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TEXAS BOWHUNTERS' JOURNAL

Happy Birthday!

By Michael Middleton

If you will take a gander at the upper, right-hand corner of the Table of Contents at the left, you will note that "Volume 2" marks the one year anniversary of Texas Bowhunters' Journal! Although I was hoping to be able to publish the newsletter monthly, I am proud of the fact that we were able to publish 6 issues last year, purely dedicated to Texas hunters, and Texas hunting! In reality, when I attempted to start the publication last October, it was without expectation of publishing more than a single issue. It was, and is, something I have enjoyed putting together, and I hope that you enjoy reading it half as much as I do editing it!

I'd like to thank each of you that have contributed stories, articles, ideas, pictures and recipes to our little publication.

I'm proud to announce that with this, our second year of publication, we have successfully developed a web site to house past issues of Texas Bowhunters' Journal, and are working hard to make it the best bowhunting site in this great state! Although the web site is still in its developmental stages, we encourage you to surf on over to www.texasbowhunter.com and take a look. Please email us with any comments regarding the site, or any suggestions for content within the site.

With the creation of the web site and our very own domain name (texasbowhunter.com) comes a new email address for submitting stories to the journal. If you have not done so already, please note the address change in your e-mail address book. The new address for Texas Bowhunters' Journal and TexasBowhunter.com is journal@texasbowhunter.com.

We look forward to another great year! Happy Birthday, TBJ!

A De-scenting Voice

By: *Tomme R. Actkinson*

You stink! That was the basic message at Wyatt Birkner's seminar in San Antonio during the 1998 LSBA banquet weekend. Wyatt's an experienced outfitter and it was a heck of a good seminar. Wyatt wasn't talking about me personally (or at least I hope not), but he gave the deer's perspective. Wyatt said you need to think of a deer as a giant walking nose and yourself as a big blob of sticky, stinky, orange goo. Everything you brush up against or touch, everywhere you walk, leaves a plop of that goo, and a deer can see it. A trophy buck sees it with his nose.

Maybe that's what happened to me two years ago. I was high up in an oak tree on a Texas Vet Tract in Northeast Burnet Co. There's a lot of deer; and it's a two buck county. I don't bow hunt that place during rifle season because there are a lot of small acreages around me and I think it's too dangerous; so I really hoped to score on this late October hunt. It was about 30 min before

dark when I saw the best eight pointer I'd seen there in years. He moved into a small opening about 50 yards from my feeder. Better yet he was looking at the feeder and moving toward it.

Unfortunately the path he chose happened to be the one I'd walked on to get to my stand. He wasn't downwind of the stand, and I was high in an oak tree but suddenly he turned and took off. It might have been a lot of things that scared him, but I think he stumbled on some of that orange goo that Wyatt talked about.

Scent control has become a major topic in bowhunting magazines in the last few years. It wasn't always that way. Twenty-four years ago, when I first started bowhunting, advice about scent control was limited. Oh sure you were told to be careful of a deer's nose, to hunt into the wind when stillhunting and to set up down wind of where you wanted to hunt, but this advice didn't always work.

My first treestand was directly downwind of where I was feeding, but it was way too close. It was

only about ten yards downwind of the corn. Deer often approached that stand from twenty or thirty yards directly behind me. Snort, snort, and they were gone. In those days I didn't realize that it might be better to move your stand if you're winded. What I did do that first year was talk to my local archery dealer and he pulled out a can of Burnham Brothers skunk scent. I've heard folks say not to use skunk scent, but it really worked for me. Perhaps that was because it was the real McCoy and strong, really strong. To use it you were supposed to put a couple of drops on a bush or a couple of cotton balls downwind of your stand. I'd swear my hunting buddies didn't read the directions and were dabbing this stuff behind their ears. Made it a little hard for us to eat in some of the finer restaurants, but we did seem to see more deer.

Today there are all sorts of scents, coverups, sport washes, special suits, etc. Scent control may seem real complicated, but really scent control breaks down into three areas. Eliminate all the scent that you can, take steps to make sure you don't pick up unwanted odors, and finally do what you can to cover up or block your scent and keep it from reaching the deer. I've

given a few examples of each of these below and I'll bet you add other ideas of your own.

Scent Elimination

1. bathe often
2. use baking soda
3. use commercial scent elimination sprays
4. use a mouthwash
5. wash your hat.
6. have a hunt only belt and wallet
7. don't take anything to the stand that you don't absolutely need
8. regard everything you take as a potential scent bomb.

Staying Scent Free

1. don't dress until you reach the stand
2. don't wear hunting clothes into obvious scent locations like cook-rooms or places where people are smoking
3. put plastic bags or drop cloths over your car seats
4. use an electric razor or don't shave until after the evening hunt
5. change clothes before you get back into the truck
6. put clothes in a plastic bag with a branch from a bush or tree of the local area (best to use one without thorns)

Keeping Scent From the Deer

1. wear rubber boots or waders
2. stay off of the same path the deer is going to use
3. wear rubber gloves to feed, put out decoys and scent lures
4. wear rubber gloves to the stand
5. wear a scent lock suit
6. hunt in a scent proof or scent limiting blind
7. hunt high in a tree stand
8. use a cover scent, skunk, doe urine, fox, etc.

Some of the ideas may seem obvious; like bathe often; others are often overlooked or not done. For example, several years ago when hunting on the Shin Oak ranch I was jolted when the ranch owner asked why I was wearing my hunting clothes into the dining hall. I only came in for coffee and there were a lot of other hunters similarly dressed, but I realized we were all soaking up the cooking odors. I don't do that anymore, but you can pick up a lot of odors both in camp and on the way to your stand.

