

FRONT SIGHT



Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

April - June 2021, Issue 54



Coyote on the prowl in
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- Photographed by Chad Donahue

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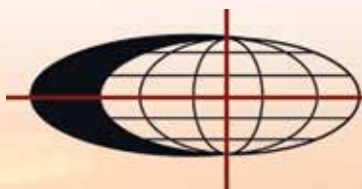
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Standing Committees

Chairmen are listed first

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- Conservation/Govt. Affairs - Mary Browning
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- Sportsman Against Hunger - Mike Strobe
- Pathfinder Hunts - Brandon Jurries
- Youth - Disabled Veterans - Blue Bags, etc.



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 www.midmichigansci.org for copies of the **Front Sight**, listing of events, and fundraiser auction items.

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



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. In order to receive the lock combination you will need to contact Lance Norris at either (989) 621-2794 or ruter11b@cmich.edu to take a safety training/orientation to familiarize yourself with the club. When visiting the Sportsman's Club please carry membership identification on you.



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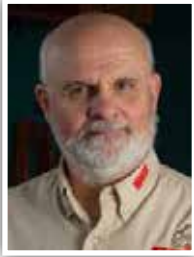
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President's Message

We are moving ahead with our Chapter 2021 events. Our Chapter Annual Convention is planned for Friday, April 30th and Saturday, May 1st, 2021 at Soaring Eagle. Big Buck Night is on for Friday, April 9th, 2021 at the Comfort Inn. These will be fun and interesting events as always and will be sweetened with coming out of Covid-19 lockup! Check out the auction hunts online before

the Convention. Remember that Friday will be a members and outfitters appreciation event with a feel Grizzly hunt raffle to all members present. A nice menu of walk around food will be part of the Saturday event.

I attended the SCI virtual Board Meeting on February 6th. Both SCI and SCIF are active in improving operations and implementing their missions. SCI is working on membership recruitment and retention in these challenging times. The lock down situation has affected all organizations that rely on large conventions. SCI has substantially less financial risk due to foresight from the CFO to have convention cancellation insurance.

I just returned from a late season hunt in TX and was there for the big freeze! I was hunting with the Lazy CK Ranch near Mountain Home, TX. The hunt was great even with the freezing rain. They are one of our Chapter's Donating Outfitters; you will have a chance to talk to them and bid on a fine hunt at our Annual Convention. It was my first chance to try out hunting with a suppressor. The sound reduction made the experience more enjoyable. The procurement process is slow, but there are vendors that can help with the paperwork and submission. Suppressors may be an item for you to consider in your hunting toolkit.

Don't forget to submit your stories, recipes, questions of the issue and any other interesting tidbits for the Front Sight. I foresee a story about suppressors in a future issue.

Please let us know your suggestions for improvements and activities for the Chapter. Spring turkey and fishing will be here before you know it! Make sure to get those tag and point applications into the various states. Start planning those fall hunts.

Jon Zieman
President
(989) 430-2985 • jjzieman@tds.net

Editor's Message

I hope everyone had a safe and successful hunting season and you are looking forward to joining us for our rescheduled annual fundraiser April 30th and May 1st. I always look forward to visiting with friends and discussing future hunts and past hunts alike.

As you can see from the cover of this issue, our chapter was awarded the SCI Chapter of the year award for chapters with more than 200 members. This is a great honor and all members of the chapter should take pride in this achievement.

While reading through this issue you will see many ways our chapter gives back to promote our love of country and outdoors, including articles about veteran hunts and a disabled youth hunts.

Before we know it, turkey season will be upon us. If you've never taken to the woods after these gobblers I strongly recommend trying it. There's nothing quite like having a tom turkey gobbler at close range.

I am always looking for articles to publish in our magazine. We now have the pictorial essay format for those who don't necessarily want to write an entire story but still want to relive their adventure (we had one of these in our last issue and two in this issue). Also, in our next issue we will have a great story told through journal entries (which many of us do on our hunting trips). We all take pleasure in going on hunts, but there's nothing like sharing your stories in print for all to enjoy. Please consider sharing with us.

And finally, we are sending chapter emails out to try to inform and remind our members of upcoming events and what is going on with our chapter. If you haven't been receiving these emails but would like to go to our newly designed website www.midmichigansci.org and subscribe at the bottom of the home page.

Happy Hunting!

Josh Christensen
Co-Editor
(989) 329-4911 • jchappyfish@gmail.com



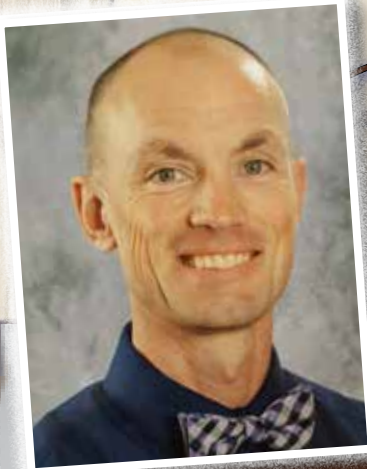
The results of my last day of grouse hunting for the season with friend Chad Donahue and his dog Dax.

SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Date	Meeting Type	Time	Location
April 9, 2021	Big Buck Night	4:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn
April 12, 2021	Board Meeting	5:00 p.m.	Cheers
April 30 & May 1, 2021	Mid-Mich Fundraiser Convention		Soaring Eagle
May 10, 2021	Board Meeting	5:00 p.m.	Cheers
May 16, 2021	Trap Shoot	12:00 Registration	IC Sportman's Club
June 14, 2021	Board Meeting/Membership - Election	TBA	Comfort Inn

All board meetings are open to our membership. Reservations required.
Please call and leave a message at 989-560-1061 or email Suzette Howard at suzettejhoward@yahoo.com



Book Review

by Josh Christensen

Title: SAFARI SIDETRACKS

Publisher: NC Printing LLC

Author: Rod Merchant
and Roger Card

Copyright: 2020

List Price: See below

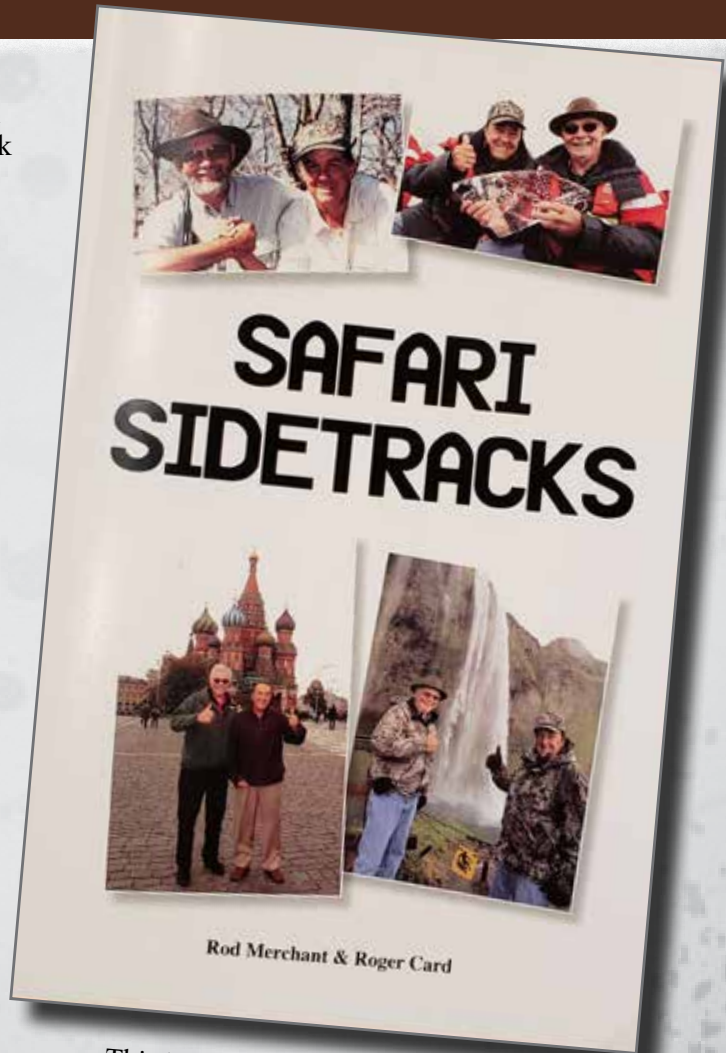
In October of 2010 (issue 10) I did my second book review for our magazine of Roger Card's first book *A Hunter's Journey*. Now in issue 54 I am doing a book review for Roger's second book, *Safari Sidetracks*. This time Roger had some help from his good friend and hunting partner Rod Merchant.

Together these world travelers have compiled stories from their adventures together. These stories aren't about the hunts they took, but instead they discuss the interesting happenings they encountered along the way.

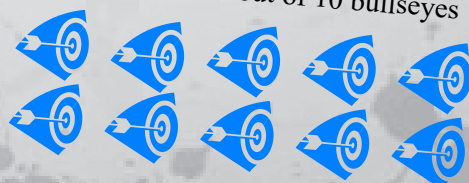
Within the pages of this book we are given details of over 40 different "sidetracks" Roger and Rod encountered on their many travels together. Some of these stories will make you scratch your head, while others will make you laugh out loud. From almost dying in Argentina from an "earthquake," shooting a trophy animal in a "birthday suit," to name dropping to get out of financial problems with a rental car, this book has it all.

