

January 2012



Lansing Area Chapter Safari Club International Newsletter

Whitetail Night 2011

The Lansing Area Chapter Big Buck Night was held on December 15, 2011. Over 80 members and spouses gathered at the Eagle Eye to support and acknowledge the 2011 hunting accomplishments of our members. Nothing can replace the thrill of experiencing a successful hunt; however, it's always fun to hear a good hunting story. We were not disappointed. This year we had 36 entries.

Attendees enjoyed scrumptious dinner prepared by the staff of Eagle Eye. Jim Hammill from Crystal Falls in the Upper Peninsula was our speaker. He gave us an informative presentation about the moose situation in the Upper Peninsula.



Lansing Area Safari Club's Official
Measurers were available to score
hunters trophies

This year's awards went to:

Out of State

1. Nick Johnston – 158 6/8 - Iowa
2. David Ratliff – 155 0/8 – Kansas

Estate

1. Jim Wisner – 277 1/8 Whitehouse Whitetails
2. Joanne Witte – 201 5/8

Michigan Youth

1. Eric Lanford – 108 1/8

Michigan Lady

1. Mary Harter
2. Nancy Hendrick – 99 3/8

Michigan Cross Bow

1. Don Harter - 92 6/8
2. Joe Vorro - 83 6/8

Michigan Modern Firearm

1. Roger Froling – 113 0/8
2. Larry Witte – 110 0/8

Michigan Muzzleloader

1. & 2. Nick Johnston – 123 6/8 and 117 3/8

Michigan Archery

1. Doug Sleep 128 1/8

Largest overall and largest in Michigan Archery
Kent Ballard 138 2/8

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President's Message
by Ron Lanford

Howdy,

I've frequently been asked who I'm going hunting with when telling of my upcoming hunts. Most of the time the answer is nobody. Certainly people that don't know me sure aren't going to ask me to go with them. But then, people that do know me aren't much more likely. Many of the hunts I go on realistically don't fit with more than one hunter. I generally go on guided hunts, and those in the mountains usually are with one hunter per guide. But there are other hunts that are really fun that involve other people. Before I joined this chapter, I hunted with a few friends. By hunted with, I mean that we went out hunting at the same time, but not together. We generally would meet up afterwards and discuss what had gone on. But this was a far cry from the camaraderie many of you find on your hunts that are built around traditions many years in the making. Jim Leonard heads north every November for deer season on an island with his old gang. Things have changed over the years for Jim, but he still makes the trip even though his chances of seeing deer are very slim. Shooting a deer isn't the main thing he goes for.

I've heard before that the way to find out if you're compatible with someone is to go hunting with them. Horror stories are sure to come out if you listen to a lot of people talking about their hunting exploits. Whether it's someone you already knew, or even a guide that your outfitter pairs up with you, sometimes fireworks can fly. I've only had one real

instance of being in a situation that I really didn't care for. I was up in the Northwest Territories stuck with a guide whose best attribute is that he wasn't convicted of murder, because he was only driving the car. To quote the new terminology, WTF?! Not only did he not have a clue to assess trophy quality, but he amazed me with other well learned guide things. It seems that when we got "lost" it was because the mountains moved and the maps were wrong. I found out too that the quickest way to take the chill off the tent is to fill the kerosene stove with airplane fuel before you light it. That's one way of gaining altitude quickly! He's also the first guide that I had to wake up every morning. I should have let him sleep. Fortunately, I didn't let that experience stop me from doing other hunts where I've been partnered up with some great people. I always try to give

them tips on things like starting stoves and stuff like that. It's amazing some of the looks you get.

Since joining the Lansing Chapter, I've been fortunate to get to hunt with some great people and enjoyed some fantastic times. Taking a world class Dama Gazelle and enjoying the time in Texas with Jim Houthoofd while we also hunted for Scimitar Horned Oryx, Blackbuck, and Texas Dall sheep with a fantastic outfitter was certainly a high spot. I was just on a bunny hunt with Hoot and Helmut Scherer that was a blast, even though the dogs didn't run a lot of rabbits. My only trip to Africa was memorable hunting with chapter members Terry Braden, Peter Bucklin, and Jerry Schave. We were hunting buffalo in the Selous but the only buffalo I saw was the one Jerry Shot. Terry didn't fare any better as he stalked in when Peter shot his bull, but Terry never got a chance. We did shoot some other cool animals, and I got wonderful memories and new friends out of it. I've actually had the most fun and developed the closest hunting friends from bird hunting. I've had the pleasure of missing birds and developing wonderful friendships on trips with many chapter members. I've even managed to hit a couple birds!