My observation is that most hunters get dressed in camp. If you do, you

might think about how to keep from picking up scents on the way to the stand. Remember, scent is like a sticky goo, it rubs off on you as well as what you touch. There's not only the scents in camp that can stick to you but even those in your car or truck. Some guys cover their seats with plastic sacks or drop cloths. Seems like a good idea to me.

Of course if you wait to put your hunting clothes on until you reach your stand it's not a problem. At least not if you have your clothes sealed in a plastic bag. But you may be bringing other problems along with you.

Is everything that you carry to the stand really scent free? What about that leather belt or billfold? That belt you've worn for years and that wallet you've been sitting on for six months should be real ripe. Instead of taking your wallet, maybe you just need a plastic carrier for your hunting and drivers licenses. Perhaps a hunting only washable belt or set of suspenders would work for you.

Camo hats are often overlooked too. I know some hunters who wear the hat all season long and have never washed it. Most of our body heat escapes via our head. For good scent control your camo

hat needs to be washed as often as your clothes.

Similarly everything you carry to the stand is a potential scent bomb. Do you have a fanny pack or back pack? What about a video bag? Have these and everything in them been descented? Some hunters spend a lot of time on themselves and their clothes, then pick up that old fleece backpack that the cat's been sleeping on and head to the stand.

Speaking of heading to the stand; seems like every major trophy hunter wears rubber boots these days. Personally I hate rubber boots, and I've killed a lot of deer while not wearing them. Recently, however I've switched to rubber boots on almost all of my hunts (especially if I'm after a mature buck).

On many of my hunts I've also started wearing rubber gloves until I get to the stand. I still remember Mack Freeman the instructor in my IBEP course, telling about a doe that came up to the place he crossed a barbed wire fence. That smart old doe sniffed the fence where he'd pushed it down with

his hand, then she turned and left.

Rubber gloves keep me from leaving scent on fences, bushes and anything else my hands may touch as I travel to the stand. They also keep me from leaving scent on the steps of my tripod or tree stand. Needless to say if you put out decoys, scent lures or feed by hand, rubber gloves are a good idea.

There are lots of other areas where we can work on scent control and it will never be total. Part of it depends on how much trouble the individual hunter is willing to go to. I at least do the easy things. For example, if I shave on a hunt, I do it after the evening hunt. I've noticed that when I'd just shaved and hugged my wife she'd often remark, "You smell nice. Have you put something on?" No I hadn't put on any cologne, but she could sure smell the aftereffects of my shaving soap. Bet the deer could too.

There are lots of good ideas on scent control. Some are a lot of trouble and you may not want to follow them every time

you hunt. On the other hand, that P & Y buck didn't get that way by making any mistakes. If you're hunting big deer you can't afford one either. Remember; if you don't descent, there will be no dissenting arguments from the deer. They'll like it, because they'll smell you in a minute. I don't know how to say this buddy, but frankly...YOU STINK.

Bowhunting Hot Links

TexasBowhunter.com – The Authority on Bowhunting in Texas! This is the new home of Texas Bowhunters' Journal. Be sure to complete our Bowhunter Survey and sign our Guestbook. View our Trophy Wall, read monthly feature articles, and participate in online discussions! www.texasbowhunter.com

EdersAuctions – From the people that brought you Edersbow.com, this is The Nets Only Exclusively Outdoor Auction House! <http://auctions.eders.com/index.cfm>

Jackson's Archery and Hunting Page – THE best directory of bowhunting links on the web! Arrow shaft selector, KE calculator and more! <http://home.att.net/~sajackson/archery.html>

Prepare Now For the Coming Season

By Michael Middleton

With the 1999-2000 (WOW!, that sounds weird!) season rapidly approaching, it is time to double check your hunting inventory to make sure you're prepared for a successful hunt. I'm sure that most of you, my eldest brother excluded, have been shooting consistently during the off-season to maintain your shooting skills, and may have been making significant adjustments to your equipment or shooting form. Now is the time, however, to stop experimenting with new equipment, and begin the process of fine tuning what you have so that you're comfortable with your setup on opening morning.

Broadhead Tuning

Presumably, you've been practicing most of the summer with field or target points on your arrows in order to save a little wear and tear on your broadhead target. One of the biggest mistakes hunters make is

assuming that because their field points are grouping in the bullseye, that their broadheads will automatically do the same. In most instances, it takes some fine-tuning to get your broadheads to hit in the same place as your field points. In fact, in some cases, it's just plain impossible to get your broadhead tipped arrows to group with your target tipped arrows. Even if you shoot mechanical broadheads that are less likely to wind plane, the difference in the ferrule length and shape, in relation to your field points, may prevent your broadheads from grouping with your field points. With a properly tuned bow, you should be able to get properly balanced broadheads and field points to group fairly close together. If not perfect, however, be sure to sight your bow to the broadheads.

Equipment Checks

Whether you've been shooting your bow daily since last season, or are just pulling it down from the attic because the season is approaching, you need to inspect your bow closely

for wear or potential failure. A summer's worth of shooting can cause serving or string wear, in which case, it would be advisable to replace your string before the upcoming season. Lack of use, too, can cause your string to dry rot or decay, in which case you will need to replace it as well. I would suggest, in either case, that you don't wait until the week before the season opens to replace your string. Be sure to allow enough time for the string to stretch properly or you could experience tuning problems as the string gets properly broken in.

Be sure to check the mechanical parts of your bow as well. Check your cams and wheels for proper timing and be sure the axles are properly lubricated. Be sure your cables are not worn. Check your sight pins to be sure they are straight and that everything is tightened so as not to rattle. Also check your rest to make sure that you have the proper tension, and that the launcher arms are working properly. Make sure your mechanical release aid is functioning and properly lubricated so as not to make noise. Inspect your arrows closely to ensure that they are straight, and that all the fletchings are properly secure.

