

December 2010



# Lansing Area Chapter Safari Club International Newsletter



These Vets came from all over northern Michigan – Ishpeming, Marquette, Alpena, Saginaw, and Rosebush among other locations. A few walked with difficulty but had a great time shooting the tower shoot. The dog work was exciting and I was glad to work my young lab even though I had a broken arm and couldn't help with the shooting. As it turned out, they didn't need any help.

After the hunt, we adjourned for a fantastic Michigan State/Iowa game and lounging in the Grand Lodge. They talked of when they were wounded and the heroics of their mates. But like most Vets, they really did not linger on the tough side of their deployments. Major Rick Briggs, of the Brain Injury Institute, did try to get them talking about PTSD and if they were suffering from it or if they knew anyone who was and needed help. One father (Viet Nam) and son (Iraqi/Afghanistan) who had attended last year shared their story. The father was suicidal and had not attended any

## Veteran's Pheasant Hunt at Muy Grande Ranch

by Lynn Marla

SCI/LAC was very fortunate to partner with Pheasants Forever Ingham County Chapter allowing us to provide three pheasant hunts for Veterans this year.

I was able to take part in the hunt at Muy Grande the end of October where 14 Veterans and one wife shot clay targets and had a tower shoot followed by a very successful walk-up hunt. They really did a great job of shooting both the birds flying overhead as well as the escapees that the dogs routed out in the afternoon.



previous gatherings of veterans. They were not talking to each other and had withdrawn. After the hunt last year, they got into a 6 week in-house therapy at Battle Creek VA hospital. The father admitted that all the shooting brought the stress to the forefront and made him realize that PTSD is a very real problem and that he had been suffering from it for 40 years!

We have just celebrated Veteran's Day and it makes me really proud that our Chapter has elected to do our part to honor our Veterans and thank them for their service.



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## President's Message

by Ron Lanford

What a wonderful fall. It started off with my trip to Spain with Alfonso Fabres and Huntinspain which was quickly followed by the musky trip on Lake St. Clair with Rob Stanley. Then, things got really cool.

Our chapter partnered with the SE Michigan Bow chapter of SCI and our local Pheasants Forever chapter to sponsor and arrange three pheasant hunts for Veterans. The hunts were held at Dunn Creek, Bear Creek, and Muy Grande Ranch, and we hosted about 75 veterans. I accompanied Jon and Bill Adrian on their first time ever shooting at birds while at Dunn Creek. What great young men. Jon completed two tours, including a 12 month stretch in Iraq, and his brother Bill was shipping out shortly after the hunt for a tour in Afghanistan. Even though they had never shot at birds before, it wasn't long before they had the hang of it, and the feathers flew!

A bunch of active duty Coast Guard personnel as well as recent era through Vietnam era Vets joined board members Mike Leonard, Craig Mortz, and me at Bear Creek. Many of these kids have never hunted birds, and one young man I talked with wasn't used to being around many guns, being from the conservative state of Massachusetts. It's amazing what a day in the field does for forming and strengthening friendships. All of the Veterans expressed extreme thanks for us sponsoring them. What the heck?! It was us thanking them! Board members Sally Ellis, Lynn

Marla, and Jim Ellis made the veterans feel at home at Muy Grande, and they had the same results as the other two hunts. Every member of this chapter can be proud of our support of the troops.

A few weeks after the pheasant hunts came deer season. Right now, it's the sixth day of gun season and I'm sitting in a Double Bull blind on the edge of a food plot watching for deer with my brother-in-law, Dan, and his 14 year old nephew, Jarod. I hope I'm not writing too loudly to scare the deer. This was Jarod's second time deer hunting and he has yet to kill his first deer. Actually, his first anything. Jarod's family doesn't hunt and I think it's great to get the fever of hunting started in him that he'll hopefully infect the rest of his family with. My 13 year old nephew, Eric, who took his first buck last year,

was here opening day. This experienced young hunter had killed a six point on the youth hunt and had harvested seven pheasants a week ago on a trip to Tails-A-Waggin' preserve that my sister had purchased at our last banquet. Eric took a small doe opening night, and learned the lesson about not celebrating the kill too early when a big doe he knocked down made her escape. I think we've all had similar circumstances that we wish we could do over. His shot obviously shocked the spinal cord but didn't break her down. I think chances are very high that this wasn't a mortal wound for the doe and that she'll heal up and have a pair of fawns next spring. Eric also had a really nice buck jump out of the brush, but it jumped back in before he could do anything.

