track would keep us from being spotted by the deer because the cornfield would be between us, concealing our movements. My thought was if we could sneak to the edge of the cornfield and work our way to the end of it Elijah might get the opportunity to make a shot on the deer.

We quietly walked the two-track back past the blind we sat in all morning and continued along the track. Somewhere along the track Elijah asked, "Will I have to stand to make the shot or will I lay down?" I explained I would sit down in front of him and rest the rifle on my shoulder while he knelt behind me to make the shot. We stopped to practice a few times (this isn't a shot I thought my ten year old would be taking so I

hadn't had him practice a shot from that position). I also went over shot placement again and if she was still facing quartering away I would want him to make a shot that would go out her back shoulder. We also grabbed our ear muffs and placed them on our heads, but not over our ears yet.

As we walked the trail we passed our little pond that had fifteen or so wood ducks that took off in the direction of the field where the doe lay down. I thought that might be bad if they somehow alarmed the deer, but there was nothing we could do about it now so we continued on.

Once at the edge of the field I couldn't see the deer and wondered if she had left the field after seeing a small flock of wood ducks fly over. But within a second I knew she was still there. The rain stopped and almost instantaneously the deer stood and looked around. Elijah and I froze. I could see her head over the corn. We were at a much higher angle than I thought we would be, which would come into play later in our hunt. She scanned the field and then went back to eating from the tall grass around her.

I instructed Elijah to stay low and follow me. As we duck walked toward the corn field I thought how awesome of an experience this was for not only my ten year old son, but for me also. Once we reached the corn I could barely see through the stalks to where the deer was, but I could see her and if she looked in our direction she could see something behind the cornfield,

which is exactly what she did. I thought the stalk was over for sure, but she didn't run away. In fact, she took a step towards us. I'm guessing she was waiting in the field for other deer to show up and she could see something was on the other side of the cornfield, but wasn't sure what.

She went back to eating a little bit and Elijah and I slipped on our ear muffs



and slowly eased ourselves towards the corner of the cornfield where he might be able to get a shot. Once we were close to the corner, not quite there yet but close, the doe looked right at us. I wasn't sure what was going to happen, but I told Elijah not to move. He was right behind me and I had slipped the rifle up on my shoulder.

The deer was about 75 yards away at this point and then she started walking towards us, not running

away. I thought, "This might get interesting." As she came towards us I asked Elijah if he had her in the scope. He whispered "No, it's too high." My shoulder was too high for this shot, which was angled down. I slowly moved my hand, which I was using to help steady the rifle for the shot, down and with that the rifle until it was low enough for Elijah to see the doe.

And still she kept coming. At this point I was hoping Elijah was able to see enough through the cornfield to get a shot. In a hushed tone I told Elijah "Shoot her in the chest", because that was the only shot available and she was only about thirty yards away. She had stopped advancing and was trying to figure us out; the thing on the other side of the corn stalks.

I heard the cock of the hammer and then the shot. The doe dropped where she was. I saw her go down, but Elijah lost sight of her because of the corn stalks. He quickly asked, "Did I get her!" I motioned to the area she was and said, "She's right there buddy!"

And when he stood up he was able to see his deer. I'm not sure who was more excited. High fives were had and our smiles could have been seen from the moon!

To most people, this would have been a small doe and not worth mentioning and definitely not a trophy, but to my son and me that was the best hunt ever. To be able to share this experience together will be one I will never forget and will share just like any other "Trophy" hunt story.

Nilgai Hunt at the King Ranch

by Doug Chapin

Last January my oldest son, Ben, and I had just finished a hog hunt at Eagle Pass, TX. We then drove across south Texas to Kingsville where we had a nilgai hunt booked at the legendary King Ranch the next day. That evening we had dinner at a nice TexMex restaurant and headed to the hotel.

The King Ranch offers day hunts for nilgai. This is a fun and affordable way to hunt an iconic ranch. The next morning we met our guide Westin at one of the ranch gates. The King Ranch is 825,000 acres and we were hunting the Norias division, about a quarter of a million acres, all low fenced.