Continuing and deepening those friendships as well as developing more might come down to having me met what I think will turn out to be my best and closest hunting buddy. Hawk is a Brittany spaniel that came in to the hospital as a stray that got injured being hit by a car. We work with several rescue groups and we took care of him while Animal Control waited for the owner to contact them. Fortunately for me they didn't, and I question how much care they gave him since he also had heartworm disease. He's doing great now, and after spending a few weeks with the trainer Justin McGrail, he's doing fantastic finding birds. We had to make sure he fit into

our household first though and fortunately he is wonderful with the other 13 monster dogs that my wife has. I think he has a sense of humor too, even though he doesn't fall on the ground



laughing when I miss. I know he and I are going to develop more friendships taking new people out on hunts and strengthening some of the friendships I already have. We're going to donate a pheasant hunt for this year's banquet so you might be one that gets into the Lanford Hunting Buddies Club.

February 1, 2012 Board Meeting	March 7, 2012 Board Meeting	March 24, 2012 Fundraiser Banquet <i>Eagle Eye</i>
February 9, 2012 Chap. Meeting <i>Eagle Eye</i>	March 23, 2012 Outfitter Night <i>Eagle Eye</i>	



Lansing Area Chapter Safari Club International

12th Annual Banquet & Fundraiser

Saturday, March 24, 2012

Outfitters Night

Friday, March 23, 2012

Eagle Eye Golf Club
15500 Chandler Road
East Lansing, Michigan 48823 • 517-641-4570

Register:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Payment:

Check. Make Payable to: **LAC - SCI**
 Visa MasterCard Expiration Date: _____
Name printed on card: _____
Card Number: _____
Card Address: _____
Signature: _____

Tickets:

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|-------|---|----------|
| 1. Saturday Banquet & Fundraiser Tickets: | \$65 Each | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| 2. Table of 8: | \$480 per table | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| <i>(Includes (8) Banquet Tickets, (8) \$10 Raffle Tickets and Special Seating)</i> | | | | | |
| 3. Chapter Sponsor Table: | \$675 per table | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| <i>(Receives (8) Banquet Tickets, (8) \$20 Raffle Tickets, (16) \$10 Raffle Tickets Premier Seating, 1/2 page ad in auction book)</i> | | | | | |
| 4. General Raffle Tickets \$50 Packet (\$50 Tickets) | \$50 Each | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| 5. General Raffle Tickets \$100 Packet (\$110 Tickets) | \$100 Each | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| 6. General Raffle Tickets \$200 Packet | \$200 Each | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| <i>(\$275 Tickets, (1) Premier Drawing Ticket)</i> | | | | | |
| 7. General Raffle Tickets \$400 Packet | \$400 Each | x | _____ | = | \$ _____ |
| <i>(\$625 Tickets, (3) Premier Drawing Tickets)</i> | | | | | |

Grand Total: \$ _____

Please List People's Names for Table

Print legibly (Name tags printed from list)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

Send This Form with Payment to:

Glenn & Maryanne Belyea • 8051 Clark Road • Bath, MI 48808 • 517.641.4224
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Letter from the Editor

Hi! I'm your new editor and hope I can provide you with a publication of which you can be proud. Now, as your editor, I need your help. Many of you go on wonderful hunts and the stories need to be shared. If you can, please e-mail me your stories and digital pictures. You can also send me a hard copy with pictures. Feel free to submit as many stories as you want. My feelings are if the hunt was good, it is worth sharing. I have been lucky enough with the help of my husband to have a few stories of my own. So I hope to hear from everyone with great stories to publish.

To submit material for the newsletter:

Mary Browning
6030 Madeira
Lansing, MI 48917

Or e-mail: lrc05@sbcglobal.net



HUNTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

With the 2012 Lansing Chapter SCI Banquet just a few months away, it is time to consider nominating qualified members for the HUNTER OF THE YEAR AWARD. Please forward your nominations to Tom Nelson wcpnelson@aol.com. Consideration is given for a candidates work in conservation, chapter involvement, community service, etc. A nominee's hunting prowess is only a small part of the qualifications the award committee looks at.