Me? I've had a blast. I would like to report that I only saw three deer on the third day of the season. Does that make you happy, Mike Leonard? I did see more than that the other days though. Opening day I saw 94 deer with 12 of them being bucks, including a mainframe 14 point that I had first seen at 103 yards in front of me during archery season. Unfortunately, my Tenpoint crossbow doesn't shoot quite that far, and when I had my Ultimate muzzleloader on that first morning, he was on my neighbor's property and there was a lot of thick brush between us. He looked like he had saw blades sticking off the top of his head! I haven't heard of anyone else taking him, so I'm going to keep my eye out for him. Each day I've been out I've seen bucks, including three shooter bucks as well as a 2-1/2 year old 10 point that I had the scope on. He should look great next year if he makes it. For numbers this week, I've seen 94, 76, 3, 67, and 47 deer with about 18 different bucks. In answer to my neighbor's question when he just read that: No, you can't.

I hope all of you have had great hunts this fall. We would love to read about them. Send in pictures and stories, or if you're like Terry Braden and can't write well, just send in photos. Stories always abound at our chapter meetings, and whitetail night should be great! I won't be able to make it that night because I'll be winging my way to hunt at Indianhead Ranch in Texas for blackbuck and who knows what else.

Well, my fingers are getting cold because Jarod's gloves weren't warm enough for him. He's starting to fall asleep, so I'll try to steal my gloves back. Brat! Hopefully, deer will start showing up soon. I'll let you know how this hunt ends. Man, I love this time of year.

Follow up:

A button buck and small doe showed up in the oat plot and Jarod tried to take her. I think the scope on my shotgun that he was using must not be holding its center. He was holding it steady, but didn't hit a hair. Dan got excited and shot too. He was sitting on a tripod stool that dumped him over on his butt when he touched off his gun. You gotta love this stuff. Jarod will be back, and we'll get him his deer yet!

## Editor's Comments

By Sally Ellis

As I put this newsletter together and look forward to Whitetail Night, a few family birthdays, Christmas, and the New Year, I realize what a significant place Safari Club International and its members have in my life, and I thank you all. I'd like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year . . . after all, hunting isn't cheap!

Jim and I are heading to Florida soon, so your articles and photos can be sent via email to: [sallyellis47@yahoo.com](mailto:sallyellis47@yahoo.com), or mailed to me at 9770 SW County Road 769, #141, Arcadia, FL 34269. Phone: 517.230.7398. Thanks, and please keep the articles and photographs coming in.



John McCollum's 2010 Saskatchewan buck taken the first week of November while hunting with Jim Shockey's hunting company. He weighed in at a little over 315 lbs and had an inside spread of a hair under 20 inches. John shot this buck on the morning of the third day of his hunt. John says, "I could not believe the size of the deer this year. Four years ago I shot a whitetail that weighed in at 355 lbs. I know that I saw several bucks this season that looked even bigger than that one. New hunters in Saskatchewan have a very difficult time judging the size of the antlers on deer that are over 300 lbs. I will be returning to Saskatchewan next year for my 12th year hunting with Jim's Canadian Whitetail Adventures."

## 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, Mike Leonard, and Tony Semple.

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](mailto:wcpnelson@aol.com).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 5, 2011 <b>Board of Directors Meeting</b>	<b>March 18, 2011</b> <b>OUTFITTERS NIGHT</b> Eagle Eye
February 2, 2011 <b>Board of Directors Meeting</b>	<b>March 19, 2011</b> <b>FUNDRAISING BANQUET &amp; AUCTION</b> Eagle Eye
February 10, 2011 <b>Chapter Meeting</b> Eagle Eye	May 18, 2011 <b>Board Meeting</b>

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## Florida Gator Hunt

By: Jim Houthoofd

It was a bucky night as we slipped through the darkness in search of big gators. Our guide, Billy Henderson, and his



assistants, Glenn and Kevin, had gotten us up on nice lizards on Rousseau Lake an hour or two northwest of Orlando. Helmut, my neighbor, had taken a nice gator the night before and now it was my turn.

As we slipped through the water, the evening was calm and the water was motionless, and Billy's flats boat made little if any wake. As Billy called out, we could hear the prehistoric beast's crash off the bank and into the water. It was eerie. They were surprisingly elusive, and the hunt was quite difficult as we could see the monsters glide by and disappear into the night. Glowing eyes were everywhere but not within shooting range. Billy would later say that the cool fall air was making the hunt as difficult as he had seen.