So if you are looking for a book with short enjoyable chapters and want to be amused, this might be the book for you. The cost of the book is \$20 plus \$10 shipping and handling (total \$30). If you are interested in purchasing this book, make your checks payable to Roger Card and send the check along with your address to:

Roger Card
7799 Schooner Lane
Canadian Lakes, MI 49346



This book gets 10 out of 10 bullseyes



BUY, SELL, or TRADE

The following are the terms and conditions for the Buy, Sell or Trade section of our magazine.

- It will be **FREE** to all members of our Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter.
- One photo per item will be used in this section. This photo will be displayed in a small size (about 2"x2").
- You may have up to four ads per issue. (You must renew each ad each issue.)
- Beyond the description of the item, each ad will need your name, e-mail and/or phone number
- Each ad should be limited to 25 words plus your name and e-mail and/or phone number.
- **The Mid-Michigan Chapter is not responsible for items sold.**

Send listings and questions to Josh Christensen at jchappyfish@gmail.com



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MID-MICHIGAN CHAPTER SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

WHY JOIN MID-MICHIGAN SCI

- Membership meeting with outfitters and conservation representatives
- Quarterly Issue of **FRONT SIGHT MAGAZINE**
- Online Record Book
- Michigan conservation efforts (example: chronic wasting disease)
- Protect Michigan hunting rights

WHY JOIN SCI INTERNATIONAL

- Bi-monthly issue of SCI's **SAFARI Magazine**
- Monthly issue of **SAFARI TIMES Newspaper**
- Access to SCI First for Hunters Website and SCI online Record Book
- Representation in Washington D.C. for hunters' rights issues and conservation
- Eligible to attend SCI's Members-only Annual Hunters' Convention

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TROPHY AWARDS PROGRAM

By Mary Browning, CHAIR

To refresh your memory, trophy awards for our Mid-Michigan Chapter of SCI are decided as follows:

Score sheets are collected for a two year period. Before our Hunter's Convention in February, the sheets are categorized by country and species. The top entry for each species receives a gold award, the number two animal receives a silver award and the number three animal receives a bronze award. Animals are also separated by method of take so there could be two gold awards in one category if one animal is taken by rifle and one by bow.

The following awards are voted upon by the Awards Committee.

The continents of North America and Africa receive numbers one, two, and three awards each; the other continents receive one award. The winners are decided by which animal scores closest, numerically, to the top in the International Record Book. To find this score the rank of the entered animal is divided by the total number of ranks in the International Record Book. Also taken in to consideration are terrain taken, choice of weapon and difficulty.

Other Major Awards are for the method used (Crossbow, Muzzleloader, Handgun and Bow). These are determined by the committee based on animal species harvested, difficulty and terrain.

The last categories are Men's Hunter of the Year and Women's Hunter of the Year. This decision is also made by committee based on hunting achievements for the specific period of time, participation in conservation, and ambassador of Safari Club. This award can only be won once in a lifetime.

The period for score sheets this year is: DECEMBER 1, 2019 TO November 30, 2021

Send your score sheets to me, Mary Browning, 6030 Madeira Drive, Lansing, MI 48917

You may contact me at 517-886-3639, or email at ltc05@att.net

All entries must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2021.

Please remember to send pictures and to notify me if some score sheets are youth entries.
Children and grandchildren of members under age 17 are eligible for youth awards.

Mid-Michigan Chapter donates monies

Part 2 of 4

By Josh Christensen

Over the course of any given year our Mid-Michigan SCI chapter contributes to many causes, with the proceeds from our membership dues and annual fundraiser. In total our chapter donates between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per year to programs under the following categories; education, conservation, pathfinders and humanitarian.

In our last issue we spotlighted four programs we as a chapter donated to. These were The American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS), scholarships to graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in wildlife related fields, sportsmen against hunger, and walleyes for warriors. Here are three additional programs our Mid-Michigan chapter supports through donations

Education:

Shooting Sports – Annually our chapter donates to local schools shooting programs. These programs include high school trap teams as well as archery programs (National Archery in Schools Program). Through these funds one local school was able to start an Outdoor Education class where many outdoor activities are explored, such as stream ecology studies, fire and shelter making, and archery.

Conservation:

Predator Prey Project – Our Chapter has contributed to this project which was being conducted sequentially over three snowfall areas of the UP during a 12 year time frame (low, mid, and high snowfall). What started initially as an effort to understand what was driving the decline of the Upper Peninsula's deer herd turned into a decade-long project that has launched a statewide conservation movement. This multi-faceted research has resulted in dozens of peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and academic theses and dissertations. The project has made considerable scientific contributions to wildlife management, especially white-tailed deer management in heavy snowfall areas and latitudes.

Pathfinders:

Disabled Youth Hunter – Each year our chapter sponsors one disabled youth to take a hunt of a lifetime at Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch. During this experience the youth gets an opportunity to see many animals while experiencing the outdoors. The harvesting of a nice buck is only a portion of the fun the disabled youth experiences through this donation.



Pathfinders Youth Hunt

First Big Game Hunt Experience

By Josh Christensen

Every year our chapter donates to many programs that allow people to experience the outdoors through several outlets including veteran/first responders pheasant hunts and a disabled youth whitetail deer hunt. This year I once again was lucky enough to bring a great young man on a hunt of a lifetime at Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch in Falmouth, Michigan.

This past October I was able to escort a former student to experience his first big game hunt. I have known Steven for many years as we live on the same road and I have been able to watch him grow into a smart hardworking young man. Since I first met Steven he has always had difficulty walking due to his Cerebral Palsy, but that has never stopped him from going outside and doing activities. He has the heart of a lion and never lets anything stand in his way. He is constantly outside working with his family to cut and stack firewood or working on vehicles.

As we were preparing for this hunt Steven and I were able to have several good conversations and I learned a few new things about him as well. I already knew Steven was in Boy Scouts of America, but through our discussions I learned he is currently working on his Eagle Scout project which entails him building a bridge for a boardwalk at our Gladwin Conservation District to allow people to walk from the conservation district parking lot to the Education/Demonstration Park. I also learned that Steven is one heck of a shot with a

rifle even though he hasn't ever hunted. He told me he gets the opportunity to shoot .22 rifles at the Boy Scout camps he attends and apparently he has taken to it because there was very little I needed to discuss with him about shooting.

When I approached Steven and his parents about Steven's interest in going on this hunt. Steven's dad told me he was planning to take his boys out deer hunting for the first time this year and it was up to Steven if he wanted to go on the whitetail hunt with me. The more I explained the hunt the bigger the smile on Steven's face grew.

Over the next month, Steven and I would go to the small range I set up behind my house to shoot. The first outing Steven brought his dad's .308 to get it dialed in at 100 yards. I was able to help with this and Steven was spot on at 100 yards with the rifle. The rest of our outings involved my Ruger 10/22 and lots of water, powerade and ice tea bottles filled with water. There's just something enjoyable about shooting water filled plastic bottles.

When the big day arrived, October 10th, Steven was ready to go. The weather was warmer than desired as we headed north to Falmouth to hunt that evening. When we left Gladwin at two in the afternoon the temperatures were in the mid to upper 60's. We arrived at Low's Trophy Whitetails close to three and I drove Steven and his father Brian along one of the borders of the ranch. As luck would have it, we were able to spot two very nice bucks in the timber and the excitement started to grow even more.

Once at the ranch introductions were made and Leon asked Steven if he was ready to go hunting. The four of us climbed into Leon's truck and headed out to the property. For this hunt Leon took us to a location he calls Five Corners, because at this area of the property there are five two tracks that meet. He told us this location had been a good one in the past and thought we should try our luck. He also explained to us his property was having a bumper crop of acorns and the deer really didn't need to move much because they had all the food they needed.

Leon dropped us off at the blind, a large box blind, and then spread some corn along with apple slices down one of the shooting lanes before he drove the truck and parked it far up and around one of the two tracks well out of sight. This was around three. For the next two and a half hours we sat discussing hunting and the operation of Low's Trophy Whitetails. During this time, we were able to see squirrels gathering food for the winter and watch the birds flying around through the trees.



Steven ready for our evening sit.



Steven and his buck

As it approached six Leon told us it was about time for things to start moving and even in the blind we could feel the temperature dropped substantially. When we left that evening the thermometer read in the mid 40's. Shortly after six we saw our first deer. A button buck, and then his mom started at us from over 200 yards away down a two track. Within another minute a large buck with a drop tine on each side followed the pair toward us. They stopped at the corn and apples and we were able to watch them.

About twenty minutes later another buck with a similar sized rack, but bigger body made an appearance. Before he came in to browse over the food he decided to make a scrape. This was a great opportunity for us to discuss deer behavior with Steven. Once the bigger buck made or added to his scrape he came over to the area where Leon had spread the food. On his approach the button buck and doe decided to leave the area and the other buck was sure to steer clear of this larger adversary.