Whitetail Night Award Winners



David Ratcliff



Nick Johnston



Joanne Witte



Jim Wisner



Erik Lanford



Mary Harter



Nancy Hendrick



Joe Vorro



Larry Witte



Don Harter



Nick Johnston



Doug Sleep



Kent Ballard

Clinton County Archery Kill

Kent Ballard

The morning of October 16th found me in one of my favorite stands. My strategy was pretty simple, I wanted to catch a mature buck heading into my thick cover to bed up for the day or for the next three or four days as mature animals quite often will do. In the first hour of the morning I had some minor activity, seeing a young six point and a couple of mature does heading into cover to bed down for the day. At 8am (give or take a minute) I turned to my east to see a mature buck cutting the downwind side of me. He was at about 50 yards and coming in towards me at a leisurely pace. I immediately identified him as a Pope & Young quality buck and reached for my bow while at the same time turning on my camera to ideally video the entire kill. As I swung my bow through the crotch of the tree everything went smoothly, the animal continued at a slow pace right for the area where I wanted to send an arrow through him. As he closed in to about 25 yards I could see the hairs stand up on end on his entire body as he caught enough of my scent that he knew a predator was somewhere near. That quickly, his hairs let off tension and I could see he thought I was far enough away that he could continue on. At about 14 yards he went on alert again. I could see he was thinking: "Wait a minute, how did I end up this close to a predator- in deer terms of course". His head swung around and he started to scan the tree line. In my mind I said: "give him some". I drew my bow and anchored my pin. The shot was not ideal in that he was approximately 30% quartering to me as I brought my pin down on his vitals. My mind thought "dead deer" and I cut the arrow loose. The animal took two big bounds and then dropped his head to the ground like

a bird dog and took off walking. I could not see him past 50 yards as he went right back to where I had originally seen him, as mature deer quite often do. I have learned over the years that when once you are in a mature animal's personal space and he gives you a kill shot, take it immediately. It may not be exactly 100% perfect but your time in a mature deer's personal space is very limited. I reviewed my video to see that the shot was just as I had thought and I was pretty certain it was a good kill shot. I sat in my tree with my binoculars scanning the ground and after about a half an hour I spotted my arrow blood soaked and sticking out of the ground at the spot of impact - "that is a good thing" was my thought.



I have been in many rodeos over the years from a recovery standpoint. My rule is that if I do not see the animal go down after I shoot them I wait six to eight hours to go after them—minimum. I have jumped mature deer in the past that I put a kill shot on, once they jump up and run with an adrenaline rush (even with a kill shot), all bets are off and you feel like the rodeo clown, in a circus. I refuse to get into that circus again in my hunting career! I called my buddy Buck right after shooting this deer and shared with him that this was a nice racked animal but the thing that really stuck out in my mind was how his sides hung out over his rib cage when he was walking at me and his body length was real long. I was certain he was going to be greater than Pope & Young as he had good mass and main beam length and the kicker was that he had good 4's. I have learned over the years that those 4's can send you over the top from a score standpoint.

At 10:30am I snuck down out of my tree and went out of my stand in just the opposite direction of the path of my animal. My plan was to go home, sit around patiently (of course that would not be easy as this is what I had worked all year for) and then go back to recover the animal at 4pm. At 4pm I approached my arrow, which looked great (complete pass through and great blood). I had minimal blood on the ground but found my deer about 65 yards from where I had shot him. Perfect shot, I caught the lungs and passed out at the bottom of his belly, he did not live five seconds past the time the arrow went through him. As in the past when I make this shot, some of the guts pulled through the exit hole, plugging the exit hole. I hunt very high and this shot result is very common because of my height, the pass through plugs the exit hole a big percentage of the time. As I admired everything about the animal I felt the culmination of all of my hard work as a deer hunter/land steward. I knew right away this animal had real body size. My buddy Buck gladly cancelled his evening hunt to take photos and assist me in getting the animal out of the woods. I never gut my animals on my hunting ground as I don't want to magnify coyote activity on my hunting ground. We hung the animal at Buck's house as his wife, Heidi, processes all of my deer. He weighed 287 lbs with the guts in him and 230 lbs after field dressing him— a true specimen. He later aged at 4.5 years old at Rose Lake. When I gutted this animal red acorns tumbled out of him onto

the ground. I believe he had been out all night eating and just got knocked off course from his normal routine on returning to cover and I took advantage of that. I believe he was headed into cover to lay up and digest those acorns for three or four days only getting up to stretch three or four times a day as he continued to digest that protein.