Chances are that you haven't worn your camouflage since your last hunting trip, and if you're anything like me, you were in a rush to get home after staying in the field as late as possible as the sun eclipsed closing day. I've found that, in a rush, my clothing can become scattered and misplaced. Opening morning is not the time to find that you can't locate your facemask and cap. And it's no fun at all wearing your Goretex parka when it's 98 degrees in October because you can't seem to locate your mesh hunting jacket that you haven't seen since last October. Take inventory of your hunting gear now, so that you know what you have, and more importantly what you need to buy before opening day. Oh yeah, be sure to wash that rain-soaked jacket, that you've had "stored" in a black plastic garbage bag, a couple of times in scent-free detergent!

Hopefully you've had a chance to make it out to the field prior to the season to fill feeders, inspect and hang your stands, and

prepare your hunting area so that you don't have to do it in the dark on opening morning. A lot can happen, during the nine months since the last season ended, to cause stands to deteriorate. Be sure to properly inspect all of your stand sites prior to hunting them for safety, as well as to make sure that funnel areas and shooting lanes are clear.



Be sure to closely inspect stands and feeders prior to your hunt, as significant wear can occur during the offseason.

Have a Backup

One of the keys to being prepared for the season is to, well, be prepared. As you former (or perhaps

current) Boy Scouts know, having a backup plan can mean the difference between success and failure. Having backup equipment isn't a bad idea either. My recommendation is to always carry a spare bow, fully setup and tuned. At the least, if there are several hunters in your camp, consider having one backup at camp that can serve as a backup to each hunter. In that case, it's best to have majority ownership rights in the backup bow, just in case more than one hunter has problems with their bow.

In the event that you can't carry a backup bow, it is important to at least have backup parts to replace those that break in the field. A good starting point is to have a fully setup bowstring. At a deer lease, six hours from home, is not the place to begin looking for a bowshop that's open on the weekend to build you a string, because yours was cut with a broadhead that you inadvertently placed in your case with the bow. A good friend of mine, whom shall remain nameless, but has been married to my mom for 25 years, had a hunt ruined last year with just such a scenario. I guess it serves him right,



though, since he didn't invite me on the trip!

Other parts of which I would recommend carrying an extra include a rest, a sight, or at least sight pins, and a release aid if you shoot with one. Try to have spare parts that are the same model as the original, if at all possible, so that you don't have to get a feel for something new. A less expensive alternative, however, is to just purchase the cheapest part available, in hopes that you never have to use it, but secure if you need it. I have several spare rests, sights, stabilizers, release aids, etc. that I picked up on clearance after various seasons that fall into the latter category. But should I need them on Thanksgiving morning while in Encinal, they will be priceless!

Tools of the Trade

Finally, there are several tools that I would recommend that every bowhunter have as part of his arsenal. These include a serving tool and serving material, and arrow building supplies. On a trip last season to the Bugscuffle Ranch in Vanderpoole, I brought

what I thought would be plenty of arrows for the weekend trip. As it began to rain on the first morning, I quickly realized that I was going to have problems keeping my feather-fletched arrows dry. Soon, I had feathers falling off ALL of my arrows. Fortunately, another hunter in our group, Richard Dunkin, had with him an Arizona EZ Fletch Jig and a couple of spare vanes. We quickly built a couple of arrows with vanes, instead of feathers, and my hunt was saved. Upon my return home, I quickly purchased an Arizona EZ Fletch from Arrowhead Archery to carry in my tackle box for quick field repairs. Even if you don't want to build your own arrows, I would recommend investing in a simple jig and glue in case you need to make arrow repairs in the field.

I learned another similar lesson on a Memorial Day hog hunt at our ranch. I decided not to take my spare bow, because I was taking my gun on the trip. After all, it was more of a meat trip than anything else, so I figured if I had problems with my bow, I would just break out the

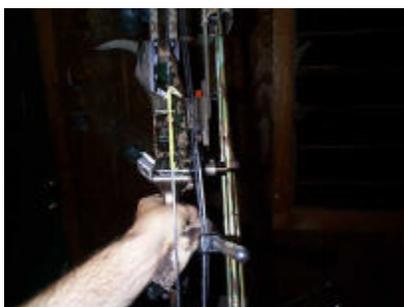
gun. I failed to factor in one little detail. . . I hate gun hunting! On the second day of my trip, I saw a hog that was feeding out behind the cabin. I grabbed my bow, and as I was attempting to stalk the hog, I glanced at my bow only to notice that the serving had broken just above the nock. Thinking the nocking point would hold the serving in place, I continued my stalk, and once within 15 yards,



Author arrowed this hog in 1998 using a backup bow, a Pearson Spoiler with energy wheels and Easton 2213 arrows, tipped with Thunderhead 85 broadheads.

began to draw my bow. My release slipped off the string, and sent the arrow sailing harmlessly over the sow's back. I was disgusted. I had just replaced the serving only a week before, but apparently nicked it when resetting the nocking point while I was tuning the bow. My hunt was

ruined. I didn't have any desire to shoot a hog with my 30-06. After searching through my hunting box, I managed to fashion a serving out of mint flavored dental floss. I had no idea how to tie a serving, so I just wrapped the dental floss around the string, then tied it in a series of knots. I had to double serve it so that the arrow nock would be secure. It was not in any way pretty, but it was serviceable and I was able to continue hunting. Once again, upon returning home, I quickly purchased a serving tool and some string, and convinced Mike Clark at Arrowhead to show me how to tie a serving. I would still prefer to pay someone \$3 to serve the string for me, but finding someone to serve a string in Encinal on Memorial Day is not an option!



Although certainly not pretty, note the lime-green serving the author used to fashion from mint flavored dental floss!