Westin got us parked and our paper work done in a couple of minutes. It was time to hunt. Ben and I were both looking for bulls. Westin informed us that the nilgai were rutting now and that if we saw cows, a bull would be close. We took off on a walk in a good area and actually spotted a bull within 30 minutes. The bull was feeding on a ridge. We made a stalk and got within 200 yards. I had a 375 H&H loaded with 260 partitions. The first shot hit home, the bull turned and the second shot ended it. The ranch also is home to an incredible whitetail population and I'll never forget the huge bucks that walked by me and my nilgai while Westin and Ben went for the truck.



With my bull loaded we were headed to the cooler with plans to check out a couple spots for Ben on the way. The first spot didn't produce but at the second spot we located cows right away, then an immature bull. We kept walking and saw three cows and a mature bull. We tried an approach but couldn't find them. We then tried getting to the opposite side of thick stuff when Westin called Ben up to him

and got him positioned on the bog pod. I stayed back but Ben stayed ready for over five minutes on the sticks staring a nilgai cow down at fifty yards. She finally moved through, followed by two more cows and finally a beautiful bull. He shot the bull in the center of the chest as he stepped into the clearing facing him. His 375 H&H and 300 grain Hornadys dropped him on the spot.

We had two 450 + pound bulls down before lunch. Wow! It was a great day of hunting. The King Ranch is a very unique hunt, well-managed and full of rich history. I won't hesitate to go back!

Jackson's SCI hunting experience

by Jackson Ecker

I was so excited back in February when my dad told me he won a youth hunt at the SCI Auction in Mt Pleasant, MI.

I am twelve years old and this will be my third hunt.

As the date approached, we realized that my father's hunt (also bought at the SCI Auction) was during the youth hunt weekend. One of his friends, Bruce, graciously agreed to fill his spot and hunt with me. We had our game plan set!

We decided to meet at 4:30 am the morning of the hunt - early! The morning was warm and raining, but this wasn't going to stop us. I had my gun, camo, and bag packed with many things to help pass the time.

I was full of emotion - excitement, nervousness, and focused determination. The drive from our meeting spot was only a few minutes, so we were quickly out of the car and in the blind.

The blind was well positioned and elevated so that we could see all angles of the field.

Once the sun began to rise, it took about 45 minutes for the first doe to appear. There were nine together, the biggest herd I had ever seen. They slowly walked along the tree line and then towards us. Unfortunately, something spooked them and they ran back into the woods.

Our next encounter included three doe and a 6 point buck. They were about 200 yards away and slowly made their way to around 160 yards. They stood there for a while eating and then wandered off.

There were many to watch in the morning, but nothing in a position to shoot. We decided to break for lunch and try again in the evening. The weather forecast was looking better - cool and NO RAIN.

We met again late afternoon with BIG hopes for something this evening. We settled into the blind and began to wait for the deer to appear.

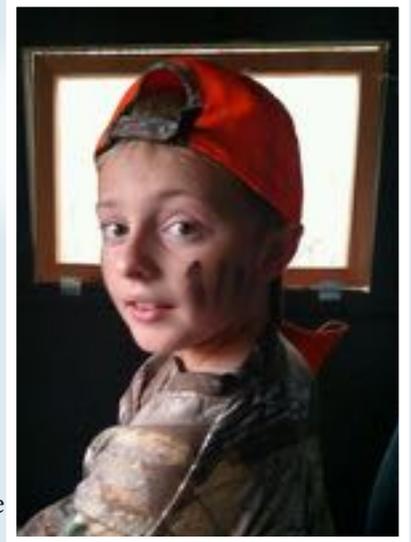
There they were, again, walking the tree line. I had a good feeling about tonight.

We were watching with the binoculars, as they started to get closer. She was 90 yards away. It was time for me to get my gun set and ready. I was excited - my heart was racing and I could tell I was breathing fast. I raised my gun, unlocked the safety - I was ready to shoot.

Oh no! A thermometer fell off the wall, made a big noise, and the deer ran off. I was so close to shooting my first deer.

We waited until night fell and then left the blind. Unfortunately, no other good shots.

I had a great time - the rush of getting ready to shoot has me hooked. I can't wait to get back out there to try again.



ELKANABA

in the MOONLIGHT

by Kenneth Lehman

This particular hunting adventure had its inception at the Mid-Michigan Winter SCI Show. Up for bids was a Michigan elk hunt.