Quality Deer Management works! Call it whatever you want but this has been my process: Shoot mature, long nosed does, try to shoot those that have multiple fawns with them. When you shoot that mature doe, you allow her fawns to be recruited into your local herd, the doe fawn will get bred and the button bucks will stay in your area, not getting dispersed by the mother in the spring. Mother Nature has an amazing way of working. Draw a line in the sand with a realistic buck expectation for shooting on your ground and then be true to that size expectation. Don't feel pressure to tag a buck and don't think that you have to shoot two bucks every year. Any time you shoot a buck, move your bar up, again to a logical size expectation. Talk to your neighbors about QDMA. Be open with your approach and then work year around on habitat. Cover is the key and then create any and every type of food that you can on every square inch of ground that you have. Be creative, stick food in anywhere you can on your land, winter carryover is more important than plots to draw in animals during the fall, at least for larger racked animals the next year.

My fall owes me nothing, my hard work and great neighbors created luck (the harder I work the luckier I get in life) for me and I am blessed by the deer gods. My goal is for me or my buddy Buck, who has land very close to me (we are hunting the same animals), to kill a Boone & Crocket animal in the next 3 to 5 years. I believe it can happen so I truly think it will. Six years ago when he and I spoke about consistently killing Pope & Young animals on our ground it seemed unrealistic. It is now happening all around us and I am certain better hunting is ahead of us as we have significantly moved our population age of bucks up and does down.

I look forward to sharing a photo of that Boone & Crocket animal in the coming years! Aim small and track very little!!!!!!!

OUTFITTER OPEN HOUSE

There will be an Open House to meet Alberto Valdes Fisher, Outfitter and Ranch Owner in northern Mexico. Alberto's ranch, the El Chupadero, is 70,000 acres and he has trophy quality Carmen Mountain White-tail Deer, Mexican White-tail Deer, Desert Mule Deer and Collared Peccary. Dr. Braden just returned from the El Chupadero with a large Carmen and is returning in 2013.

Place: at Dr. Terry Braden's Trophy Room

Date: on March 8, 2012 at 7:00 P.M.

R.S.V.P. would be nice, but not necessary.



FEDS TO DROP GREAT LAKES REGIONS WOLVES OFF ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources applauded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to remove wolves in the western Great Lakes region from the federal endangered species list. The decision returns management of the species to the state level.

The federal delisting rule removing wolves from the endangered species list will be published in the Federal

Register Wednesday, Dec. 28, and will take effect Friday, Jan. 27, 30 days after its publication.

improved fencing and guard animals such as llamas, donkeys and Great Pyrenees dogs. However, in cases where nonlethal methods are not working or feasible, DNR officials will now have the ability to kill problem wolves when appropriate. Under federal Endangered Species Act protection, wolves are protected from lethal control measures except in defense of human safety.



Register Wednesday, Dec. 28, and will take effect Friday, Jan. 27, 30 days after its publication.

Returning wolves to state management will allow the DNR to more effectively manage the species under Michigan's highly regarded Wolf Management Plan, which was created through a roundtable process involving interested parties representing viewpoints from all sides of the wolf issue.

"This is great news for the state's wolf population and for Michigan citizens who have been affected by this issue," said DNR Director Rodney Stokes. "Treating wolves as an endangered species, when the population has exceeded federal recovery goals in Michigan for more than a decade, has negatively impacted public opinion in areas of Michigan where wolves are established on the landscape. I firmly believe that the more flexible management options allowed under the state's Wolf Management Plan will help increase social acceptance of the species while maintaining a healthy, sustainable wolf population."