Take some time to plan ahead this season, and you will decrease your chances of encountering hunt-spoiling problems during your hunt. A little additional forward thinking can turn those major ordeals into minor inconveniences, and increase your odds for success by allowing you to spend more time hunting deer, and less time hunting a repair shop! - **TBJ**

LONG MOMENTS

By Louie Adams

As the buck slipped under the fence he looked my way. The big double-trunk oak blocked his view as he proceeded forward. When his view was cut off, I raised my bow and came to full draw. Clearing the oak, his head was still turned, but having his curiosity satisfied, he turned his head back to his left. Unable to hold at full draw any longer I let the string slip from my fingers and the shaft was on its way. That distance from bow to buck seemed to take forever. In my mind I replay the picture time after time. He continued his slow stride while

turning his head and I watched the orange fletched shaft arc to its target.

The arrow met him about four inches back from his right fore-leg and passed completely through before he made any response. Then as if touched by some unseen object, he bolted and reversed his direction, back the way he came. In less than thirty yards he went down, and it was over.

For every hunter there are the long moments; those seconds that tick away in the experience of the outdoors that seemingly take hours. Some of the experiences are good and some bad. I remember a high hit on a buck that left little or no blood trail. The five hours it took to find him seemed an eternity. The deer had succumbed to the shot, but the blood trail was so light the tracking was done on hands and knees. The time seemed so long because of the thoughts that ran through my mind, about how difficult the task of following his trail would be, and the fear that maybe I would not find him at all. The end of that trail brought with it reassurance in the ability of my equipment, my determination as a hunter and the need for patience.

In retrospect, it is easy to see why the moments were so

long. It is because those moments were filled with the very essence of the hunt. In those long moments, I discovered my actions were consistent with what I believed were the actions of a responsible hunter. If my actions were true, then there was a reward. The reward was not always the game taken (though at times it was), but rather the knowledge that I played my role as a part of the natural order and found peace within myself in viewing my actions.

We each have those moments. They are not all about game missed or bagged. They may be of a sunrise so beautiful that you wish it could last all day. You know, when the pink of a sunrise seems to defy description and any attempt to do so is useless. Who could forget the call of a bob-white quail in the early dawn as life begins to stir in the woods? These are those long moments that are so satisfying.

Then there are those moments around a campfire, laughing over events of the day or sharing the fire without speaking because of being bone tired. There are

moments with a hunting partner when there is no other place on earth you would rather be. Even now, you remember the reflection of the fire on his face.

The moments are not always visual ones. Sometimes it is the smell of an oak fire in the chill of an evening or a bugling elk in the dark still of a night. Once in the mountains around 2:00 A.M., an elk woke me screaming his call. I lay there in the darkness listening, and it seemed that there was no other place in the world. For that bull, it was his world. He was doing what he was born to do. Being in his world made the hair stand on the back of my neck.

The moments become long because we hold them so dear. The greater the meaning and purpose of those moments, the longer they seem. We know in the experiences we have in the outdoors that we cannot stay. We are there for only a brief period whether it be measured in days or weeks. As we go to the outdoors, so must we leave. But, if we are fortunate and are there for the right reasons, when we

leave we do so filled with long moments that we carry always. It is not meant for us to live life as moments in time, but rather we live to find those long moments that make life worthwhile. The bowhunter may stalk the woods for many reasons. It could be a particular quarry that challenges his skill or the solitude found only where this quarry lives. He could be there just for the peace and solitude itself or to find the person within himself who got lost in the pursuit of everyday life. If he hunts for any of these reasons but never experiences that long moment during his stalk, odds are he will return with an unfilled tag and with a feeling that the hours spent have been a waste. As for me, let me be filled with long moments to remember from hunts gone by. In them I find the purpose of the hunt and something to hold onto long after the return.

Let's Get Ready to Rumble!

Very few bowhunting issues in recent years have stirred as much of a controversy in the state as the recent approval of a device that allows a hunter to lock their bow at full draw. Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioners, going against the recommendation of the field staff, approved the use of the device, called a Draw Loc, during the archery only season. As recently as two years ago, state hunting regulations specifically prohibited any locking device to be attached to the bow. But with the so called "Sunset Laws," the agency opened the door for the Draw Loc by removing what, at the time, was considered unnecessary language from the regulations. Under the most recent regulations, specific language was ADDED to ensure the legality of the locking device. In an email letter to Texas Bowhunters' Journal, Mr. David Sinclair, Director of Wildlife Enforcement for Texas Parks and Wildlife, explained as follows:

"Mr. Michael Middleton

At the April Commission meeting, the Commission adopted the proposed Statewide Hunting and Fishing Regulations with CHANGES. The proposed regulations prohibited any device that would lock a bow at full or partial draw. After public testimony, the Commission adopted the archery / crossbow section without the locking device prohibition; therefore, a locking device is legal for game animals and game birds during any open season. The following is language that has been included in the 1999-2000 Outdoor Annual, page 63:

"Longbows, compound bows, or recurved bows that are equipped with a device that allows the bow to be locked at full or partial draw are lawful during any season when lawful archery equipment may be used."

If you have any other questions, please contact me."

Sincerely,

David Sinclair
Director of Wildlife
Enforcement"

The approval of the device, as you might imagine, caused quite a backlash from the bowhunting community, including the official state bowhunting organization, the Lone Star Bowhunters Association.

However, not all bowhunters were against the approval of the device, and supporters were able to convince the Commission to adopt the changes.

