

January 2010



Lansing Area Chapter Safari Club International *Newsletter*



Travis's Wish Comes True *By Jim Leonard*

An unexpected early wet snow was falling in the hills near Tyrone, Pennsylvania when the grey van pulled up at Quest Haven Lodge. Mom Michelle and Dad Ken got out and, using a slide out elevator device, proceeded to unload their two sons, both in electric wheelchairs. Brandon 14 and Travis 11 are debilitated with muscular dystrophy but it did not deter their big smiles as they looked forward to their first chance ever to hunt. They were joining four other life challenged young folks at what was the third Tony Semple Foundation for Hope Outdoor Adventure scheduled this year. Foundation Board

members present included Tony, Craig Mortz, Mike Leonard, and Mike Ruhlig. The Lansing Area Chapter of SCI sponsored Travis so Janet and I were there to help out and represent the Chapter. After a great lunch, each of the six hunters were presented a huge duffel bag loaded with three layers of camo hunting clothing from Moth Wing, LaCrosse boots, binoculars from Leopold, Pro Ears electronic hearing protectors, back pack, custom skinning knife with their initials engraved on the blade, Detroit Lions shirts and hats and other assorted items. Mike Leonard then ceremoniously presented each of them with an authentic arrowhead he had made especially for them by a Michigan flint knapping group. It was bound with gold wire and on a lanyard to be worn as a special hunter's lucky charm. They were told, and it is

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President's Message
By Ron Lanford, DVM

Hey everybody,
For most of us, our big-game seasons have come to an end and the year is almost over. Each one of us has had different challenges throughout the year, but for me personally in the outdoors, this has been a good year.

Despite tearing the rotator cuff in both of my shoulders, I was able to function fairly well with medication instead of needing surgery. I was able to continue working and could do many of the everyday things, but I wasn't able to shoot my bow, even with it set at my normal wimp setting. The year before, I had ligament damage in my elbow that kept me from hunting with the bow. It seems that many of us nationally are forced to stop archery hunting. The peak age of bow use in the US is in the early forties. After that, the number of bow hunters drops off in a constant downhill slope, and those people don't start back up again. Research has shown basically two causes. Time commitment constraints keep many out of the woods. Working a lot of hours is very common, and parents spend much more time with their kid's activities than they used to, and many times Johnny's soccer game comes first. (At the risk of having Tom Belloli choke me half to death, I have to say that soccer is a stupid game. You can't even use your hands for gosh sakes! But I digress.) Time keeps us from practicing with our bows the way we need to and the animal deserves. The other main reason of declined archery hunting is physical problems like I and many of

you have had. Even if the injuries heal, sometimes it's just before the season opens. It certainly isn't one of those things where I've been able to pick up a bow after months of layoff and be able to hit what I wanted to, and I've always felt that I won't go hunting if there's a strong chance that I'll just wound an animal. I know that most of us have this ethic. So what do we do? Fortunately, Michigan made it much easier for us to enjoy archery season by greatly expanding the legal usage of crossbows.

Of course, we hear many people bashing the crossbow for not being ethical and giving an unfair advantage to hunters. Isn't that the same bashing we heard from recurve and longbow users when compounds were developed? Another complaint that I've heard is that you don't have to practice as much with a crossbow to be accurate. That's a

bad thing? Isn't that our desire, to be the best shot we can? Don't we stand to make better shots on animals when we can shoot better and hopefully not lose as many wounded animals? Why do we need to try and split hunters up instead of joining us together in the sport we love? In Ohio, one of the states where crossbows have been legal the longest, the numbers of vertical bow hunters went up from 82,000 to 150,000. During that same time period, crossbow users have gone from 11,000 to 175,000. If our sport is to survive, we need to increase numbers, not watch them dwindle away.