Gail and I by chance were seated at the same table as the hunt donor, Chris Oktwein. He was encouraging me on one side and my wife nudging me from the other side, while just behind me was an auction spotter waiting to waive his flag for me to be the high bidder. Over the years I have purchased several great hunts at this show such as sheep hunts and moose hunts so I knew from my experience that this was a very good opportunity for a top rate hunt at a bargain price. And, as the gavel came down I found myself the lucky high bidder on a trophy elk hunt at the L-4 Ranch in Luther.

A few months earlier I had become acquainted with a disabled veteran from Tennessee who returned from combat with several serious injuries. I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to show appreciation for his great sacrifice. Late summer I learned that this veteran had received an all expenses paid trip our west for an elk hunt. For several years I have had a worker at our Turn Again Farm, Ryan Brigham, who was now graduating from Valparaiso University. Knowing he had almost no recreational time for the last several months I asked him if he would be interested in trying for an elk. He quickly and whole-heartedly agreed!

In late August we contacted Chris, manager of the L-4 Ranch and Ryan and I were scheduled to arrive at the ranch on 12 September to start our hunting adventure.

Chris greeted us with an enthusiastic welcome as we drove up to the gated lodge. We started out on a bright sunny day to begin the hunt. We were to be transported around on an electric ATV and once we would spot a potential animal for harvest we would make the stalk for it by foot.

This ranch consists of 4,000 acres of high-fenced property with an unbelievable variety of heavily wooded ridges, lowland swamps, and a spectacular variety of bushes and native grasses. Toward the entrance of the property there were 20 to 40 acre meadows surrounded by old growth hardwoods; some of the maple trees were five-feet across.

Dotted around the edges of the areas were mature apple trees loaded with fruit and often we would see a deer or two picking from the tree or from the ground.

On the first day of our hunt we became acquainted with the ranch as Chris bragged about all the 400 plus scored elks and 200 plus scored white-tail bucks that they had been seeing. We sat there and listened to him thinking to ourselves he might be stretching the truth a little bit—just like how all hunting stories are told. After we visited awhile and grabbed a quick bite to eat we loaded up the ATV to start our journey.

Day 1: It was mid-afternoon and we couldn't ask for more perfect weather with clear sky and a temperature into the 70's. Within the first hour we spotted our first elk crossing the woods



heading into the swamps. We circled back around and tried tracking him, but the swamps were too thick to see where he went exactly. We continued our search as the day went on and came across many perfectly symmetrical typical white-tail deer that were monstrous compared to what we have seen in the wild. The search continued as we had no luck spotting any elk and we were hours from approaching dark. Chris decided that we should cover some new ground so we headed to the south end of the farm where there were a couple food plots and valleys for the elk to hide in. As we came across the valley we saw two bulls that were only a couple years old. When we stopped to get a look at them there was 6x6 trailing them. We parked the ATV and began our stalk. We were 400 plus yards out so we trekked down a valley filled with thorn bushes, tall grass, and thick brush. Once we found an opening to get a good view the elk took off trotting into the woods and were long gone. It was time to head back to the ATV because the only thing lighting up the surroundings at this time was the moonlight. We joked about "Escanaba in the Moonlight". Then Ryan invented a new phrase- "Elkanaba in the Moonlight".



After heading back to the lodge we ate a delicious dinner. Ken decided to stay at the lodge while Chris and Ryan went out in the bright moonlight to see if they could spot any elk, which would give an indication as to where they would start their hunting in the morning. On the north side of the ranch they came upon a cornfield, which was approximately 160 acres. There they did spot a few elk coming and going from this area. Chris and Ryan then headed back and got ready for bed so that we could be well rested in the morning.

Day 2: Morning came early as we arose at 5:30 a.m. and enjoyed a hearty hunter's breakfast. We talking about our game plan and the area that we would first start glassing. Optimism was running strong and we thought that today we might harvest a nice elk since we had spotted some good ones near the cornfield last night. Travels last night took them into the corn field so before Chris came outdoors in the morning Ken and Ryan hurried over to the garden and pulled a few corn stalks and placed them in appropriate places around Chris' truck to indicate where they were driving the night before. Then as the morning was just starting, like Charlie Brown with a cloud over his head, the weather turned overcast and there was thunder and lightning in the distance. We continued on with the hunt in our rain jackets and boots. Heading to the cornfield where the elk were spotted the night before it began to rain heavily. That did not stop us as we approached a pair of elk that were the perfect size to harvest. Chris immediately set up sticks so Ryan could get a good steady shot on one of the elk. By the time all was set up the elk were out of sight! This seemed to go on the whole day as we kept seeing elk, stalking them on foot, and the elk ending up victorious.