We continued to watch these two bucks for the next fifteen minutes until a herd of five does and fawns were spotted to our right along another two track/shooting lane. These deer milled around eating acorns and some grains Leon put out the day before. As we watched these two groups of deer feeding we saw, on several occasions, other deer move through the timber around us. Most of these deer were does, but we did see a very nice large typical mainframe ten point buck.

Shortly after spotting the large typical buck, we noticed the group of does to our right had a nice eight point with them. We didn't notice him slip into the group, but there he was. Leon took a quick look at him and asked me what I thought about this being Steven's shooter buck. I told Leon we should have Steven take a look and decide. I handed Steven my binoculars and told him to look the buck over. Of course, the buck was facing away from us with his head down eating. He continued to eat with his head down for what seemed like hours, but in reality was only a few minutes. When the buck picked his head up it gave Steven a good opportunity to look him over.

After Steven looked him over he handed my binoculars back to me. I asked him if he wanted to take a shot at that buck or wait to see if something else came out. His response was a "yeah." So I asked, "Yeah you want to shoot the buck or yeah you want to wait?" He quickly replied that he wanted to take this buck. I reminded Steven to put his ear muffs on and then he quietly put the window of the blind down and slipped the .308 out, using the window sill as a rest.

At this time the buck was still facing away from us and I told Steven to wait for a broadside shot,

which Leon ensured Steven he would be doing soon. After only a few moments the buck turned broadside and then quarter away from us. Leon told Steven that was a good angle and he could take the shot. I reminded Steven to place the crosshairs right behind the shoulder, to breathe and squeeze the trigger. The way we were sitting in the blind allowed me to be seated right behind Steven as he set up for the 85-yard shot. I had my binoculars on the buck as I waited for Steven to send the bullet down range. I watched and waited, but no shot came. I looked down from my binoculars to see if Steven was shaking, this was his first deer hunt and he was about to take a nice buck, but it appeared Steven had everything under control so I went back to looking through my binos. Shortly after finding the buck in my binoculars again the shot rang out and we could all tell it was a great shot. The buck stood up on his hind legs and then fell on his back. I slapped Steven on the back and congratulated him on a nice shot. At that very moment the buck got up and ran hard for about twenty yards before coming to his final resting place in a tall weed covered field.

We watched the tall weeds for a few minutes after the deer came to a halt before we began to discuss what had just happened. We learned that Steven took a while to shoot because the crosshairs of the rifle wouldn't stop jumping around. He had experienced his first case of hunting adrenaline.

The smile on Steven's face grew larger and larger as we approached his buck. As we came closer we saw the deer had fallen right on the edge of the weeds and created a perfect picture opportunity. After many pictures and reliving the encounter several times we transported the buck back to Leon's house to clean him out. The buck was weighed first and he weighed out at 180 pounds.

That night we transported Steven's deer to a processor and the next morning Steven and I took the cape and antlers to NAC taxidermy, where owner and operator Nick Giuliani graciously agreed to do a shoulder mount for Steven for the small fee of telling Nick the story of how he came to harvest such a nice animal.

After learning more about the donated hunt, that the taxidermy was being donated as well and the processing fee was being donated by another chapter member, Tracey Curtis of Yetti's Meat of Gladwin decided to donate the processing fee money back to the chapter to help fund a portion of next year's hunt.

**Editor's note: Hunts such as this are just one of the many ways your membership dues money goes to help instill our passion for the outdoors into the next generation and beyond.*



Steven's deer where we found it.



Two nice bucks feeding.

First for Hunters with disabilities

By Michael L. Ritchie

I was introduced to SCI by Jim Shockey in his televised hunting show. The tag line was Safari Club International: First for Hunters. I must say that it did not spark much interest in the organization at the time.

The image I saw was some rich old men hunting elephants in Africa. Not that I wouldn't want to hunt in Africa, but it was something I could not relate to as a young professional in debt from student loans.

My goal was to hunt the western states for elk, mule deer and antelope without breaking the family budget. Enter Diane and Floyd Moore of SCI NE Michigan. I had just taken a blind hunter on a hog hunt at a high fence preserve near my home in Higgins Lake, MI. He was successful in shooting a 371# hog with a 30/30 Winchester mounted with a laser. Diane and Floyd heard about the young man's interest in hunting through a mutual friend and asked if he would like to try to hunt bear in the Upper Peninsula. The club would procure a tag from the Governor, provide food, lodging and take him on the hunt. Diane and Floyd would personally sit with him on the hunt. What a generous opportunity for the 14 year old.

Generosity, in a world that is always looking for a handout, this group of outdoors men and women exemplify the word. I must say my interest was piqued when I went to one of their Chapter fund raising dinners. What would this be like? The event began with a prayer for the food and the pledge to the flag. I was amazed how everyone was telling and listening to each other's hunting stories, whether it be a pheasant hunt or those high dollar Africa safaris. Their purpose was

resolute: preserve the hunting tradition of our forefather's and create opportunities for new hunters to join us.

These goals are attained in the political arena where they make sure government knows that we are not about to let our heritage fade



Mark Copeland of Jay's of Gaylord assists blind hunter to his first trophy.

away because of groups that oppose us. Sometime back, anti-hunters wanted to get rid of bear hunting in Michigan. It was Safari Club International that fought to protect our rights. The climax of the banquet for me was when they introduced the parents of a child that went on a wish hunt for elk that was provided by the

local Chapter. Wish hunts are mostly for terminally ill children that would like to have a hunting experience of a lifetime that the family would not be able to provide. Everything is provided for the family on these hunts including transportation for the parents, child, lodging, food, outfitting, and all are top notch. Depending the child's physical limitations, they can provide motorized wheelchairs, computerized triggering devices, heated hunting shacks etc. If the youth is successful, many times a taxidermist will mount their trophy free of charge.



Nick with George Kestinholtz

The parents shared their gratitude to those in attendance and related that their son had died since the hunt. What happened next blew me away. The auctioneer offered a beautiful black wolf hide from Ontario up to support the next years wish hunt. The top bid was \$9000! Before they presented the hide to the winner, he stood up and said, "Auction it off again!" This time the top bid was \$7000. As they went to present the hide the winner said, "Auction it off again."

The third and final time the hide was auctioned off, the bid was \$7000! The high bidder went to the front to receive the overpriced wolf hide. As he walked back to his table he stopped and presented it to the family who had lost their son to cancer. There was not a dry eye in the room of rough and tough hunters.

Incredible generosity, amazing dedication to their lifestyle, close community, unashamed patriotism, and gratefulness to the Creator, this is what I saw at my first SCI banquet. The hunting lifestyle levels the playing field when it comes things like, economics, race, gender and even disabilities.

I signed up to be a member that night and have been part of SCI ever since.

By the way, the young blind hunter didn't get his bear saying, "I didn't see a thing." This was unacceptable to the Moore's and they set up a deer hunt for the boy at a hunting preserve in Alpena, MI. They assisted the young hunter in the harvesting of an 8-point buck.

Safari Club also favors Veterans with disabilities. Most chapters support our military heroes with special needs hunts around the world.

Our local club holds pheasant hunts for Veterans every year, and this year I applied for a moose hunt in Maine for a friend who is a Vietnam Veteran who is suffering the results of Agent Orange exposure. When I let SCI know about this once in a lifetime opportunity for this deserving Marine, they said absolutely. Three different chapters paid for two thirds of the cost of the entire hunt!

Come check out a meeting, see what SCI is all about, and you will find an outward focused organization that puts their money where their mouth is and has a really good time doing it.

Bio - Michael Ritchie and his wife Laurie have been married for 38 years. He practices Chiropractic and lives in Higgins Lake, MI. He is the father of two grown children and is Grampa to Lucas. Whenever he can he hunts, fishes and travels. His most recent emphasis is getting young people outdoors. He is a Board Member for Centershot Ministries which is an international ministry that puts bows and arrows in the hands of children and teaches them that "God Loves Them."

Honor Where Honor is Due

by Michael L. Ritchie

The sun was just appearing over the horizon and two moose had already crossed in front of us. Our guide Jeremy Judd was at the corner of the woods frantically waving for us to catch up to him. I was doing my best to get my friend Dan Holbrook in position, but his legs just wouldn't cooperate, and it was too late. "You should have seen him; he was the largest bull I've seen in Maine my entire life." Jeremy said exasperated, "Then that guy drove up in that red pick up and pushed all the moose out of the field!"

Dan was participating in a Disabled U.S. Veterans hunt put on by the Maine Fish and Wildlife Department and hosted by Smoldering Lake Outfitters out of Bridgewater, Maine. Through a close friend Ray Howell who is the founding servant of Kicking Bear Ministries, I had learned about this hunt. "The hunt is really a crop damage hunt." Said Jeremy Judd who is a Maine Game Warden. "The local broccoli farmers get 25 tags per year to prevent these massive creatures from consuming 60 lbs. of broccoli per animal per day. Smoldering Lake Outfitters raises the funds, takes applications and facilitates the veterans hunts as a part of the Veterans Afield Foundation."