My lovely bride gave me the official okey dokey to get a crossbow. I chose the 10 point Phantom package, and I love it. It whacks the target where you're aiming, and it does it quickly. With it, I was able to take my largest buck to date. He's a beautiful basic 10 point with a sticker right above the burr, and scored 136-6/8. My buddy Jim Ellis was also able to take a nice buck with his new crossbow. Not bad for a new beginning in an old sport. I know that many of you have had to cut back too. Open up the possibilities of getting back into the woods enjoying the hunt. Think about a crossbow.

Ron

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Sally Ellis

Once again, it's time to head south, along with some of the birds, ducks and geese. Please send your photos and stories to me via email at: sallyellis47@yahoo.com, or by mail to: Sally Ellis, 141 Riverside, 9770 SW County Road 769, Arcadia, FL 34269. My phone remains 517.230.7398.

As you read many of the articles submitted to the newsletter, you will notice that the hunts were purchased at one of our fundraisers. It is important to let our donors know how much we appreciate their generosity, and one way is to honor them by writing about their donated hunts. Also, future bidders are more aware of the auction items. Thank you for sharing!

I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas (or holiday season, if you celebrate something other than Christmas) and a very healthy, happy and prosperous New Year!

SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS

January 6 Board of Directors Meeting	March 14 FUNDRAISING BANQUET & AUCTION Eagle Eye
February 3 Board of Directors Meeting	May 19 Board of Directors Meeting
February 11 Chapter Meeting Eagle Eye	June 10 Chapter Meeting Eagle Eye
March 3 Board of Directors Meeting	July 21 Board of Directors Meeting
March 13 OUTFITTERS NIGHT Eagle Eye	

Travis's Wish Comes True... continued from page 1

true, that the arrowhead charm has never failed to help a single one of the dozens of previous Safari Wish hunters to harvest their buck. When that was said, over in the corner of the room, we saw the owner of Quest Haven, Russ Walk's chin drop as he suddenly realized the pressure he was under to achieve six more successful hunts.

With the orientation over it now was time to get down to some serious hunting. First up was a trip to test fire the rifles and assess shooting abilities. Travis was the most physically challenged so he was first up. We set up our device to hold the rifle for him. He was able to see through the scope but could not move the rifle. This was solved with his guide slowly moving the gun up-down-left-right as Travis whispered commands; Travis was now able to line up on the target. Then to our dismay we discovered that when we put his hand on the trigger he could not pull it. Luckily, we had a mechanical actuator that pulls the trigger when one sips on a semi-rigid straw. With this installed Travis could now get a shot off. With a little practice this combination worked and he started getting good hits on the target. There was a big silent sigh of relief and realization that there must have been some help from above to get Travis to this point where he was actually ready to hunt.

When the rifle check out was complete the young hunters and their guides left to test their luck in the first evening's hunt. The rest of us returned to the lodge with our fingers crossed hoping for success. When they started rolling back in after dark, one hunter had a nice buck and Travis had also shot one but it got too dark before they were able to recover it. He was beaming from ear to ear with pride and sense of accomplishment and we were all happy for him but silently knew there was a chance it would not be recovered. In the morning our prayers were answered when Travis's beautiful buck was found.

During this second day three more proud hunters harvested nice bucks. This left one to go, and it was Travis's older brother Brandon. Now the pressure was really on but Russ came through and Brandon got his big buck on the third day. Whew, what a relief: six for six. The saga of the lucky arrowhead continues.

The experience did not end in mid October in the Pennsylvania hills. Each hunter picked the pose for his trophy and thanks to the folks at The Wildlife Gallery in Blanchard, MI they will receive their mount by Christmas.

Words cannot describe the joy and sense of accomplishment these challenged young kids and their parents experienced, nor can one describe the gratification the rest of us received just watching it all happen.