As my gator came to within range, my muscles tensed and I got on the crossbow's holographic sights. Billy had instructed us to shoot the gator either on the body or, if he was coming right at us, in the eye. Gators have a thick boney skull, and as Helmut had found out the night before, were no match for a crossbow bolt.

As he came to within 5-6 feet of the boat, the monster hesitated and I shot. The crossbow bolt struck him in the body and anchored him to our buoy. It was a good shot and he couldn't elude us now. He spun, rolled and tried every which way to get loose, but the more he struggled, the clearer it was that he was ours. A bang stick to the skull sealed the deal and we could bring him in the boat. As I reached into the water to haul him in, I could see the scars on his hide of gator wars over the years.

In the end, we had taken two beautiful gators and had a great hunt with Deep South Outfitters. It was a bucky night!

Note: We purchased this hunt at the Lansing Chapter of SCI fundraiser and it was a great bargain. Hunting alligator in Florida was not the highest priority on my "to do list", but with a modest cost and such a great time, I'm sure that I will get back

again soon. Flying into Orlando is a breeze and the only real gear to buy is a flashlight and some work gloves. It couldn't be easier and, by purchasing it at the fundraiser, we not only got a discount, but also felt good about helping to fund some great SCI projects.

## A Bucky Night at Muy Grande

By: Jim Houthoofd

As I sat in the blind at Muy Grande with guides Tom and Ben and my neighbor Helmut, I thought to myself, "I am the luckiest guy in the world and it's a really bucky night!"

For nearly four hours we watched nearly 100 deer walk into and out of the field until after a while I began to think that a 200 inch whitetail deer was common place (note to future hunters: 200 inchers really are common at Muy Grande). Many of them were named, but "the boss," or so they called him, was a main frame eight-point with at least five stickers and split brow tines on both sides. He had a big body and when he walked around the field, he commanded respect. We talked about "the boss" and a few other deer estimating scores and talking quietly.

As we closed in on 15 minutes of shooting time until dark, I could see that Tom was looking into his rangefinder a little more frequently (I would love to play poker against him) and I could tell that he was about to give me the green light. I nervously fingered the safety on the gun, as I got ready.

With only a few minutes of daylight remaining, Tom gave me the go ahead and with a single shot from my 30-06, the huge buck was down where he stood. I was speechless as I got up to the buck, as he was even bigger than I had imagined.

In the end he scored 202 5/8 in velvet and weighed 230 pounds. Peter Ocello, a friend and taxidermist from Charlotte, was able to freeze dry my antlers in velvet to preserve them. (Note to future hunters: Peter does awesome taxidermy work, with a background in anatomical preservation, he is truly an authority.)



A velvet whitetail hunt is something that I could only imagine, and I would like to thank Perry and the staff of Muy Grande, for making it happen for me. Perry donated this hunt to the Lansing Chapter of SCI fundraiser and I did do some upgrading (don't tell my wife), but the hunt was beyond my wildest expectations. The lodge is indescribable, the food was incredible and the camaraderie with the other guests was outstanding. It was a very bucky night!

inch beard and 1 1/2 inch spurs. He was a big old monster and will score #8 in the world for the SCI record books - it was a very bucky night!



## Bucky Nights Spring Turkey Hunt

By: Jim Houthoofd

It was a bucky night, as I awoke to the sound of country music on the alarm clock. There's only one thing better than the first day of turkey season – that's the last day of turkey season, as I wouldn't have to get up and go hunting any more. If you know me, you know that I'm not really a morning person, but I do enjoy an early morning outdoors.

Mike had scored the day earlier, with a beautiful mature tom and now it was my turn to collect a long beard. Mike had gone solo on Saturday morning while I stayed behind in bed. It was predicted for a 60% chance of rain, but the weather had held off and Mike's persistence was rewarded.

The text message was pretty clear from Mike on Saturday night:

Mike – Are you going out tomorrow am?

Mike – See you at 5:30 am

Jim – Probably not

Mike – Are U nuts? It's the last day. Do I need to fill your tag?

Jim – If I can drag my lazy butt out of bed I may go

I wondered on my drive out if Mike was being too optimistic or whether we actually had a chance. As the rain picked up, I was sure that we were both nuts. By the time I got to the property, it was pouring. I was surprised to see Mike's truck in the parking area.