It turns out that the gentlemen who purposely drove the fields spooking the moose was doing it intentionally. When our guide Jeremy confronted him, he gave our guide and Game Warden an earful. It seems he did not approve of the veterans getting "First Shot" at the moose ahead of Maine's hunting public.

What would possess a person to interfere with a disabled Veterans hunt? The signs on the property's perimeter clearly stated, "Keep Out, disabled Veterans Moose Hunt in Progress" It was clearly a lack of respect for our National Heroes. Ray Howell serving as the cameraman for the hunt was mortified. "What kind of person does such a thing? Thankfully, I have it all on video."

What would possess a person to do such a thing? Proverbs 3:27
Withhold not good (honor) from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

Danny Holbrook served in the U.S. Marines from 1966-68. He was working at Great Lakes Steel in southeast Michigan when the draft called him up. He was married 2 months before his deployment to Vietnam. Sitting on a hill waiting to cross a river on a search and destroy mission he opened a letter from his wife Lynn. She was having second thoughts about being married and was considering divorce. This is not an unusual thing for those fighting for our nation. The stress and loneliness of the spouses is sometimes too much, and they send a "Dear John or Jane" letter. Dan was talking to God and asking for his



Wife Lynn and Veteran Dan

help and a still small voice came to his mind, "Danny do you want to come home now?" "perceiving it to be God he replied, "No Lord I want to complete my job and return to my wife." Suddenly 5 shots rang out and a bullet whizzed by his abdomen hitting his fellow soldier in the leg. Thankfully, Dan returned to his wife Lynn and have been married for 54 years. "The worst thing was the terrible way Vietnam Vets were treated when we returned home." I was called baby killer, loser, and many worse things. I was told the war was escalating and I would likely have to return to Nam, which was horrifying." Dan shared "All by people who never served their country in the military."

Amazingly, Dan was not bitter against the man who interrupted his hunt or the people that did not honor him for his time in the service. His hunt continued and we spotted several different moose without a good shot. The rules of the hunt were this. 1. Do not shoot

a moose while standing in the crop fields. Moose are as "Big as Dinosaurs" as Dan put it. And to get them out of the field with a truck would destroy too much crop. 2. Shoot the first moose that offers a good shot. The Vets were told to shoot bulls, cows, or calf.

Returning to camp for lunch, we saw that one of the Military Heroes had scored on a 50+ inch bull moose. Tyler (who was in the Coast Guard) was sharing his success story. The other vets were all crowding around him with huge smiles and handshakes of congratulations.

Ray Howell and SLO owner Dave Hentosh were doing Kicking Bear Ministry camps together for many years.

Many of the guides for the moose hunts are part of the on-going Kicking Bear Camps, including Josh Hanes, Jeremy Judd, and many others. It's incredible to see the positive impact between today's youth and the veterans.

Dave Hentosh had a heart for the Veterans saying, "The reason why I began doing disabled veterans hunts eighteen years ago is that I never served in the military myself. The reason I still do them today is because of the letter I received after the first hunt." Dave relates his first such hunt was a bear hunt with five vets. The letter simply said, "Thank you for saving my life."

Dave immediately called the man and asked him what he meant by those words. "I usually woke up every morning and took a bottle in one hand and pistol in the other and had to decide which one I would use that day," said the veteran. Sadly, twenty-two combat veterans take their own lives every day in the United States because of PTSD. Jeremy Judd volunteers to guide for these hunts every year, taking vacation days from work to help. "The great hunting is the draw but the real magic happens over the three to four days as these veterans get to know each other, tell their stories and regain some of the brotherhood they have lost after returning home from war."

As an outsider I could really see this happening before my eyes as I witnessed one of the six hunters begin the healing process. Sean was having difficulty adjusting to normal life after Afghanistan. By the week's end, he was smiling, interacting with everyone, and genuinely enjoying himself. Dan asked me why everyone had treated him like a king when he had "only" done his duty. I responded, "Dan, you are a king! Don't you see? You spent two years in Nam defending our freedom. You deserve to be honored." The staff, guides and helpers all gave maximum effort to make sure they all understood that.

The second day of the hunt, Jeremy set Dan up in a field that had not been hunted. Dave Hentosh noticed the broccoli was heavily damaged due to the munching moose. Dan would have a maximum of a 300-yard shot if the moose came where Dave expected. The



Dan, Jeremy, Mike Swimm and Mike



Dan and Mike with Moose



Ray, Mike, Jeremy Dan and Dave Hentosh



Moose antlers

difficulty is to shoot them before they reach the crops. Jeremy had hollowed out some brush downwind and set Dan in a chair and his rifle on a shooting rest. Now we just had to wait to see who showed up. Hopefully, no red pickups would disturb our hunt on this day. The field was remarkably close to a county road. As evening approached, Jeremy would softly call hoping to coax a moose

out of the thick timber. Suddenly, a black silhouette of a moose appeared. "Moose!" Jeremy said, excitedly. Dan's hunt was over at 200 yards, with finely tuned .308 hand loads out of his CZ rifle. The 300 lb. calf moose would provide many tasty meals for Dan and his friends and family. On the third morning, the final moose tag was filled. Dave and the other volunteers guided the hunters six for six on the 3-day hunt. The dramatic story included state policeman David Tripp carrying hunter Brad Lang on his back to get him in position to take a nice bull moose. I think everyone in camp was as happy as Brad as he was able to harvest a moose in such an amazing fashion. Brad was using his own custom rifle chambered in .308 cal. His business after the military is: www.stumpiescustomguns.com and he can make you just about anything you could enjoy shooting. "I won't sell a rifle that won't shoot quarter inch groups at 100 yards. His shop is located in North Carolina and people can send their rifles to him through the mail.

Honor, defined by Wikipedia, is the idea of a bond between an individual and society as a quality of a person that is both of social teaching and of personal ethics, that manifests itself as a code of conduct, and has elements such as valor, chivalry, honesty and compassion.



The Vets - Tyler, Chuck, Mike, Dan, Brad and Sean

I was blessed to help Dan with his once-in-a-lifetime hunt to honor him for his service to our country. I would like to thank those who sponsored him, providing the needed funding. Safari Club International two-time president, Bob Easterbrook; Safari Club Mid-Michigan <https://midmichigansci.org/> and Safari Club Michigan Chapter were first to help and provided 2/3 of the total funding. Many thanks to individual donors: Amber H, Richard R, David M, Bill H, Don O, Roger C, Jeff C, Laurie C, Mike D. Special thanks to Smoldering Lake Outfitters-David & Kerry Hentosh, <https://www.smoldering-lake-outfitters.com/>, Jeremy Judd, and other volunteer guides and helpers, Ray Howell (Kicking Bear Camps www.kickingbear.org), Centershot Ministries (www.centershot.org) and Smith Farms of Maine.



No Bull; Alaska Beckons with Beautiful Scenery

By Roger Froling

1996 has been a great year with one of my hunts actually beginning back in 1994. I have had several successful hunts, I have also had some not so successful hunts; I went to Alaska in 1994 and planned to hunt the giant Alaska moose and found that I could also hunt Dal sheep for about nine days and then go after a moose.

I saw some smaller moose at close range with all the big trophies staying way out of range. I came home empty handed. I never saw any legal rams in the eight days of climbing around in the mountains although I saw a lot of beautiful and very spectacular and breathtaking scenery. I climbed into the Cessna 185 and headed for moose camp. You cannot hunt the same day you have flown so we merely got our gear together for the next morning. While flying down to the moose camp, I spotted several very nice bulls along the way. As I went off to sleep, I could just imagine one of those big bulls out there in front of me. Morning came shortly and after some breakfast, I was off after the big bull. As I stepped out into the morning air, I found that I was completely surrounded by clouds and could not see more than 50'. Finally about two hours of climbing and getting up the side of the valley so my view would be good, the fog lifted and there was a bull moose only he was too small. Then there was a big monster way off across the valley and walking through the pines. This looked like an easy stalk, but where did he go. That darn big bull just vanished and since the rut was over, it could not be coaxed in with any calling.

Editor's note: Roger and Tim did make their return trip to Alaska to hunt with Brian Simpson in the fall of 1996 and they were both successful in connecting with excellent bulls. Roger recalls seeing 70 bulls in the first three days of that hunt, and remembers having a great time with a great outfitter and great friends.

I really enjoyed the mountains and the valleys with the smell of pines and the streams as clear as they get running everywhere. I realized that it was the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors as few humans ever get to do. You have the adventure of the hunt which keeps us all looking forward to the time that we can return again and enjoy the fabulous outdoors. I look forward to fall and the time when I'll be back in the mountains hunting and yes, this year I will be heading for Alaska and the opportunity to get that big bull moose that has been evading me. Maybe I will get a chance for a wolf or a black bear or maybe a caribou. I might even see a grizzly and get a whack at him. If you are a hunter, you most certainly know days when you returned home empty handed. How you handle that sort of situation tells a lot about what sort of person you really are. Just about the time summer is almost gone and the evenings begin to get a little cooler, I find myself counting the days until I will be back in Alaska. I can just see those majestic mountains with their snow capped peaks and I can smell the pine trees.