As a side item, Travis and I got a little friendship thing going during the practice shooting session. To get out of the wet snow that was coming down we did our practice shooting inside a big pole barn with the targets set up outside through a big open doorway. Everyone had hearing protection but admittedly it was a bit loud. Travis is soft spoken, a bit shy, but a very nice young man. As he waited as others shot, he told his mother he didn't like the loud noise. Jokingly I told him to deal with it and just suck it up. At first he didn't know what to think and I got the weirdest stare. Then suddenly he began to laugh and repeat, "Just

suck it up." I heard it repeated several times the next few days. We both got a good laugh one time as I was burning my fingers when moving a hot candleholder. Travis said, "Just suck it up".

You, as a Lansing Area Chapter member, can take credit for the happy smile you see on Travis in the picture of him with his big buck. Thanks to you he is the second health challenged kid our Chapter was able to send on a "deer hunt of a lifetime" this year. The funds come from our fundraisers so please keep that in mind when you sign up for our next one in March 2010.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!

**Lansing Area Chapter of SCI
ANNUAL FUNDRAISER BANQUET
WILL BE HELD
SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010
AT THE EAGLE EYE GOLF CLUB.**

OUTFITTERS' NIGHT IS

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010

**More information will be forwarded to you
soon.**

Please plan on attending and bringing some friends along with you. If anyone wants to stay over night, they can make a reservation at a reduced rate at the East Lansing Hampton Inn if they mention they are attending the Lansing Area Chapter SCI Fundraiser. But this must be done before March 1.

In addition to the many hunts, fishing trips, etc., we also have a very high quality 12 foot long Old Town Dirego kayak, complete with paddle and car top carrier, to be raffled.

Hope to see you there!

LANSING CHAPTER SCI HUNTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

It is time to submit your nominations for the chapter's Hunter of the Year Award. Past winners include Jim Leonard, Jim Ellis, Lynn Marla, and Mike Leonard.

If you know of a chapter member who is deserving of this honor, please take the time to nominate him or her. Past nominations are not considered, so please, even if you have nominated someone in the past, take the time to nominate him/her again.

Criteria to be considered is not just the hunting ability of the nominee, but his or her contributions to the chapter, conservation and promotion of hunting.

Please forward any nominations with a short nomination letter to: Tom Nelson @ wcpnelson@aol.com.

WHITETAIL NIGHT 2009

Whitetail night was a festive, gala affair, complete with door prizes, raffle items, a 50-50 drawing, auction, and, of course, whitetail measuring and awards.

Dr. Russ Mason, Chief, Wildlife Division Michigan DNR, gave an informative presentation. We had two of our military in attendance, one of whom won an award! Kevin Kech (see front page of October 2009 newsletter) and his parents and sister were there, too, and Kevin was presented with his whitetail trophy, prepared for him in a very timely fashion by Wildlife Galleries. There were items available for purchase, as well.

A new category was added this year: crossbow.

Congratulations go to Dave Bradish, for the largest free range Michigan buck (155-3/8), which he took with a bow. The winners are pictured here but, unfortunately, some of the scoring forms were picked up before they were recorded, so we don't have all the winners' names and scores, for which we apologize.



WHITETAIL NIGHT 2009



Dr. Russ Mason



Drawing raffle winners



Joe Vorro calculating measurements



Kevin and Ron with their trophies



Ron and Peter Ocello measuring



Raffle items thanks to Tom Nelson, Midge Rafferty, Lynn Marla, etc.



Two of our military



Winner of Cabela's gift certificates



Linda Schroeder connected October 17th in Clinton County on The Schroeder Farm with this dandy 10 pointer. Linda had the buck at 10 yards but was offered no shot. At 38 yards out the buck finally turned presenting a broadside shot which put the buck down on the spot. The arrow took out the top of the heart and then traveled upward into the spine dropping the buck where he stood. Submitted by the proud husband, Dave Schroeder

Spud's First Deer Hunt

by Ron Lanford

Muy Grande by Zach Burtrum

The Muy Grande Ranch is a fun place. There is a lot to do there; Make new friends like Tom, Jim, Lynn, and Perry. They are really nice. You get to spend the night in a comfortable bed, like me. Eat good food and drink coffee. Shoot deer. The only not so fun part is the drive; it is five hours. I even got to shoot a buffalo. There is a lot to do there, so you should try it.