Once wolves are removed from the endangered species list, the DNR will continue to recommend nonlethal methods of control first, including flashing lights, flagging and noisemakers. In addition, the DNR administers a grant program that provides some funding to livestock owners with depredation issues for

Livestock and dog owners in Michigan will also be able to legally protect their private property from wolf depredation once wolves are removed from the endangered species list.

The Michigan Legislature passed laws in 2008 to allow livestock or dog owners, or their designated agents, to remove, capture, or, if deemed necessary, use lethal means to destroy a wolf that is "in the act of preying upon" (attempting to kill or injure) the owner's livestock or dog(s). These state laws will go into effect on Friday, Jan. 27, 30 days after the Final Rule is published in the Federal Register.

After the wolf is taken off the federal endangered species list, the animal will remain a protected species in Michigan. There is no public hunting or trapping of wolves allowed in Michigan. The DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will investigate and continue vigorous prosecution of any wolf poaching cases. Illegally killing a wolf is punishable by up to 90 days in jail, a \$1,000 fine, or both, and the cost of prosecution. Reports about poaching can be made to the DNR's Report All Poaching (RAP) Hotline, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 800-292-7800.

For more information on Michigan's wolf population and to see the state's Wolf Management Plan, go to www.michigan.gov/wolves.

My Elk.....Finally

By Glenn Belyea

During the 1970's and 80's I hunted elk a number of times in Wyoming and Montana, both guided and do-it-yourself hunts. All were typical western mountain hunts-- sometimes with horses, sometimes on foot, sometimes in the snow, but always rather tough and physical. After striking out on all of them, I gave up on elk hunting and turned to other North American game. In February 2002 I went on a short notice, late season muzzleloader elk hunt in New Mexico. Again, the same results—lots of hunting, but no elk. Why didn't I just forget about elk!

Then in about 2008 I started hearing about a place in Montana that sounded pretty good, Paul Maliskey's Trail Creek Lodge. Paul had started coming to our Lansing Area SCI Fundraiser and although he was donating antelope hunts he also did mule deer, whitetail and elk hunts. I started hearing things like "a good place to go," "high success," "nice animals," "not too physical," "reasonable price" and I became interested in elk hunting again. After two of our chapter members, Jim Houthoofd and Helmut Scherer, took nice elk with Paul I really became interested. I tried to set up a hunt for 2010, but Paul was pretty well booked and he said if I waited until 2011 I could be his only elk hunter on the 1st hunt of the year. With that offer and a guaranteed outfitter elk license, I was signed up! I then added a white-tailed deer to the hunt. SCI recognizes several categories of white-tailed deer across North America and while I have taken the Northeastern, Southeastern, Midwestern, Texas and Coues, I have never taken a Northwestern, the ones in Montana and other western areas.

It all sounded great until suddenly things began to change. In the fall of 2010 Montana passed a ballot initiative that eliminated the guaranteed outfitter license and threw everyone into the general drawing for licenses. Was I going to lose out on my elk hunt because of this? Turns out it was a good thing, at least in 2011. They not only added all of these outfitter licenses into the general draw, but they increased the cost of the general elk license by nearly \$300. This drove a lot of applicants out of the draw and everyone who applied in 2011 drew a license. Not only did I get my license, but the general license was still about \$300 cheaper than the old outfitter license.

In mid-October my wife, Maryanne, and I headed west for my hunt. We took a somewhat leisurely trip out, spending some time in the Black Hills in South Dakota and then in Cody, Wyoming, mainly in the various museums within the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Their gun museum with over 3,000 guns is something to see.

From Cody it is a scenic half day drive up to Paul's lodge just north of Big Timber, Montana. This is his main

hunting area, but he also offers mountain tent camp hunting west of Yellowstone Park. I've done enough of that—give me the flatter foothills hunting near the lodge!! Arriving a day and a half early gave us time to settle in, shoot my rifle and scout our hunting area with our guide, Barry Scott, one of Paul's well experienced guides.

Opening morning found us sitting up on the side of Porcupine Butte waiting to intercept the herd of elk heading from the agricultural fields below us to the upper reaches of the butte to bed for the day. Shortly after daylight the herd came up towards us, over 100 cows, younger bulls and one very nice 6x6 bull bringing up the rear. We were perfectly positioned and everything was working like clockwork. I could hardly believe my good fortune after so many bad experiences. Most of the cows and younger bulls were within good range and I was just waiting for the big bull in back to clear some obstructions when the wind swirled down the butte, the elk stopped, turned and raced away around the butte. I couldn't believe it—my elk hunting bad luck had kicked in again! Dejectedly, I went whitetail hunting and then back to the lodge for lunch.