I look forward to throwing my line out and feel the tug of a nice grayling or a salmon that we can enjoy fresh over the open fire. It won't be long and I will be back in Alaska hunting again for that big bull moose. I decided to use my musket next time. I know that my hunting partners, Tim Hauck, Larry Hayes, and I, will have a wonderful time; and I hope we return with three respectable bulls.

So as you are all about to head out for your own hunts and as the excitement grows, I want you all to take some notes so you can share your adventure with all of us.

Good hunting and safe journeys!



ANNUAL VETERANS HUNT

A Pictorial Essay by Autumn Gonda

On a chilly Sunday in October I accompanied my husband Tony to Crooked Foot Hunt Club in Owosso, Michigan for their annual veterans hunt. The day started out with a salute to the American Flag and National Anthem followed by check in and coffee and donuts. Then the big group of all the veterans was broken down into three smaller groups. The first hunt was a European style hunt where the hunters were paired up and rotated around a tower waiting for birds to be released. This lasted a few hours. Then the group did the traditional walk behind hunt where the veterans hunted behind the dogs. This also was a few hours. After the hunts were completed the hunters returned back to the club house for lunch and refreshments.



Sponsor Sign

Tony Gonda and Dave Badour pose next to the Mid-Michigan SCI banner before heading out to their European style hunt.

European Tower Hunt

Tony and Dave prepare for birds to be released. On this portion of the hunt if a shooter had a shot they would take it. Hunters rotated between hunting stations that made a circle around the tower.



Registration

Once the veterans arrived at Crooked Foot they needed to register and sign the appropriate paper work to participate in the hunt. Once registered each veteran was given a raffle ticket. At the end of the day there was a drawing and two lucky veterans each won a firearm.



Walk behind

Here the hunters are watching the dog work, trying to find birds.



SCI Sponsors

Hunts such as these are provided for veterans free of charge because of the many sponsors willing to donate. Here is a banner of three of these sponsors thanking veterans from their service.



by Mary Browning

CHIEF OF WILDLIFE DIVISION

Michigan Department of Natural has a new Chief of Wildlife Division, Jared Duquette

Mr. Duquette is a native Michigander from St. Charles, MI and attained his B.S. from Central Michigan University. He was the original PH.D. student on the predator prey project. His most recent position was with the Illinois DNR where he managed hunter R3 and public outreach initiatives, and CWD management.

WOLVES

At the end of October, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the removal of gray wolves from the federal list of T&E species in the lower 48 (outside of Mexican Gray Wolf range and where wolves are already delisted in the northern Rocky Mountains); Official delisting date is Jan. 4, 2021. There is already a NOI to sue the USFWS if they do not rescind the final rule before January 4th from Defenders of Wildlife, HSUS, Sierra Club, etc.

Michigan’s present minimum wolf population estimate is 695 and has been between 600-700 the last nine years. Michigan wolves long ago passed state and federal population goals for recovery of the species and DNR welcomes the return of wolf management to state authority and has a well-considered plan in place to manage the state’s wolf population.

Once delisting becomes effective, wolves will be a game species in Michigan under state law. That doesn’t mean a hunt will or should take place. Michigan DNR believes that before a wolf hunt should be considered, several things should take place:

- The legal status of wolves should be more permanently settled, especially given the long history of legal challenges to delisting decisions and the resulting shifting status of wolves.
- The DNR’s wolf management plan should be updated upon completion of a public attitude study in 2021. DNR is currently working with Michigan State University to implement the public attitude survey.
- The DNR should consult with the federally recognized tribal governments located in Michigan prior to developing any potential hunt.

DEER SEASON

License sales thus far are up 5% over this

Conservation Affairs

time last year. This includes 100,000 new hunters and a 45% increase in apprentice license sales.

But with that being said Covid undoubtedly is having an impact on deer hunter behavior but DNR won’t know the extent of that for months, if ever.

- People may be staying home this year which may include hunting closer to home and possibly foregoing a check station they would typically visit.
- Some may forgo hunting altogether this year?

They drastically decreased the number of deer check stations, hours of operation and days open this year and also decreased much of our CWD testing statewide. Historically, Sunday openers have not had the best participation in comparison with more popular opening days - Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Opening day weather was not ideal. High winds and rain changing to sleet in the afternoon made for difficult conditions statewide. With all this said, DNR looked specifically at November 15-18 deer check station numbers over the last 4 years. Our deer check numbers are down statewide by 57% in comparison with the last three years averaged (2017-2019). The numbers shift regionally with the UP being down 21%, the NLP 62% and the SLP down 56%. While in the past DNR has utilized deer check numbers to gauge where the harvest may end up this is not a year they recommend doing that. They will not know what the estimated harvest is until the hunter survey numbers are tallied in Spring of 2021. Deer check station numbers and even the harvest estimated from this year’s survey will not reflect deer populations across Michigan. They believe that deer numbers are still stable to increasing across nearly the entire state. Going into the season we had anticipated a good harvest with sightings being up, deer looking healthy and plenty of sign being observed. Hunter behavior more than any other factor likely had the greatest impact thus far on the 2020 deer season

DECEMBER 2020 ELK SEASON RECAP

Hunt Period 2 of the elk season has concluded, and 88% of elk hunters found success in the northeastern woods. During this hunt period, 131 state hunters harvested elk (46 bulls, 72 cows and 13 calves), and one Pure Michigan Hunt winner harvested a bull.

While the early elk season is designed to target elk outside of their traditional range, the late elk season is used to manage overall elk numbers, including those in the core elk management area. In total, hunters in hunt periods 1 and 2 harvested 214 elk, and all three Pure Michigan Hunt winners harvested bulls.

The weather during the nine-day December season was nearly ideal for hunters afield. The temperatures were consistently below freezing with multiple fresh, light snowfalls. The snow cover remained throughout the entire hunt, providing excellent tracking conditions.

PHEASANT STAMP

Billed signed by the governor on 12/29/2020 and filed with Secretary of State on 12/29/20

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to do the following: -- Prohibit an individual 18 years of age or older from hunting pheasants without a current annual pheasant hunting license. -- Establish a \$25 fee for an annual pheasant hunting license. -- Specify certain public and private in which an individual could hunt pheasant without an annual pheasant hunting license. -- Allow a collector to purchase an annual pheasant hunting license if it were issued as a stamp without having to place it on a base license, but specify that a license issued in that manner would not be valid for hunting purposes. -- Establish the pheasant subaccount within the Game and Fish Protection account. -- Require 100% of each license fee to be deposited in the pheasant subaccount to be used only to release live pheasants on State-owned land suitable for pheasants. -- Specify that the bill would be repealed effective January 1, 2026. MCL 324.43525c Legislative Analyst: Dana Adams FISCAL IMPACT The bill would have a positive fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources and no fiscal impact on local units of government. The amount of revenue that would be generated under the bill is unknown, but a Department of Natural Resources study conducted in 2019 estimated that about 23,200 hunters hunted pheasants in 2015. If all those hunters purchased a license, the revenue would be about \$580,000 annually. However, the bill would exempt hunters on private land, private game preserves, or public land in the Upper Peninsula from the requirement to purchase a license, so the actual amount generated likely would be considerably less than that amount.





Crooked Foot Veterans Hunt Staging Area

Mid-Michigan Chapter Pathfinders Recap for 2019-2020

By Jon Ziemann

This Chapter is a strong supporter of Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) Pathfinder activities. Deer and pheasant hunts have been the traditional emphasis. The Chapter also has helped sponsor the Walleyes for Warriors for the last several years. The SCIF description of Pathfinders is “People who are faced with challenges in their lives that causes them to find new ways to live and be engaged in outdoor events/projects. These include disabled, wounded warriors, terminally ill and veterans of military service.”

The Chapter strives to engage disabled youths and veterans of all types in hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities. The Chapter works hard to ensure all participants enjoyed the events. Chapter members work with and accompany the youths to ensure a safe and fun activity. Track chairs have been used to assist those with limited mobility. The Veterans are acknowledged and thanked at the activities and provided with the SCI military coin donated by a chapter member. The Chapter works with other Groups to honor and actively support veterans.

Readers of this magazine are familiar with stories of veterans and disabled youths. Here are some recent events supported.

Low's Trophy Whitetail Ranch donated a disabled youth hunt and was flexible in scheduling the hunt (<http://www.lowstrophywhitetails.com/>). The Chapter appreciates Leon Low for this full donation which provided a rich experience to a youth named TJ (see Front Sight Issue #49, Page 23-27). This outfitter has supported the Chapter's Pathfinders program for multiple years.

Chuck Connell of Tails-A-Waggin Acres is strong support of veterans' hunts (<http://preservehunt.com/> and <http://www.veteranshunt.org/>). Chuck has been an excellent partner with the Chapter for many years. He organized a group of approximately 360 veterans to attend the 2019 pheasant hunt at Tales-A-Waggin Acres. The hunt was another success and reflects well on Chuck's efforts (see Front Sight Issue #49, Page 20-22).