You get to sight in a gun like I did. I sighted in a 30.06. People say it is a man's gun. I say it's not, because it does not kick at all. A really fun part is the big black limousine van. It is so nice you would love it and want to keep it. We went to a different ranch. That is where I shot my buffalo. I used one shot when I shot both. The deer ran a ways. The buffalo plopped down to the ground. The deer ran about 40 yards and the leg was flopping around. Then it fell to the ground.

The preceding was the letter my nine year old grandson Zach Burtrum (Spud) wrote after we returned from his first deer hunt. I bought a Muy Grande doe hunt that was donated to our 2009 banquet with the hopes of taking Spud. I had taken his older brother, Brett, on a doe hunt with Larry Higgins at Red Pine Whitetail when he was eight years old. Brett did great, and made an instantaneous kill on a nice doe. Now it was Zach's turn.



Zach didn't seem to appreciate my statements of being "about half way" there every time he asked how much longer until we got to Muy Grande. He didn't seem too keen either when I pointed out a run down farmhouse and told him that was the "Grand Lodge". For those of you who've been there, you know that Muy Grande truly does have a Grand Lodge. For those of you who have yet to make it, you're in for a wonderful experience, just like Spud. I think he might have been a little disappointed because we didn't get out to the woods the evening that

we arrived. In fact, we didn't go out for deer until the next night. Perry helped him sight in the Remington 700 youth rifle in 30.06 with the reduced recoil loads, and Spud did a great job getting a nice group, and claiming that it kicked like a .22. I don't think he knew that the rifle was sitting in a gun rest. He certainly didn't know that Jim Ellis and Perry had set up a short day trip for him. Spud was in seventh heaven lounging in the black limo as we traveled in style, but I didn't let him have anything to do with the Crown Royal that was found there. I tucked that in my coat pocket for later! We got out of the black chariot at a neighbor's ranch and got to see their elk and buffalo. Spud realized something was up when the shooting sticks and rifle came out of the luggage area. Spud had to wait until the bull we were after was clear of the other buffalo, and was presenting a broadside shot. It took several minutes, which



seemed to me like hours. Finally Perry started to say, "OK, shoot him whenever you're ready." He should talk faster. He got "OK shoot" out when the 180 grain bullet was on its way, and the bull fell like a ton of bricks. Spud had a little smile on his face, while the rest of us were grinning like crazy. Spud noted that the gun kicked more than when he sighted it in. He found out that there's a bit of difference between the reduced recoil loads and the full load 180 grain Remington shells.

That evening found us in a box blind with Tom, ranch manager of Muy Grande. It wasn't long before a doe, her doe fawn from last year, and this year's twin button buck fawns came feeding down the hill to the food plot. Once again the wait was on. Spud was as cool as a cucumber. He had the crosshairs on the big doe the entire time, and the barrel wasn't moving at all. At one point she was broadside, but one of the others walked behind her. Spud exclaimed that he couldn't shoot because the bullet could go through her into the other deer. Tom said he usually can't get adult men to notice that. Finally, she was in the clear and the rifle barked. She ran about 40 yards with a broken front leg and bullet and bone fragment damage through her lungs and heart. She was dead when we got to her, and a little smile came over Spud's face again. What the heck!? What would it take to get this kid really excited and happy? I know he was inside, and I know that I've started him on his lifelong quest as a hunter.