In the pages that follow, I have included letters and comments from TBJ subscribers and fellow bowhunters. Noting that the majority of the comments were opposed to the locking device, I wrote a letter to a proponent of the Draw Loc, Mr. Keith Warren, and asked him to write a letter to Texas Bowhunters' Journal explaining his support for the device. Mr. Warren is the producer of several outdoor television shows, including *Texas Angler* and *Hunting and Outdoor Adventures*. Mr. Warren was quick to respond and I appreciate his contribution to the TBJ. His letter is included with the other responses I have received on this issue. I have also written an editorial, which follows, with my personal opinion on the locking device. Your comments are welcome at journal@texasbowhunter.com.

I will publish some of those comments in the next issue of Texas Bowhunters' Journal.

The Draw-Loc Debate

By: Tomme R. Actkinson

This year the Texas Parks and Wildlife commissioners took a revolutionary turn. Swayed by arguments that the draw-loc would recruit more women, children and physically handicapped to bowhunting, and angered by ONE person's ill chosen words, that bowhunting is not for everyone, they moved to okay the draw-loc in the archery only season. They almost approved crossbows as well, and this may happen next year. I understand that the main reason that crossbows were not approved, was that under the current law, which created the archery season, Texas Parks and Wildlife would be unable to charge for an archery stamp for crossbows. One commissioner suggested asking the State Legislature to amend the law and make crossbows legal for the next (year 2000) archery season.

I am against the general use of crossbows and draw-loc devices in the archery season. My reasons are simple; they are not needed and they are not archery equipment. Let's take these in order.

The claim has repeatedly been made by draw-loc and crossbow advocates that these devices will recruit more women and children to bowhunting. The implication is that there are lots of women and kids who want to be bowhunters but who are denied the opportunity to hunt because of an inability to draw a bow and hold it at legal hunting weight. Is this true? The answer is that no one knows for sure. No one has ever tried to determine exactly how many women and children (if any) aren't able to hunt using standard archery equipment. Are there a lot? As will be seen below, probably not.

One crossbow advocate certainly overstated the case when in a magazine article he gave the opinion that it was better for a kid to use a crossbow, than miss or make a poor shot with a fifty pound bow. Since forty pounds is all

that is required to hunt, I've wanted to ask him why he has this kid shooting fifty. I also wasn't clear as to whether he was speaking of draw weight or holding weight. It appeared that he was talking holding weight and this is ridiculous. With today's compound bows a legal hunting bow might have a holding weight of as little as six pounds. I don't see this as a particular problem. My wife and I started bowhunting in 1976. At that time she was 5'2" tall and weighed about 115 pounds. She was no athlete, but with a little practice she was able to shoot legal archery equipment. The max let off in that day for her bow was only 33 percent. She was holding far more than any modern archer. Bottom line is that women and kids can already hunt. They don't need the draw-loc to afford them the opportunity.

I guess in all fairness I should say maybe not all kids can pull enough poundage to hunt. I doubt if many six year olds could pull 40 pounds. But the age some kids start may surprise you. In the Sept-Oct issue of Lone Star Bowhunter there's a story and picture of Connie Balusek (age 11) with her first bow killed deer. Similarly, in another publication, and without really searching, I came across a picture of a 10 year old boy

and a 14 year old girl, each with a nice bow killed buck. At an even earlier age, I have a picture of Ben Fulton (age 8) with his bow killed rabbit.

I personally believe that part of what recruits young bowhunters is the anticipation. As they practice and develop the ability to pull the bow and hit the target they anticipate that first hunt. I believe that's good for the kids and good for bowhunting. All bowhunters have to practice to be able to make good ethical shots. If kids have to practice to pull legal hunting weights, then this gives them time to not only become better shots, but to anticipate that first bowhunt. Psychologically this is a good thing. Perhaps the draw loc would allow a few very young kids to actually shoot an arrow at a deer, but I don't believe it has been proven to be needed.

If kids and women don't need the draw-loc, that only leaves two groups: the physically challenged and able bodied men. What about the physically challenged? Currently crossbows are legal for anyone suffering a

permanent upper limb handicap. Some would argue that since this is so, there is no need to okay draw-locs. I'm not one of them. Draw-locs in operation bear many similarities to the crossbow. I believe they should be allowed too. I know not all will agree, but I have read and talked to many other bowhunters, and most seem to feel the same way. If due to disability of some kind there is no other way a person could draw a bow, then most bowhunters are willing to make an exception. Please note, however, that this is an exception; and I feel that a requirement should be maintained for a person to get a medical doctor's certification of upper limb disability. I know there will be some who will cheat; but I think it important to give this group the opportunity to hunt in October. The fact that most bowhunters are generous enough to allow non-archery equipment for this special group doesn't mean that we are willing to allow general draw-loc use by everyone.

It's interesting to me that while the draw-loc proponents featured

women, kids and the handicapped in their arguments, the marketing of the device seems to be targeted at able bodied men. Perhaps this is understandable. After all this is the largest market. But is this why the commissioners made this revolutionary change in the archery season? Would the commissioners have been as likely to approve the draw-loc if they had been told that the primary market was to be adult male hunters? I don't think so.

An outfitter near Laredo told me that the draw-loc was being advertised in that area as a device, which would be quieter and would allow you to shoot without the motion needed to draw a bow. The idea was that this would give you that edge when that smart, spooky P & Y buck stepped out. Nothing was said about women and kids, the device was being marketed for the male bowhunter. In the October issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife a picture is shown of an Oneida bow with a draw-loc attached. It didn't mention that Oneida voids the warranty on the bow if a draw-loc is used. There is also no mention of women, kids or the handicapped. What is stated is that the device gives you the ability to "...pull an arrow, lock it at full draw, and wait for just the right moment to

shoot without any muscle strain.” Makes things easier, perhaps, but is this bowhunting. Was the reason for approving this device simply to make things easier? I don’t think so.