Welcome Banner



Some happy Veterans and Track Chairs at Crooked Foot Veterans Hunt

The Chapter supported the 4th Annual Veterans Pheasant Hunt at Crooked Foot Upland Bird & Game Hunting Club (www.CrookedFootHuntClub.com). The Detroit and Lansing Area SCI Chapters also sponsor this event. Three SCI Chapters together provide strong SCI presence which increases veterans' outreach and generates good will. Almost 100 veterans participated in this October 27th, 2019 event. The event kicked off with the National Anthem followed by a veterans' raffle of donated items including several shotguns. A safety briefing was conducted, and the group broke down in teams for the several European Hunt towers. The attendees then enjoyed a delicious lunch. Smaller teams were formed in the afternoon to head out on walk up hunts.

The Mid Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International again was planning to support the Walleyes for Warrior program (<http://www.walleyesforwarriors.org/>). However, due to the COVID-19 situation, the event was cancelled for this year (<https://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw-bay-city/2020/05/walleyes-for-warriors-fishing-event-for-veterans-canceled-due-to-coronavirus-concerns.html>). Another sad note is that Nels Larson, Founder of Walleyes for Warriors, passed away in 2020. He will be sorely missed in not only the veterans', but also the general community. We are planning to support this event again in 2021.

The Chapter is proud of its successful Pathfinders Program. Chapter members volunteer several hundred hours and travel to the events along with networking with outfitters, youth and veterans' groups to provide the ability to offer these opportunities. The Chapter includes and welcomes the youths and veterans at Chapter activities such as Big Buck Night, Annual Convention, and Member Meetings. The Chapter often hosts their attendance at these events. The Mid-Michigan Chapter efforts generates significant good will among participants, veterans' and youth groups, and the public.

Brandon Jurries is the Point of Contact for the Chapter's Pathfinder efforts. Please contact him or myself for further information.



SCI Chapters' Sponsor Banner for the Crooked Foot Veterans Hunt



Hoping to Support Walleyes for Warriors in 2021

(<http://www.walleyesforwarriors.org/>)

*****IMPORTANT UPDATE*****

Dear Friends of Walleyes for Warriors,

We are sorry to inform you this year's event (2020) is CANCELLED due to COVID-19 crisis. We will not be having a smaller, less crowded event later in the year. We decided we could not hold this event without possibly the health and safety of our veterans, captains and volunteers.

Walleyes for Warriors will be back in 2021! Thank you for your understanding and future support.



Family Fishing in Alaska

by Mary Harter

We left for Sitka, Alaska on August 15, 2020 from Detroit to Seattle, and then on to Sitka with our daughter, Ann, and son, Todd. We had purchased this trip from Bert Stromquist of Baranof Expeditions when he attended our Mid-Michigan SCI Fundraiser a couple of year ago.

We felt so lucky to be able to go on this trip after six months of Covid-19 and all of our restrictions. We still had to have a negative Covid test within 72 hours of flying and this became a problem. In our area, more people wanted to be tested than they had tests. We tried with our local doctor but upon calling the lab, no one could guarantee the results of the tests in that period of time except for a client of Todd's. Todd made appointments for us and went and got the results the day before we were to leave. Our tests were all negative as we had avoided much social contact for at least two weeks prior.

We arrived in Sitka, passed all of the requirements and got a special sticker on our sleeve, and Bert picked us up and took us to our motel. We went out to the Sitka Hotel Restaurant for dinner and then back to the motel for a good night's sleep.

The next morning in the rain, we met Bert and went to his store, the Orion, a sporting goods store, to purchase our fishing licenses and anything else we might need.



Don, Mary, Ann and Todd in front of Kasnyku Falls.

Bert gave us his van to drive and we went out exploring the historic town, the first town in Alaska, learning of the Russian influence and having lunch at Captain Ju Ju's Food Truck. We drove along the coast stopping at several places to see the scenery. We drove to Totem Pole Park expecting to see the totem poles but arriving at the bridge, we saw a brown bear feasting on the many salmon that were coming upriver to spawn. The river was full of them. We walked closer to get better pictures but when we discovered it was a sow with two



Alaska Outlier



Ann relaxing inside our Alaska Outlier.

cubs, we backed off. Ann still got great footage. We didn't go further even though the bears seemed satisfied eating fish.

We ate dinner again at the Sitka Hotel Restaurant and prepared to go fishing early the next morning.

Bert picked us up at 6 a.m. and took us to his 72' Alaskan Outlier. We enjoyed seeing all of the boats in the marina and finally we were taking off. We hauled a skiff behind us. We knew we would have a great time as Roger and Sherri Froling and Chris and Sheri Maxfield Agle had told us a little of what to expect as they had also been clients of Bert.

The 72' yacht was fabulous. Our kids were impressed. As we drove out of the harbor, we got settled into our rooms and transferred to the 36' fishing boat, manned by Bert's son, Clay, and away we went fishing.

The first day we caught halibut and ling cod. We camped in a cove with a beautiful waterfall. Clay bled out each fish as they were caught and then cut out the gills and put them on ice. When we stopped each night, the fish were filleted, vacuum sealed, and frozen. Oh, what delicious meals in each bag! The first night, Bert served us halibut baked with a sour cream and mayo topping that was delicious. This was the best way to eat halibut. I had to have that recipe to take home.

The second day we caught halibut, ling cod, grey cod, black bass, rock fish, kings and Cohos. We kept 26, with our limit on many. We saw sea lions, seals, eagles, and humpback whales which hit the water with their tails as they took a deep dive. We would first notice the whales when they would surface and blow. If you saw a little spout of water, usually it was a whale. We also saw Indian writings on a wall. Ann took many pictures as she brought a good camera. We camped for the night in a beautiful cove where the salmon were going up stream in a river.

On day three in the wilderness, it rained off and on. We saw three bears, eagles, sea lions, seals, and whales. We caught two more ling cod. There is a limit of one per year per person. We also caught twelve black bass and seven Coho. We caught two orange rock fish but we can't keep



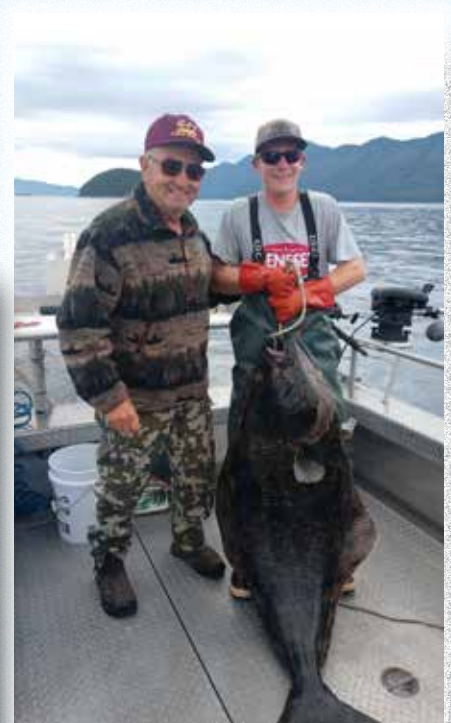
Todd with a rock fish.



Inside our Alaska Outlier.



Our cleaned fish.



Don and his halibut.



Captain Ju Ju's Food Truck

them. There are waterfalls everywhere as the snow-capped mountains are slowly melting and providing water.

We had a little more time to explore the yacht. We couldn't believe how nice it was. We were staying in the Captain's Quarters with a king size bed, shower/tub combo, toilet, sink, huge wardrobe with many drawers, make-up place with a seat and mirror. There were three more bedrooms, each with their own bath. A huge kitchen was surrounded by the dining room and living room. Storage was everywhere we looked. There was storage under storage.

On the fourth day we caught our limit of Coho, two halibut, and some kings. We caught several pinks that we threw back. We saw whales and eagles. We had delicious shrimp scampi for dinner. Bert sure is a great cook. That evening we camped near Baranof Warm Springs where there is a small village with several houses and a whale research station. The dock was filled with boats so we anchored and tendered in. Some of the walk to the springs was on a dock, some on elevated decking through the forest, and some was over tree roots, stumps, mud, and rocks until we reached an area with two pools along a river that the very hot springs flowed through.

On day five, we saw whales, eagles, and porpoise. Don caught a huge 60" halibut weighing about 110 pounds. Now we really have a lot of fish and the freezer is full. We saw the Kasnyku Falls, the most photographed falls in Alaska.

We met up with Bert around noon and they began cutting up Don's fish. Then we proceeded back to the harbor in Sitka with a beautiful double rainbow greeting us. The fish were picked up to be boxed and flash frozen for shipping, delivered to our airline the following morning, and flew home with us. Flights both coming and going were great, on time, with short layovers.

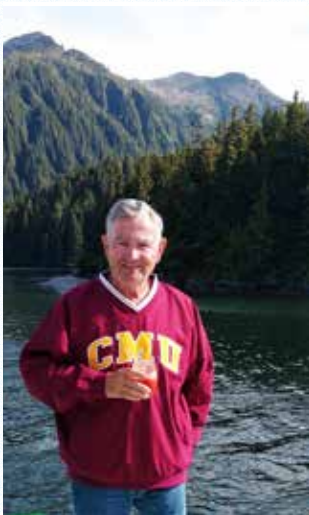


Making Central Michigan proud!