We were soaked by the time we were set up, but were happy to have the little pop-up blind with two comfortable camp chairs. (Normally we sit in the open.) After calling a bit, we had no problem in drifting off to sleep. As I was fighting to keep from dozing off, I heard a few clucks off in the distance. I responded cautiously with the paddle call. A few minutes later I nudged Mike back to consciousness – "Keep still ... there is a turkey over there" I said. As the big bird came into view, he stopped. "It's a tom!"

But the worst possible thing happened next, as Mr. Big turned and started away. At 40+ yards, I was in a panic as I said to Mike, "He's leaving and I'm going to have to take him." The first shot was kind of a warning shot as the tom laughed and went running, but the second shot sent him tumbling and spinning wildly.

In the end, we had accomplished what seemed to be the impossible and my turkey measured 24 pounds with an 11 1/2



Jimmy H's 20# salmon caught August 2010, Pentwater, MI



Jim H fighting the salmon

# It's Only the Beginning

By Tom Belloli

A good friend likes to say that "life is about making memories." After December 5, 2010, I know exactly what he means.

My grandson, Jack, has gone along with his dad Steve, two uncles, Jim and Nick, and me on a variety of hunting trips since he was about eight years old. He always seemed to have a great time with the guys and talked non-stop about the day when he could "really hunt and shot an animal" himself. Needless to say, his enrollment in hunter safety class and the arrival of his 10th birthday couldn't come soon enough.

He passed his test and received his certification card after taking the required course at the Demmer Center on October 10 but had to wait until his birthday on November 30 to get his first official license. It was a very long couple of weeks but it gave him a little more time to practice shooting that .410ga. single shot, brake-open shotgun. He began getting ready for his first hunt

during the previous summer using a .22 for target shooting and progressed slowly to the .410. He decided that he wanted to hunt pheasant and try to bag a beautiful rooster for his first animal. A family hunt was promptly booked at Dunn Creek Outfitter's and the anticipation mounted in each of us for that day to arrive.

It was a cold Sunday afternoon as the Belloli Boys headed to the hunting preserve. We had explained to Jack that he might not get a bird on his first hunt as they are tough to bag, especially for a ten-year-old with a .410. But he had the perfect attitude and said he was just glad to finally have even a chance to shot one. We did a couple of "dry runs" letting him mount his un-loaded gun and dry fire at the birds as his dad and uncles shot. After two such opportunities, he looked at me and said, "I don't think I can wait any longer. I think I'm ready." As soon as the dogs locked up on the next point, we approached, got ready, flushed the bird, but it veered hard to the left creating a very difficult shot for any hunter. Jack shot

missing behind the bird. Needless to say, he was disappointed, but still had the right attitude and we went looking for the next one.

Several birds flushed ahead of us and he watched his dad and uncles shoot a few birds on the other side of the field. He was excited for them and really enjoyed watching the dogs go to work. As we walked and talked he looked over at me and said, "Popi, how could anybody not like this?" In that one sentence, he had expressed the feeling that almost all hunters feel at one point or another and I knew that his luck was about to change.

We crossed a creek and began to work the top of a ridge that over looked a plowed field which gave us great visibility. As we walked, the dogs started getting very "birdy." In a flash, our griffon, Remi, stopped rock solid and went on point. Soon, our german shorthair, Luna, honored. Jack and I approached cautiously, looking for the bird and readied for the shot. The dogs had the rooster hemmed in so its only escape route produced a great passing shot for Jack. A quick check



to see if he was ready and I flushed the bird. With his dad, two uncles and me looking on, no one else even having a raised gun, we watched Jack let the bird rise away from the dogs and take flight attempting to escape. As it flew left, Jack tracked him, led him and fired. The bird crumbled on impact and fell a mere ten yards away. Looking back, I can truthfully say, I don't know which of us was more excited. It was a moment in time that none of us will forget -- one of those memories that each of us will replay countless times in years to come. It was the essence of why hunters do what they do.

If you're lucky enough to have a memory like this, I think you are just plain lucky enough.



# Lansing Area Chapter Safari Club International

## 11th Annual Banquet & Fundraiser

Saturday, March 19, 2011

## Outfitters Night

Friday, March 18, 2011



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# **11th Annual Banquet & Fundraiser** **Saturday, March 19, 2011**

*Doors Open 3:00 p.m Dinner at 6:00 p.m.*

# **6th Annual Outfitters Night** **Friday, March 18, 2011**

*Doors Open 4:00 p.m*

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