I have argued that Draw-locs and crossbows are not needed, except in the case of physical disability. But what about my claim that they are not archery equipment? I think this second point has to be clearly made. I am not an elitist. I don’t care what type of ARCHERY equipment you use in the archery only season. I also don’t care what type of legal hunting equipment you use in the general season or other special seasons. But the archery season was established for bowhunters. Compared to many states we have a short archery season. We have also paid for many years for that privilege. There have been many years when bowhunters have paid up to an additional 60% (over the cost of a general hunting license) for the privilege to bowhunt; and I believe we are due some consideration. The archery season has been in existence for many years

and should be respected. I am not opposed to adding additional special seasons (such as a special crossbow season), but don’t believe that existing seasons, such as the archery only season, should be infringed on, nor shortened, simply to appease commercial interest groups.

So what is archery equipment? For years Texas Parks and Wildlife has defined archery equipment as being “hand held and hand drawn”. Note, for a number of years (1988-1996) there was also a stipulation in the regulations that no device could be built in or attached to the bow that would permit the bow to be locked at full or partial draw. These regulations were deliberately in place to exclude crossbows and other devices such as the draw-loc from the archery season. They were not hand held and hand drawn hence they were not archery equipment.

Some might say it’s time to change that definition, but I believe the statement hand held and hand drawn is critical in defining archery equipment and in defining our sport. No matter what type of bow

you use, you’ve always had to draw the arrow and hold the draw while aiming and taking the shot. Any experienced bowhunter has had the experience of a deer spooking when the archer tried to draw. It might be the motion involved with lifting the bow, then pulling the arrow for 29 or more inches. It might have been the sound the arrow made being pulled across the rest. Simply being able to draw and shoot is part of the bowhunting challenge.

Holding the draw is also a critical element in defining bowhunting. I think most bowhunters will remember at least one time that they drew, only to have their game stop behind a bush or tree. As the seconds, which seemed like hours, went by muscle fatigue began to set in. Sooner or later the hunter had to let off. When he did, his quarry took off. Maybe with the draw-loc he would have had a better chance of harvesting that animal, but bowhunting is much more than simply getting game. The special archery season was created because bowhunting is a sport, a sport with a special challenge. A large part of the challenge is in the drawing, aiming and holding, all in the presence of one or more game animals. Both the draw-loc and crossbow remove this

challenge. They are not archery equipment and, with the exception of those who are physically challenged should not be allowed in the archery season.

In summary, while I applaud the commissioners desire to give more people the opportunity to bowhunt, I don't believe that the draw-loc should be allowed for general use. If a serious study is made, I think that it will be found that the opportunity to bowhunt already exists. The physically challenged can already use the crossbow (and most bowhunters would allow the draw-loc for this one group). Women and kids are certainly not excluded and the group being primarily targeted for sales, able bodied men, don't need the device except to make things easier. Perhaps commissioners might want to consider a special crossbow (& draw-loc) season, but let's keep the special archery season just that, an ARCHERY season. Crossbows and draw-locs don't meet long established definitions of archery equipment. They shouldn't be allowed in the archery season.

Letter From Keith Warren

Dear Michael:

Thanks for your recent letter as well as letting me know of your publication. Regarding the Draw-loc, I am delighted to have the opportunity to discuss this neat product.

An accident years ago left me unable to draw my compound bow. I obtained a letter which allows me to legally shoot a crossbow during archery season (in Texas) and have become very familiar with the crossbow. Prior to the accident I'd bow hunted for years taking my first animal, a 4 x 4 mule deer (in 1974 in Utah). I'd taken numerous deer, hogs and small game using my bow. Losing my ability to hunt with a compound was horrible as only another bow hunter could imagine.

I started hunting with a crossbow three seasons ago. It took me two seasons before I took my first whitetail buck. I'd taken some hogs on television using the crossbow and showed the audience that I was deer hunting with it as well. These hunts were all

during general deer season. Since the airing of these crossbow shows, I've been target by some archers and labeled as anything but good. I've heard every possible argument why crossbows are so bad but I had no choice. If I was to bow hunt, it had to be with a crossbow. Therefore, I dismissed all the negative opinions by justifying that my only choice to bow hunt was with the crossbow.

Then there was those who said I should quit bow hunting entirely. Would you quit?

Two years ago I received the Draw-loc from a fellow outdoor writer and installed it on my old bow. It was the first time I shot in years and I can't tell you how I felt. Plus, I was shooting good. I checked with T.P. & W and found it to be legal. I tested the product firing thousands of arrows in the past two years. I have had no mechanical problems at all. None with the Draw-loc or the bows which I've tested. In addition, I've talked to others that installed and are using it and they haven't had problems of any kind.

I hunted with the unit for the first time last season and took a whitetail buck, lots of hogs and small game as well as a mule deer buck. I have not

received any compensation of any kind to use the product or to speak on it's behalf. I simply use it because it has enabled me to hunt with a compound bow again.

The response I received from some fellow archers didn't surprise me. It was basically the same as the opposition to the crossbow.

I feel that I am very fortunate that the Draw-loc was invented and see it much the same as the crossbow. This legal device is safe featuring a mechanical safety, it is ethical because it helps the shooter make a more consistent shot resulting in better accuracy and it helps recruit new people as well as retain people in archery.

Recently, the T.P. & W. reversed a decision to outlaw the Draw-loc. They found out the truth about this invention and realize what it means to our industry.

The Draw-loc is one device that will get more people into bow hunting. I invite you to shoot this with me at your convenience. You'll see that it is a "positive" for the archery business. It

may not be for everyone, just like overdraws, mechanical broadheads, crossbows, etc. but that's ok with me.

I see it as if it's legal, safe, ethical and recruits participants, how can anybody be against it? Maybe it is because they don't know enough about it.