We traveled all around the island of Baranof on this trip, about 250 miles, south from Sitka, counter clockwise around the island. What a great trip!

Bert and Clay also do sightseeing excursions with some fishing, if you want. You would see calving glaciers, whales, and many waterfalls. They also do hunt for coastal black bear and wolves (7 days), brown bear (10 days), Sitka black tail deer with a goat hunt (8 days), and mountain goats (8 days), and ducks can be added. We have some beautiful Alaskan ducks mounted in our bathroom.

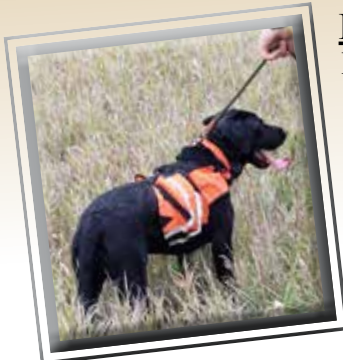
Questions? Contact Bert at (907) 738-3541. bstromquist@hotmail.com, baranofexpeditionsllc.com. We can't wait to go again.



VETERANS PHEASANT HUNT

A Pictorial Essay by Josh Christensen

For the second year in a row I was lucky enough to experience the comradery and fellowship with fellow veterans on a pheasant hunt at Tails-A-Waggin' in Marion Michigan. This hunt is offered to veterans free of charge through donations from sponsors like our Mid-Michigan SCI chapter. Once again I had an excellent time and look forward to the experience again this fall. If you are a veteran, or you know a veteran, that might be interested please check out the Tails-A-Waggin' website www.preservehunt.com and click on the VETERANS HUNT tab.



Flushing Dog

I had never hunted birds with a flushing dog before. This lab was constantly moving just ahead of us and when he caught sent of a bird would flush it so we had to be ready.



Before the hunt

Before we would make our way to the fields for the flushing and shooting of pheasants one could see veterans gathered around socializing.



Pointing Dog

When hunting birds I have always hunted behind pointing dogs like this one. This dog would point the birds and when she did her collar would omit a noise and the flushing dog would rush over and flush them for us. It was awesome watching the dogs work together.



Successful

After we walked our field we posed for a photo with the birds we were able to harvest. The three people with the yellow vests were our guides. The two gentlemen guides were also veterans volunteering their time.



Tents

These tents were set up for the veterans to enjoy a meal before or after their pheasant hunt. Both years I have attended this hunt the food was excellent.



Volunteers

This event couldn't be held without the countless volunteers. One of these volunteers working this four-day veteran hunt was one of our Chapter's board members, Janis Ransom.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Reponses to: What is your favorite animal to hunt and why?

☞ Although I'm "Sold Out" for sheep hunting I totally understand the financial burden this creates. When really searching my soul of what calls me to the outdoors on a consistent basis it's the Whitetail Deer in any state they are found. Like most big game hunters, mine began with family deer camp in the Northern Michigan state game area's and has progressed from there. I'm blessed to have hunted many places around the world but Michigan deer hunting calls me home every year!!! – **Dan Catlin**

☞ When asked about my favorite animal to hunt I continually go back to my favorite hunt. In 2015 my wife and I traveled to Scotland to hunt roe deer. These little deer get their antlers in the spring and by May/June have rubbed off their velvet and are able to hunted. So being able to deer hunt in June is one plus. Beyond that there was just something truly enjoyable about the spotting and stalking of these diminutive deer. One minute you saw them and the next they vanished. Even though the Scottish roe deer is small in stature they are a very attractive animal and I can't think of a better place to hunt them than in the beautiful countryside of Scotland. – **Josh Christensen**

☞ For years I wasn't focused on a specific animal as much as being most interested in any mountain hunt. I've always thought sheep hunting was the pinnacle for me. However, the last few years I've started to enjoy whitetail hunting. I think because I'm participating with my kids and grandkids. So today the whitetail deer is my favorite because it gives me the most time with family. – **Doug Chapin**

☞ My absolute, unequivocal, all-time, tippy top favorite animal to hunt is the RUFFED GROUSE. However, it is not just the bird that is the attraction. First are the DOGS. We hunt grouse with pointing dogs that must point their birds with style and intensity. They must locate these skittish birds with steely nerves and perfect manners before any gunning can commence. That challenge brings an addictive rush with each flush that is so intoxicating I cannot stop myself from running dogs and training almost year round just to be at our best for a few glorious months each fall. The other is FRIENDS. Quality time spent with life-long friends in a beautiful and wild public land vista is the very definition of a sporting life well lived. – **Chad Donahue**

☞ My favorite animal would be the North American bull elk because there are lots of places to hunt them, with or without a guide or outfitter. A 6x6 is a real trophy, the meat is excellent and lots of it, and they make a great mount for your trophy room. – **Roger Card**

☞ I'd have to say kudu but just about every animal I've hunted has been a favorite for one reason or another. My favorite thing about the kudu was how massive they look with those long spiral horns that they use to knock fruit out of the trees to eat. I like how illusive they can be. I remember a kudu just standing behind brush 40 yards away and I couldn't see it until it moved. Not bad camo for an animal that's over 450 pounds. Kudu is very good eating also, but the main reason why I liked hunting kudu was I shared it with a close friend. Those memories I will cherish forever. – **Ray Erickson**

☞ As much as I love bowhunting I have had the pleasure and fortune to do so for many game animals in numerous places here in the US and abroad. Notably Alaska, Canada, Ireland and South Africa. I never measure success by being able to harvest an animal but rather by the experiences that I have on each and every hunt. Bowhunting any game animal is a challenge in itself, but to me the most challenging and difficult animal I have pursued with a bow and arrow is the Whitetail deer. Just to outsmart a deer's keen senses of sight, hearing and smell to even get into bow range is a feat in itself. Then to be able to draw your bow undetected if and when it gives you an opportunity for a clean and ethical shot can be just as challenging. They are also the strongest willed animal I have ever hunted. Every hunt is adventure and a story to tell. – **Ron Gower**

☞ Sharing experiences in the outdoors doesn't necessarily need to be about a single species or style of hunting but focusing our attention to the Canada goose and its many subspecies allows us to understand a whole new level of hunting. Through nearly two decades spent pursuing waterfowl and more specifically, the Canada goose, I can see countless reasons that this bounty has consumed every aspect of my life. I never would have thought that my passion for these birds would open doors and provide professional opportunities to work as a guide all across the country, but it has for me. Countless hours have been dedicated to practicing calling, studying live birds, networking with other waterfowlers of all experience levels, and many other things that have helped me to master my craft and pursuit of hunting honkers. Within more recent years, I've even started to build my own company, Great Lakes Guided Outdoors, LLC to provide the best opportunities Michigan has to offer in the field. Hunting brings people together, and the bond that is shared lasts for entire lifetimes. The camaraderie surrounding the waterfowl community is second to none as I've been fortunate enough to share blinds, boats and pits with hunters of all ages from literally any and all walks of life. Goose hunters are a shirt off their back kind of people, and that's why I'm proud to call this community my own. What brings us together and allows us to get to know each other? The combined passion of the hunt, and desire for continued understanding of our quarry. Other hunters and outdoorsmen may have different preferences, but the Canada goose has created more opportunities for me than anything else, and I feel fortunate for the connections I've been able to make because of it. – **Conner Gough, Great Lakes Guided Outdoors, LLC**

☛ I have hunted a lot of animals, in a lot of different places and every animal has been amazing to hunt. Not only the hunt itself, but the places you get to hunt them. But, there is no animal I enjoy hunting more and no animal that gives me more drive to hunt, than the whitetail deer. The drive for whitetail deer hunting, for me, is year-round. From managing my own property, which is a year-round effort, too the anxious anticipation for every deer season!! On top of that, whitetail deer can be pursued and hunted in so many different locations around the world. – **Mike Strobe**

☛ I am blessed to have been able to hunt and harvest many magnificent animals in Zimbabwe, South Africa, New Zealand, Argentina, Canada and the USA. All of my hunts were special in many different ways but none have captured so much of what I love about hunting. Many of my non-Pronghorn hunts were organized by guides and outfitters that I barely knew before setting to the field. In contrast, all of my Pronghorn hunts were DIY excursions shared with friends and family with the occasional solo hunt. There was never a need to pay strangers to lead you to Pronghorns. Also, you may find it hard to believe, but Pronghorn hunting is far more economical than any of my Desert Bighorn, Dall Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goat hunts. Outfitted hunts might be why I'm driving a 2005 rusty truck. Pronghorn hunting has always been less dangerous than my Bear, Cape Buffalo and Water Buffalo hunts. In fact, death from a charging Pronghorn is so rare that you can hunt them with your children and grandchildren without worrying about being trampled, gored, clawed or eaten. Hunting Pronghorn is also as sporting as you want to make it. Stalk in close (my preference) or wait at a waterhole or shoot them from a longer distance. They are easy to spot and large in numbers yet challenging if you want to get real close. Unlike Moose hunting in nasty wet weather, most of the time it is a nice sunny day so leave the rubber hip boots and canoe at home otherwise Wyoming residents will mock you and your canoe. Pronghorn are easy to field dress, transport and load in your vehicle. In contrast, you better have young, strong, elk meat hungry friends if you shoot an elk at the bottom of a ravine 6 miles from the nearest vehicle access. In conclusion, the more I hunt those delicious tasting Pronghorn Antelope, the more I appreciate and enjoy the whole experience. – **Ken Ransom**