My wife noticed the difference as soon as we got home. She said he went as a little kid, but came back a

little man. She felt that he seemed much more mature, and was talking about his new friends from Muy Grande. I noticed the difference when asking him what he wants for Christmas. In previous years, he would pull out a list that took 37 minutes to read. This year he said he only wants the hide tanned. Who is this kid, and what did he do with Spud? Only get the hide tanned? Whew! I hope this Christmas is good for him. He's going to have the doe and buffalo hide sitting under the tree. I took them to the Wildlife Gallery. They have their own tannery, and mount all of the deer for the Tony Semple Foundation for Hope kids, and have donated the mounting of two bucks for injured war veterans that our chapter is sponsoring and paying for this winter. What great people! They also donate to our banquet each year, and will be there this year with a display booth. I took the buffalo head to Peter Ocello of Preservation Specialties. Peter is a taxidermist in

Charlotte, and taught anatomy at Michigan State. Peter has done many European mounts for me, and was the person starting the dermestid beetle colony at MSU. If you've been boiling skulls for European mounts, check out Peter's work. He whitens and seals them before putting them on a nice plaque, and now has the ability to apply camo and other finishes by dipping the skulls. They look fantastic, and I know that you will be very happy with his work.

I think Spud is hooked. I can only hope that we continue to provide hunting opportunities for our kids by protecting our rights through SCI, and I hope that I can share many more hunting experiences with him. If you haven't gone out with a kid on their first hunt, give it a try. It can be just as exciting for us as it is for them, and it doesn't get any better than seeing that shine in their eyes, even if they just smile a little, like Zach.

Muy Grande goes South!!

By Perry Heleski

Well, the last clients for the 2009 season just walked out the door here at Muy Grande. What a year, a lot of new faces and now new friends here. In the midst of this season I had a chance to treat myself to my first hunt. Now this would be the first time I was on that end of the stick!! As I make my living making dreams come true for all of the clients who grace the doorway at Muy Grande, I was really ready to enjoy a hunt that I have dreamed about. This would be the start of my North American collection and invited my father, Randy (my eldest brother) and his son Jared to be my guests and hunt themselves, as I wanted the experience to be coupled with unforgettable memories.

I called my father from the ranch one night and asked, "Do you feel like going on a hunt to Mexico to shoot a coues deer?" "What the hell's a coues deer?" was his first response. Now most of you haven't met my father; he is a retired dairy farmer who enjoys hunting and fishing. Oh yeah, forgot to mention 100% Polish!!!! The truth of the matter is I didn't care what we were going to hunt; I just wanted to go make some memories with my father before his age catches up to him.

We all met in Tucson, AZ the night before our outfitter picked us up. The trip from Tucson to camp was 240 miles, but it was going to take about 8 hours. Getting through the border control and checking our guns at each post really eats up the time!!! We hunted near a little town called Azpire, Mexico. We arrived in camp in the total darkness, but were greeted by glowing lights and the closest thing to a five star dinner that I have witnessed based on the kitchen appliances in camp. The food all week at camp was far more than I expected, simply put the closest town was almost three hours away. After eating like kings and drinking like fish we turned in early to be able to get a fresh start on the morning's hunt.

We awoke to beautiful views of the ranch we were going to hunt: a working cattle ranch which Patrick, our outfitter, leases -- over 40,000 acres -- to hunt the big coues deer that roam the land. I felt prepared going into this hunt, but once the sun rose above the landscape I soon found my ten power optics were a little weak for glassing this type of distance. I managed to start finding does feeding on sides of ridges and bucks sunning themselves in the morning sun. We continued this style of hunting for three days until we found a nice 4x4 feeding 500 hundred yards out. Now, in Muy Grande words, it was a ten point in the 90 inch range!! I opted to close the distance to 430 yds and take a shot. Well, with my wife's 270 Ruger in hand and seven shots later, I had officially started my collection. My father was there to witness the misses and the final shot; he seems only to tell everybody about the misses!!!



My wish came true when my father jumped on board to come with me on this hunt. It was icing on the cake to witness each other harvest big coues deer. As the picture shows we harvested three beautiful coues deer on our trip and as we all agreed the time together was priceless. If anybody is interested in hunting with PLH Outfitters call Patrick at 520-360-3401. I will personally vouch for his service, attention to details and some great coues deer hunting.





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R.S.V.P. dgrieco098@comcast.net