I look forward to hearing from you and shooting the Draw-loc together. Thanks again for your letter and for this chance to communicate my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Keith Warren
Executive Producer
Hunting & Outdoor
Adventures

From My Perspective The Draw Loc

By Michael Middleton

To this point with the Texas Bowhunters' Journal, I have tried to refrain from writing an opinion about anything that could be considered controversial or unpopular. However, as the editor of this little publication, I feel somewhat obligated to

write an occasional editorial on issues that I think are important to bowhunting in our state. No such issues have caused more controversy in recent years than the approval, by Texas Parks and Wildlife, of a device that locks a compound bow at full draw for use during the Archery Only Season. This has created a firestorm of a debate between those who see the device as a positive for recruiting women and children into bowhunting, and those who oppose the device, citing safety concerns, as well as feeling that a bow locked at full draw eliminates one of the critical elements, drawing the bow undetected, that makes archery such a challenging sport.

Initially, I have attempted to reserve judgement on this issue until I could actually see the device in question, called the Draw Loc, and listen to the arguments from both sides. The overwhelming majority of bowhunters that I have encountered seem to be opposed to the use of the Draw Loc. I have received a number of letters from subscribers opposing the use of the device, some of which are published in this issue. Internet discussion sites, such as the Bowsite's Texas Conference, have participants debating the use of the device, and suggestions on how to reverse

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the legislation that was recently approved. The Draw Loc has certainly stoked the fires on both sides of the issue.

I must admit that I have found myself riding the proverbial fence, at times, on this issue. And let me tell you, it is a fence that is loaded with barbs! My initial reaction was concern that today's modern compound bows were not designed to be locked at full-draw for an extended period of time. To date, I have seen nothing that would alleviate that concern. However, I also fully expected archery manufacturers to swiftly make a statement that installing such a bow would void the manufacturer's warranty on their bows, and the lack of same has caused me to rethink my initial concern. As of this writing, I have not seen a single statement, in writing, from a major archery manufacturer, or any other group for that matter, to indicate that the device creates undue stress on a compound bow. Without substantial proof, I refuse to simply assume that the device is a hazard to either the user, or other hunters. I'm hoping that a

consumer study will be completed soon that will answer the safety question once and for all.

Aside from the safety of the device, I have what I think is a legitimate concern that some hunters will use the device to attempt to still hunt, or stalk, game with the bow locked at full draw, and loaded with a deadly broadhead. Most bowhunter education courses stress the importance of not walking through the woods with an exposed, broadhead-tipped arrow attached to the string, even if it's not at full draw. The image of a someone walking with the same exposed, razor sharp broadhead at full draw is enough to make me shudder! Injuries because of this seem almost inevitable. That said, however, I am fearful of the precedent that would be set if the TPWD were to deem the device illegal based on the fact that it could cause potential harm to the user because of improper use. The same argument could then be used against treestands! That's the very argument that gun control advocates are attempting to use to justify banning guns. I bet

nearly every one of you have muttered something along the lines of "it's the criminal, not the gun!" The Draw Loc is not at fault for a hunter's carelessness or misuse.

Because of the responses I have seen in opposition to the device, and because I think it's important to hear both sides of an argument before making a snap-judgement, I wrote a letter to a gentleman that has been identified as one of its staunchest supporters, Keith Warren, and offered to allow him to write a letter explaining his support of the Draw Loc. The first time I saw the Draw Loc in action in an actual hunting situation was on Keith's television show, Hunting and Outdoor Adventures on the Outdoor Channel. Keith shot a huge mule deer in New Mexico using the device, and explained that his reason for using it was an unspecified injury to his shoulder that has prevented him from bowhunting for several years. Mr. Warren was quick to respond, and his letter is included in this issue of Texas Bowhunters' Journal. Hopefully, you have already taken the time to read his letter. After reading his letter, there was one paragraph that I found myself coming back to time and again:

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“Then there (were) those who said I should quit bow hunting entirely. Would you quit?”

ABSOLUTELY, UNEQUIVOCALLY NOT!!! I would do whatever was legal, or fight to legalize, anything that would get me as close to true bowhunting as I could get. Having had shoulder problems myself in the past, I have fears about what might happen if my shoulders deteriorate to the point that I can't draw my bow. The crossbow, which I have no desire to shoot at the moment, would be an option, but is closer to the feel of shooting a gun than a bow. If the Draw Loc was a solution that would allow me to hunt with MY bow – my Hoyt Striker Carbonite bow, or whatever bow I was accustomed to shooting prior to the injury – I would pay almost any price to buy one! As a close friend of mine stated, “if I had to hold a bow in one hand and draw it with a winch attached to a tree. . .” I would do whatever I could, legally, to keep bowhunting. I think most of you would too!



This picture, as seen on the Draw-Loc's website, illustrates the locking device in action.

Now, before you get the idea that I have fallen onto the wrong side of the fence, I'll offer proof that I'm still smack-dab, square in the middle of it! I agree that one of the essential aspects of bowhunting is attempting to draw your bow, undetected by an animal, and holding until you can make the shot. If it were all about getting within range and squeezing the release, I would have a fair share of Pope and Young class animals on my wall. But the art of drawing the bow undetected is part of the essence of bowhunting, and I think that hanging your bow from a tree that is already at full draw before the animal approaches cheapens the accomplishment of shooting an animal with a bow. I am firmly opposed to legislation that attempts to limit technology in bowhunting, provided that the technology stays within

the framework of the definition of archery – drawing (by hand), holding (by hand) and releasing an arrow. However, I feel that at locking device crosses the line of the definition of archery. I have no objection to a hypothetical bow that has 99% letoff. As long as the hunter has to draw and hold the string, by hand, it is still bowhunting, in my eyes. But once the line is crossed from 99% to 100% letoff, then you have overstepped the boundaries of archery.