☛ My favorite animal is pronghorn antelope. Antelope live in open areas typically with great scenery in excellent parts of the county. The most fun way is to bow hunt on the ground using spot and stalking tactics. Cover a lot of ground before considering heading out on foot. Careful observation and selection of stalk routes can take advantage of brush and terrain features to increase success. You may need to pass low probability opportunities for better success. Decoys can be a good addition to spot and stalk tactics. For best effectiveness, the decoys need to be maneuvered into positioned within 50 to 75 yards of the herd without being seen. Correctly done decoying will yield a ~12 yard broadside shot on a stationary antelope herd buck. Ranges can be long or short; I have bow shot antelope from 4 to 65 yards. Antelope hunting often coordinates well with mule deer spotting in the mornings and evenings for midday action. – **Jon Zieman**

☛ Whitetail deer have been the cornerstone of my outdoor infatuation from a very young age. Starting out in the public land of Michigan chasing anything that I had a legal tag for, to traveling the country chasing big bucks. Whitetail deer are the epitome of wild game and their abundance in North America makes them more accessible for all sorts of hunters.

My infatuation with hunting whitetail deer started from taking part in family tradition. It was always a chance to see family, and friends in neutral settings without any of the other distractions the world may offer. I did not realize the importance of that until I was older but looking back on those times only draws my love for whitetail closer to my heart. Deer camp was always like a family reunion and the memories I made then seem to be more vivid than the rest of my life. In my experience, whitetail deer have brought more families and friends together than anything, other than a death in the family. Cold sits with my dad; high fives on a successful hunt; pictures taken and shared; meals on the table with family and friends; and mentoring others in this incredible thing we call hunting.

Whitetail deer specifically became very personal to me as I got older and became obsessed with learning about the deer and the unlimited strategies it takes to harvest an old mature deer. Through many years of failure, my love and drive to hunt whitetail only got stronger. The love and struggle of the hunt work flawlessly off each other to create a great harmony. This harmony has driven me to travel hundreds of miles and spend countless hours educating myself further. With every season there is something new to be learned about whitetail. Just when you think you have it figured out; you discover something that demands more out of you to increase your chance of success. I am slowly building myself within the whitetail woods from hunting to guiding to being a General Manager for a whitetail deer outfit. These milestones do not stand as a testament to my knowledge or success but my drive to be a better hunter, woodsman, teacher, and mentor.

When I think about whitetail deer and why this animal is so important to me, it brings up so much more than just the hunt. Is it the family reunions and the challenge, or is it more? Maybe it's not the deer, the family, or the success and failure. Maybe what drives my passion is much deeper. Maybe it is how through this effort it is making me a better father, husband, friend, man, and human. Whitetail deer influences the rest of my life to allow me to find my true potential and gives me the strength to keep pushing forward in life. God just gave me deer hunting as a reminder of the other truly important things in life. – **Wess Brown, General Manager, Palisades Bowhunting**



What is your favorite optics brand and why?

The question for this issue relates to your favorite brand of optics, whether it be your favorite scope, binoculars, range finder or spotting scope we all seem to have a favorite brand...or two. So let us know what your favorite brand is. Is it an American made optic, or maybe a European made brand? At any rate write in and let us know. Submit your answer to jchappyfish@gmail.com and look for it in our next issue of the Front Sight magazine.



Showcasing the DNR: Citizen scientists help DNR track osprey populations in Michigan

By **JULIE OAKES**, wildlife biologist
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Ospreys are magnificent fish-hunting birds with striking brown and white plumage. They are among the group of birds of prey called “raptors,” which includes hawks, owls, falcons and eagles.

These large birds – which possess widely spread wingtip feathers in flight and a distinguishing brown stripe leading from the back of their yellow eyes to the nape – are often seen along shallow fish-filled waters of Michigan, including rivers, lakes, reservoirs and marshes.

But that wasn’t always the case.

Once commonplace in the Great Lakes region, osprey populations were suppressed in the post-World War II years as the use of DDT and other pesticides caused thinning of the birds’ eggshells.

Only 51 osprey nests were recorded in Michigan in 1965. After a 1972 ban on the use of DDT, osprey numbers began to rebound in northern Michigan. By 1975, 81 nests were identified, and by 1988, there were 166 nests. However, in southern Michigan, osprey numbers remained low.

From 1998 to 2007 a multi-partner team worked cooperatively to bring ospreys back to southern Michigan. The team consisted of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Detroit Zoological Society, Audubon Great Lakes, MI Birds, Huron Clinton Metropark Authority, U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Michigan Osprey volunteer group, various Audubon chapters and a magnitude of volunteers.

This program to rear and release ospreys was a huge success.

Today, these “fish hawks” have returned throughout the Lower Peninsula and can be seen diving for fish even in unexpected areas. There are more than 200 osprey nests across the state, including about 125 in the northern parts of the state and 65 in the southern Lower Peninsula.

The first wild chick was hatched in 2002 at Kensington Metropark in Oakland County.

The osprey that fathered the chick, named “C09” for his bird band number, had been reared and released at Kensington in 1999. That bird is still alive and well and living in Brighton in Livingston County. He is now 21 years old, which is on the higher end of wild osprey life expectancy.

Once the birds were well established, the program monitored their migration routes by fitting osprey with backpack telemetry units, funded by corporate sponsors and volunteers.

This phase of the program was spearheaded by Michigan Osprey, whose volunteers tracked the location of the birds on their website from 2013 to 2017. The GPS tracking devices provided information on the location of the birds as they migrated to and from Central and South America.

The ospreys made such a comeback that the DNR needed help and turned to the public to help track the birds’ reproduction and success.

The Adopt-A-Nest Osprey Monitoring Program created a request for citizen scientist volunteers to monitor osprey nests in their area. This marked the third phase of the osprey reintroduction program in Michigan.

MI Birds – an outreach and engagement program created by Audubon Great Lakes and the DNR to increase awareness of Michigan birds and the places they rely on – made a public call for volunteers.

The call was shared through the program’s network of followers on social media and through a widely shared blog post.

“The response from the MI Birds community was amazing,” said Tom Schneider of the Detroit Zoological Society.

During the summer of 2019, 318 people participated in the “Adopt-A-Nest” program and submitted a total of 834 individual

osprey observations. Volunteers submitted reports from 35 counties and reported on 143 active nests throughout Michigan.

Participation in this program requires little effort: All ages and experience levels are welcome. A minimum commitment of three 30-minute nest visits between the end of March and early July is all it takes to determine if there is a nesting attempt, if birds are actively nesting and if there are any chicks in the nest.

“You can visit your nest more often if you’d like,” according to the MI Birds website. “Binoculars are adequate for most observations, but a spotting scope is useful to determine the number of chicks. Most nests are located on cellphone towers and are easily viewable from public roads.”

This year, despite a late start to the program due to coronavirus stay-at-home orders, 68 dedicated volunteers submitted 679 reports. Volunteers submitted reports from 39 counties and reported on 114 active nests. Volunteers even identified 23 new osprey nests the DNR had not previously been aware of.

“Without the help of our citizen scientists, we would not have this valuable information,” said Erin Rowan, MI Birds program associate with Audubon Great Lakes and the DNR. “We look forward to working with volunteers again during the 2021 osprey nesting season.”

Anyone interested in being a part of the osprey nest monitoring program should contact Julie Oakes at OakesJ@Michigan.gov or Erin Rowan at Erin.Rowan@Audubon.org.

To learn more about other community science opportunities near you, follow MI Birds on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter or visit the Audubon Great Lakes website.

Check out previous Showcasing the DNR stories in our archive at Michigan.gov/DNRStories. To subscribe to upcoming Showcasing articles, sign up for free email delivery at Michigan.gov/DNR.



Looking Ahead

In Our Next Issue



JOURNALING AN ALASKAN ADVENTURE
by JANIS RANSOM

MENTORSHIP: YOUNG & OLD
by WESS BROWN



OUR NEW POND
by Mary Harter

MORE ARTICLES AND RECIPES YET TO BE SUBMITTED

Sharing Some Good Cookin'!

SCI CHEFS



BAKED HALIBUT

From: BERT STROMQUIST (Baranof Expeditions)

Four to five serving size Halibut skinned

Melt 1/4 c. butter in bottom of baking pan, and top with a chopped onion.

Place fish on top and salt and pepper.

Mix 2/3 c. sour cream with 1/3 c. mayonnaise, add artichoke heart and diced chili peppers. (I stirred in 3 T. salsa. Add what you might like to the sour cream/mayo mixture.)

Bake for 21 minutes at 350 degrees.



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