After lunch and a little break to regroup we continued the hunt on the other side of the property near the food plots. The highest hill that overlooks hundreds of acres is where we began to bugle. After many tries and driving around awhile we heard an elk bugle in return. John, caretaker, of the ranch just so happened to be driving around near us and alerted us that he saw some activity through the swamp near a small food plot which we were close to. We parked the four-wheeler and hurried in on a trail about 1/4 mile. When we reached the food plot the elk was just coming out of the swamp. Chris set up the shooting sticks for Ryan to get in a position for a shot.

There was a large oak tree in the middle of the food plot and for a time the elk was out of sight behind this obstruction. Chris was giving Ryan the okay when the 7mm Blaser rifle sounded with a loud boom. The animal showed no reaction from the shot and Ryan quickly racked in another shell only to hear Chris say, "You got him. You will not have to shoot another time." The elk kept walking about 25 more feet in the field and then dropped over.

The three of us walked together across the field and I think each of us was amazed at the size of this animal. The rack was an imperial 7x7 scoring 405 points when Chris roughly measured it. It had a 13-1/2 inch base. Truly a magnificent animal! Ken was really in disbelief that such a generous donation had been offered on this hunt. A very special thank-you goes to Mr. Dave Brask, owner of the L-4 Ranch, Chris Ortwein, manager and guide and to John, the caretaker for our truly challenging and memorable hunting adventure.

For me, Ryan, this was quite an amazing hunt as I was able to harvest a terrific elk. With this being my first big game hunt the experience was spectacular and I couldn't have done it without such a generous donation from a friend I have known for many years. With many years to come I will always remember this experience as I plan to add trophies to my collection along with this exceptional elk I harvested at L-4 Ranch.

The elk was loaded in the back of our pick-up with the tailgate down. We had several "lookers" on our way back to Greenville. We did take the liberty to show it off to a few of our friends...well, maybe more than a few of our friends!

When the animal was processed we netted 640 pounds of exceptionally fine tasting meat. Ryan and I are two lucky hunters in September of 2016 under the elk moon!

Ryan Brigham
Kenneth J. Lehman

To Share An Adventure

by Steven Shobe

After several hunting trips out west and a few to Canada I was really wanting my wife, Paula, to share a trip with me. February and March were just around the corner which meant the Mid-Michigan SCI Award Night and Auctions were on the horizon, so I was trying to persuade Paula to accompany me on a trip.

This year I had two destinations in mind, either Africa or New Zealand. After listening to Paula's concerns regarding all the political unrest and terrorism in Africa we decided to try for a trip to New Zealand as I would like to hunt red stag and Paula loved the landscapes and scenery in the "Lord of the Rings" which was filmed in New Zealand. This seemed like a good match and we were both excited as long as Paula didn't have to go to Africa.



On Friday I visited with the outfitters and acquired a lot of good information. During the awards I sat at a table with a couple who had been to Africa twice and they suggested they could talk to Paula regarding how much they enjoyed their trips as well as how safe it was. Sure enough, after the dinner Saturday night they came to our table and talked to Paula, which greatly relieved some of her concerns. I am very grateful for their kindness, especially since the New Zealand trip sold over my budget. During some discussion while the auction proceeded, Paula commented she would go to Africa, however all the African trips were already sold. Then came the announcement that item S-18 would be resold due to nonpayment by the original bidder. It was a 7 day safari for five animals with Jan Oelofse Hunting Safaris in Namibia. I had seen a hunting show on TV which was filmed with Jan Oelofse Hunting Safaris as well as read a few articles about them and knew they were a well respected top notch outfitter. I was fortunate enough to purchase this hunt and was really excited to share such an adventure with my wife.