Later that afternoon while doing more whitetail hunting, seeing lots of bucks that were either not what I was looking for or way too far away, we got a call from one of the other guides who was mule deer hunting. He had spotted a lone, large bull up in a draw in another part of the hunting area. We were off!!! After stalking up the draw, we spotted the elk



and he was definitely a shooter. The closest we could get was 330 yards, a lot longer shot than I really wanted, but using my back pack on a rock as a rest I took the shot. The 200 grain Swift-A-Frame from my .300 Win. Mag. rocked him, but he didn't go down. I'm a firm believer in shooting until they are down. Two shots later he was lying with his feet in the air and I was up on my feet dancing!! I finally had my elk!!!! He was an old, battle-scared veteran with a frayed ear and several broken tines including the end of his left main beam which made him a 6x5, but he was beautiful. Later while caping him

we discovered the broken off tip of an antler point embedded in his skull. He really was a fighter!! He scores 290 3/8 even with the broken tines, a truly magnificent elk.

The next day we were back whitetail hunting. Again lots of bucks, but the nicest ones stayed well out of range. Finally just before dark Barry spotted two bucks and when he said one looks pretty nice, I was out of the truck and onto my tripod shooting sticks. As he called out "the one on the left" and "320 yards" I took my shot. He turned out to be a beautiful 10 point that scored 134 3/8. Another great Montana animal!

It was a great hunt: a comfortable lodge, plenty of food, good guides who also do excellent caping of your animals and a nearby butcher who cuts, grinds, wraps and freezes your game for the trip home.

Look up Paul Maliskey and his Trail Creek Lodge at our fundraiser in March. You won't be disappointed.



A VICTIM OF MY ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Peter L. Bucklin

My dad and I were pretty close, probably more than the average because he was a traveling salesman and spent so much of his life on the road. Time spent with him was more valued because he was gone so much.

He was born and raised in Vermont. His dad owned the only sporting goods store in Rutland. (In those days, sporting goods stores didn't sell tennis rackets or golf clubs. They were strictly hunting, fishing, and camping.) I was told grandpa was the State of Vermont fly-casting champion five years running. It was no wonder dad grew up in the outdoors.

When he returned home from the opening two or three days of the Ohio pheasant season (we had moved to Cleveland by that time), he always brought home two or three big rooster pheasants which hung in the garage for a few days until he got around to cleaning them. I was taken by those birds – they were a far cry from the city pigeons that infested our neighborhood. To me, they were a beautiful, gaudy representation of what just had to be adventure.

When I reached age eleven, I guess he thought I was old enough to tag along with him pheasant hunting. In those days, Ohio law prohibited hunting with a gun before age sixteen. When he asked if I would like to go along with him come opening day, I thought – WOULD I ???!

The big day finally came and he awakened me at "zero dark thirty". I crawled onto the back seat of the old Desoto and went back to sleep for the drive to Grand Rapids, a little farming town in northwestern Ohio.

On the way we stopped at a café for breakfast. The place was jammed with men in heavy canvas hunting garb and wearing red caps. Pretty heady stuff for a non-worldly, naïve eleven-year-old.

When we reached Mr. Kisiberth's house (he was a business associate of my dad's), the two men sat down at the kitchen table and discussed the day's plan.

The four of us, including Mr. Kisiberth's English pointer, piled into the car and headed to the farm where we had permission to hunt. We pulled off a gravel road and into a woodlot.

After we got out and the men loaded their guns, they let the dog out and directed him toward a stand of thick brush about the size of a two car garage. Before the dog even reached it, pheasants started boiling out like bees from a hive.

Guns went bang, roosters thumped to the ground, the dog (and dad) took off after a cripple (I don't think I ever saw dad run before), and for the first time in my life, my nostrils filled with the cold, crisp November fresh air laced with the smell of freshly burnt gun powder.

I could never have even imagined anything like it. My eyeballs must have looked like two hard boiled eggs. That was it. I was hooked right then and there. I don't think dad and I ever missed a pheasant opener after that.