We brought three copies of the Front Sight magazine home with us. We read an article about Paul and Denise Jefts taking a SCI Blue Bag on their hunting trip at Jan Oelofse Hunting Safaris. Paula and I thought this was an excellent way to give something back to the local people as well as promote SCI and hunters in a



positive and humanitarian light. We called Doug Chapin and he was very cooperative and easy to work with. Doug and his family had been to Africa several times and was very informative and helpful. He gave me information to get in touch with Debbie Trinidad at Custom Travel. She specialized in trips to Africa and made all of our travel arrangements, which for a first timer gave me a sense of security.

We chose to go on the trip in June which is the beginning of their winter as well as the dry season. I love to bow hunt and although not always successful, love spot and stalk hunting. Annette Oelofse told me spot and stalk would be very difficult in the dry season but archery at waterholes was good or I could rent a gun as an option for spot and stalk.

June came quickly and before we knew it Paula and I were standing at the Windhoek airport being picked up by Daniel and on our way to the main lodge at Mt. Etjo. Upon arrival we were met by Annette and her son Alexander. They both are very genuine, warm and friendly and make you feel as though you are visiting old friends. From the front steps we were immediately taken in by the magnificent view of many species of antelope, wart hogs, rhino, elephant, and spectacular Mt. Etjo as the background.

After discussing my safari we were introduced to Flippie who was our PH. Hunters stay at Elephant Lodge, which is 23 kilometers from the main lodge, so we climbed into the upper seats of the 'Uri' for the trip. Flippie was excellent at driving us around and showing us so many different species of animals it was mind boggling. Paula's favorite was the giraffes which were numerous. Mine was the wildebeest which ran, kicked, bucked and snorted like a rodeo bronco on drugs.



Upon arrival at Elephant Lodge we were greeted by Bridgette and a front yard full of rhino. I immediately had to stop and take a picture of Paula riding a rhino, but Bridgette tackled her before she could get on the rhino! Just joking; the rhino was so big Paula couldn't get on its back. Bridgette introduced us to the staff, Tessa, Naomi, Moses, and Tuhafeni. They all were very friendly, pleasant, and full of smiles.

We were then given a tour of our new home for the next week. Our room was far nicer and more spacious than any hotel I have stayed in. Both the whirlpool and walk in shower were beautiful ceramic and large enough for me and the rhino in the front yard. The breakfast and lunch room had a glass wall for great views and fireplace to warm the morning chill. The observatory was a very large elevated room with glass walls approximately 270 degrees around the

room, which was kept exceptionally clean for watching countless species of animals and often so numerous it was incredible to behold. The observatory also had a comfortable bar to relax and discuss the events of the day with your spouse and fellow hunters. The 'Lapa' was my favorite room. It always had a cozy fire for the cool evenings. Night temperatures were upper 30s to low 40s with beautiful sunny days in the upper 70s and very low humidity, This is gorgeous 'winter' weather for a Michigander. Bridgette, Naomi, and Tessa prepared and served the finest and most delicious meals Paula and I have had at any stay! What a great atmosphere for conversation and stories of the day, Our room and laundry were cleaned daily by Moses and Tuhafeni.

My first day of hunting was in a dry riverbed area which was still dense with green brush and vegetation. I had several stalks for springbuck and impala from 13 yards to 28 yards but with no shot opportunities because of thick brush. Finally, we stalked a pair of springbuck to where I was behind a bush and when he walked into an opening at 12 yards I stood and shot. But, to my dismay, my arrow struck the bush in front of me deflecting it for a total miss. At close range your arrow is about 5 inches below your line of sight, so what looked like a clear shot was not. Although unsuccessful, it was still a very exciting and enjoyable day.



The second day we sat in a blind at a waterhole. After about 30 minutes, two beautiful jackal came in to drink and then stood at 15 yards. I really wanted to shoot one, but knew that would disrupt the morning for a few hours so I passed on the opportunity. Sure enough, 20 minutes later a very nice blue wildebeest bull came and presented a nice shot. Thank you Lord! I had my FIRST African animal! After field dressing the wildebeest, Flippie loaded it into the back of the Uri with a hoist system so your trophy never drags across the ground. This keeps your trophies in excellent condition but over the period of eight days, we had three flat tires from clearing a path through the thorny brush. We took the wildebeest to the skinning shed where Gabriel, who should be nicknamed Smiley, took over. I was very impressed with their facility which was ceramic floors and walls equipped with conveyor trolleys and electronic hoist. The processing areas was also ceramic floors and walls, with a stainless steel counter, sinks, and walk in freezers. The salting shed and skull prep area was also impressive. I thought this was a top notch operation.