Before we left for home tired, stiff and full of the day's excitement, Mr. Kisiberth firmly warned dad that he was not to come back next year without me.

That was probably the first time in my life I experienced a feeling of self-importance in the company of grownups.

Going to the movies consisted of watching a "feature film", a cartoon, RKO Pathe News and a short subject. The latter three were all of twelve minute reels. RKO Pathe News was a big deal because it was the only way we could see the likes of Eisenhower, MacArthur, and FDR in "real life". They could be heard on radio, and their pictures (in black and white of course) could be seen in newspapers and magazines. Television was yet to come. Seeing and hearing them animated on those news clips make them more "real".

Of the "shorts", my favorites were those featuring the archer, Howard Hill. They were formatted very similarly to today's outdoors programs on T.V. without the crushing weight of almost continuous commercials. Howard would do some trick shooting followed by a travel log type tour of the area and its culture, then the hunt.

One episode closed with him being charged by a pig. The pig wasn't just running in Howard's direction – it was definitely a charge. It was small but was hell-bent on "getting" Howard. At the last second, Howard seamlessly lifted his bow, drew

and released the arrow. The pig cart wheeled to Howard's feet – dead on arrival. And it wasn't "Hollywood" – it was real!! You could do that with a bow and arrow??!! That did it – I was hooked.

Another episode ended with a nighttime bobcat hunt. The dogs had treed the cat near the very top of a 70-80 footer and the camera angle was over Howard's shoulder. He raised his bow, pulled back and released, all in one motion. I'll never forget seeing that moonlit arrow carving a graceful arc into the darkness of the tree branches. The black form jumped straight up, then pinballed down through the branches, dead before it hit the ground.

Dad bought me a bow, a six foot long "long bow" – one piece Osage orange, six arrows and a target butt. I spent hours shooting the bow in the backyard, pretending all the while I

was Howard Hill. I still have that bow and it still shoots.

Over a hundred years ago, a man by the name of Will Compton wrote a book entitled "The Witchery of Archery". I never read it because I always thought witches were not such a good thing. I looked it up and found that Mr. Webster defines "witchery" as "an irresistible fascination". Bingo! I had been "witcheried" all along.

After growing up, I experienced the witchery of the fly rod on an Alaskan salmon river. "hooked" again!

None of this was my fault. I was, as they like to say nowadays, simply a victim of my environment.

Just "got hooked". And still am at the ripe old age of 77.

Hunting Ireland

Ron Browning

Sunday after trying out a couple of different rifles I settled on Davey's 30-06 to use. Shortly thereafter it was off to the hills behind John Kissane's house in search of a Sika stag. No such luck and it was agreed that John would pick Mike McCrave and me up at the hotel Monday morning and then meet up with Davey for the days hunt.

Monday morning after a walk in the woods at one of Davey's many favorite spots (because he shoots foxes on many farmers lands because they kill many young lambs, Davey has access to many different areas in return) the weather turned for the worse. With the rain coming down Mike and I were ready to call it a day but Davey would have none of it. After driving many more miles in the rain a small herd of goats was spotted a short distance off the road with what was determined to be a shootable ram among them. Out of the vehicle we went and when a suitable rest for the rifle was found and one shot later the feral goat was harvested.

Again on Tuesday morning John picked us up at the hotel and drove us to Davey's house, a bed and breakfast named "Lissyclearig Thatched Cottage". After getting Davey up we were off to another one of his favorite spots. While going up a road in the woods we came upon a truck loading lumber which blocked the one lane road. We had no chance of going any farther at this spot. After Davey got a few choice words at the truck off his chest

we turned around and headed to another spot. Upon arriving at the next location another walk was in store (so many hills, rocks, stone fences, wire, water, mud and various bushes) to try and find the elusive Sika stag. After a period of time with Davey in the lead, he topped a hill and indicated there was a band of Sika below with a shootable stag in the bunch. After crawling up to where Davey was and wiping the sweat from my eyes and with Davey's direction the stag appeared in the scope and a shot later the stag was hit. After waiting a short time, Davey walked down the hill and into the heavy bushes where the stag was found. Another wonderful hunt had come to a successful ending.





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