We returned to the waterhole where I shot a nice warthog at 28 yards. What a fantastic day!

Day three we drove to a different area. We saw eland, jackal, warthog, and kudu, but not a big enough bull to shoot. Then mid afternoon the wind switched so we left for another area. While traveling we saw gemsbok which were several hundred yards away so I opted to use a gun. After three different stalks I was fortunate to harvest a nice bull. We took photos in the setting sun, which was cool, but knew we had to hustle because there were lions in the area and we still had to walk back to the Uri then return for the gemsbok. This all adds to the adventure and memories of your trip.

Morning 4 unfolded at a different waterhole with bands of baboons, groups of springbuck, impala, and wildebeest. Then in walks a magnificent bull roan. He stood around several minutes and presented a quartering away shot at 35 yards. I was going crazy as a roan was not in my plan or budget and I mentally was trying to rationalize how I could justify the additional expense to my wife, when it did me a favor and quickly walked away. Around 8:30 some Burchell zebra walked in and I was able to harvest a nice stallion with my bow. They truly are an impressive animal. That afternoon we were back at the dry riverbed spot to stalk hunt impala and springbuck. On the third opportunity Flippie spotted a nice impala. It was feeding at 30 yards and offered a clear shot and was unaware of our presence. As I stepped around Flippie to get in position for a shot the impala fed forward quartering away but there was a branch in front of its shoulder. I thought I could successfully

slip an arrow into its vitals so I released. From the thud of the arrow I knew I had hit the impala. When we found the arrow I was greatly discouraged as it only had muscle on it indicating a nonlethal hit. Flippie did an excellent job tracking but eventually the blood trail dried up. He truly was as good as the stories you here about African trackers. My hat is off to the commitment, integrity and hard work of Flippie in trying to recover my wounded impalas. The rest of the afternoon and the next day we searched for him.

The following day we spotted the impala early in the morning. I had switched to a gun and four different times we attempted to get a shot but it was always in thick brush and slipped away. Finally, late in the afternoon we spotted it again and I was able to get a shot. After 2 1/4 days of feeling discouraged and down, I was able to give Flippie a high five and a huge thank you for his tremendous effort in recovering the wounded impala.

The next two days I was able to harvest a springbuck, blesbuck, and a beautiful red hartebeest after a very nice, long stalk. What a way to end a hunt. I was extremely pleased and felt very blessed.

Paula and I were also able to share in the lion and cheetah feeding which was awesome. I think her most exciting experience was when she and Carol, wife of a fellow hunter, went to find the elephants. After some driving they found a group of elephants feeding. One of the young elephants was curious and walked up close to the open jeep. The mother elephant didn't like her baby getting so close and became agitated. Paula nervously asked the driver when he knew it was time to leave and he said when the elephant pins its ears back. Paula asked how much farther could the elephant pin its ears back! The driver quickly drove off.

As my trip neared the end, I had grown to truly appreciate Jan Oelofse Hunting Safaris. They are very professional and operate a first class operation but also are warm, friendly people of integrity who love and believe in the people and wildlife with which they work and live. Annette has written a book about Jan and the family which was an incredible read. I recommend the book, "Capture to be Free" which is on their website.

One of their greatest accomplishments is the Mount Etjo school which they support and operate for the children in the area. It is an elementary school with approximately 40 students. Two teachers do all the teaching and administration. On the last day of our trip they held a celebration at the school in honor of receiving the Blue Bag from SCI. You could tell this was a special time and much appreciated by Annette, the teachers, and especially the students.

They were extremely attentive, gave a tour of the school, sang songs for us, and gratefully thanked us over and over. When we passed out the items from the Blue Bag, which contained numerous school supplies, toothpaste, brushes, and floss, hats, some clothing, balls, and an assortment of candy, there were many oohs, aahs, and big eyes from the kids. It was a neat experience to be part of giving back to the community.

Paul and I thank the Mid-Michigan SCI for allowing us to share this special opportunity. I would like to thank Annette and Alex for their generous donation which gave me the opportunity to share this adventure with Paula. We truly had a great time and came away with many memories to cherish. Maybe someday I can return for the roan, but for now it is back to jogging so I can lose the weight I gained from Bridgette's outstanding cooking.



CALIFORNIA Dreaming

by Jeff Harrison

My good friend Roger Froling said “we should go on a California Hunt.” I said “Who goes hunting in California?” Roger then told me Alfred Luis in Northwest California does a fabulous job of finding quality black bear. My name is Jeff Harrison. I bought a bear hunt at the SCI Mid-Michigan Auction in February of 2016. A black tail deer tag soon became available from Alfred, so I purchased it also.

Roger has already shot numerous bears and black-tailed deer, so he decided not to hunt, but just come along as a companion and video the hunt.

We flew into Sacramento in October of 2016, rented a truck and drove approximately three and a half hours to Covelo, California where Alfred met us and we followed him to the ranch where we hunted. The drive to Covelo had some beautiful scenery in the mountains, not what I had expected to see in California. While in town I purchased a wild hog and bobcat license also.

Alfred Luis is a lifetime SCI member and belongs to the Mid-Michigan chapter. He is well organized, dedicated, and I would highly recommend him if you want a beautiful California hunt.

Our accommodations included a wooden cabin on the



side of a large valley with the Eel River running through the center of it. From the spacious deck overlooking the valley, numerous black bear and black tailed deer were spotted. The cabin had no electricity, but running water and a hot shower. The food was great and the coffee better!

We started hunting the afternoon we arrived, driving the many trails in an open top jeep. We stopped often to glass many areas; a good pair of binoculars is needed for this. Alfred did have spotting scopes available when necessary.

On the second day, we were passing through a lightly wooded area on the side of a mountain and there stood a bear. Alfred said, “He is a good one! Shoot!!” The first shot connected and after a 50 yard run there laid a beautiful 435 pound brown and blonde color phase black bear. The skull ended up scoring 20 12/16.



On the last day, we hunted until noon before departing to Sacramento for home. We were traveling up a knoll to glass a valley when a huge feral pig was spotted 100 yards away. I had to follow the hog until he turned to present me with a shot. The first shot stopped him and the second shot put him down. The hog weighed in at a whopping 600 pounds, he was over 6' long, and had 5 ½" long tusks.

What a way to end the trip. But wait, it was not over yet. I grabbed a shot gun, and with the help of Alfred's great short hair "Jeter" (Named after the New York Yankees ball player) we went quail hunting. After shooting some beautiful quail, the hunt was over.

The bears in this area are known for long legs, big paws, and long necks. Bear hunting does not get much better than this.

Roger and I would highly recommend this trip to anyone who wants to shoot some great animals in beautiful country with wonderful people.

Alfred had seen some big black tails by a meadow in the north east section of the ranch. We spent a lot of time sitting and glassing this area. Finally, on the last full day of the hunt, we saw the buck we came for. After a 75 yard shot we were looking at a magnificent black tailed buck with a beautiful high 3 X 3 rack. As luck would have it, when we arrived at camp just before dark, 2 huge bucks were spotted 300 yards away. This area holds some very large black tails.

For dinner the last night we had fresh black bear back strap on the grill and a tasty cocktail to wash it all down.



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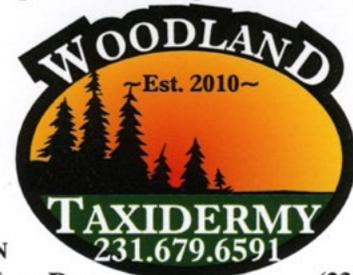
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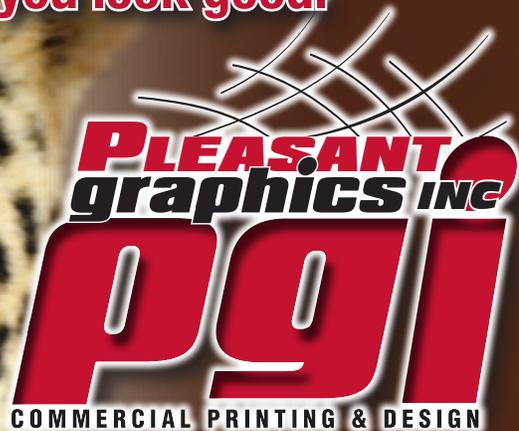
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