In short, from what I have learned to this point about the Draw Loc, I am of the opinion that, similar to the crossbow, the locking device should be allowed, during the archery season, only for those with an upper limb handicap, provided that there is no evidence that it creates mechanical danger to either the device or the bow. I would not want to tell anybody with a disability that they must give up archery if there is a viable solution that will allow them to experience, even to a lesser degree, the joy of hunting with a bow. On the other hand, I feel that an able-bodied hunter who uses this device during the archery season only bastardizes the sport of bowhunting, and creates potential jeopardy for the future of the special archery season.

Hunting Healthy

By Kevin Johnson aka
"Outbreaker"

Well here we are again at the start of another bowseason and being top-end predators we are looking to score on a trophy buck. Once we get out there we then come to the realization that we are not as top end as we think. We are preyed upon by bunches of little critters like mosquito's, chiggers, and ticks and the danger that these bloodthirsty creatures pose is two fold; the initial bite and the possibility of diseases.

Chiggers:

These are the nice guys of the triumvirate. They will typically try and feed upon you unsuccessfully and in the process set up a nasty localized reaction. You will hear all of the old time remedies that include bleach, salt etc to "Kill" the bug. Well the bug is already dead so killing it will not help. Once the chiggers have attacked only a doctor can help with anti-inflammatory medication. Prevention is the key here, and the answer is permethrin.

Ticks:

This is a nasty group. They sneak in under the cover of clothing and attach to you. The bite could become infected but

the real danger lay in the diseases that they can transmit; Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Babesia, Tick Fever and many others. The main goal here is prevention of these diseases rather than ticks but to accomplish one you need to accomplish both. When ticks attach they need to be on the body 24-48hrs for disease transmission to occur; therefore, if you thoroughly check yourself for ticks 1-3 times daily and remove all ticks this will help. There is also a vaccine against lyme available but this will not protect you against the other diseases.

Mosquitoes:

This group transmits all sorts of diseases. The list in the USA includes Dengue, St Louis Encephalitis, Western Equine Encephalitis, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, La Crosse, and many others. The key here is trying to keep them from biting you while at the same time remaining odorless. The answer is again Permethrin.

Skin Repellents:

Most current available insect repellents for application to the skin (Off! and others) are usually effective for one to several hours, but can be removed by evaporation,

rain, sweating, swimming or wiping, and must be reapplied to maintain effectiveness. The STMS recommends a new microencapsulated formulation (Ultrathon) by 3M) which provides for a longer half life and less absorption. The most effective topical insect repellent is N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide, commonly called "DEET". "DEET" repels a variety of mosquitoes, chiggers, ticks, fleas and biting flies; no topical repellent is effective against stinging insects such as bees and wasps.

The US Armed Forces have long used 75% DEET in ethanol, but several products that equal or exceed this concentration are now available commercially and all share the side effects of increased toxicity. Ultrathon contains only 35% DEET (so it is also safe in children).

Other repellents effective against both mosquitoes and ticks, but less so than DEET, include 2-ethyl-1,3-hexanediol (Rutgers 612) and dimethyl phythalate. Citronella-based repellents (Natrapel; and others) may provide short term protection against mosquitoes, but are probably not effective against ticks.

Clothing Repellent:

Permethrin, actually a pesticide rather than a repellent, is used for treatment of lice and is also marketed as a clothing spray for protection against both mosquitoes and ticks. The aerosol is available in many areas of the USA as Permanone Tick Repellent (.5% permethrin) sold mostly in lawn and garden stores or sports stores.

Manufactured by Fairfield American in Newark, NJ and distributed by Coulston International, Easton, PA, clothing repellent is non-staining, nearly odorless, and resistant to degradation by light, heat or immersion in water. It will last 6-8 weeks on clothing and through 2-3 washings.

Both Ultrathon and Permanone are also available from Chinook Medical Gear, (800) 766-1365 or Coulstons now sells their permethrin repellent as Duranon and can be reached at 800 749-8425 for ordering or requesting a catalog.

Skin So Soft:

A commercial concentrated bath oil,

Avon's, Skin So Soft, has come into wide use as a "folk medicine" mosquito repellent. This product contains di-isopropyl adipate, mineral oil, isopropyl palmitate, dioctyl sodium sulfosuccinate, fragrance, and the sunscreen benzophenone-11.

In one study, the bath oil did repel Aedes aegypti, the mosquito carrier of dengue (LC Rutledge et al, Mosquito News, 42:557, 1982) but, according to Medical Letter consultants, Skin So Soft may protect against mosquitoes for as little as 15-30 minutes, and the safety of repeated applications of the concentrated bath oil to the skin is unknown.

Due to the lack of effectiveness I can't recommend this product at all.

Adverse Effects:

DEET is absorbed through the skin into the systemic circulation; about 10% to 15% of each dose can be recovered from the urine.

Toxic and allergic reactions have been reported to DEET. The

drug has been associated with bullous eruptions (blisters) and contact urticaria (hives). Toxic encephalopathy has occurred with excessive or prolonged use of DEET, particularly in infants and children (DL Edwards and CE Johnson, Clin Pharm, 6:496, 1987).

Permethrin is toxic to the nervous system of insects but in mammals the drug is poorly absorbed or rapidly inactivated by ester hydrolysis. Objective signs of skin toxicity such as edema, erythema, and rash have been uncommon, and adverse systemic effects have not been reported.

Clothing:

There are now manufactures of clothing that will aid in this quest as well. On the Tick/Chigger front there is the new RynoSkin that seems to work well by keeping the insects off on skin contact. On the Mosquito front there is a myriad of netting products but the Bugtamer seems to have the best concept of a "Double Mesh" approach.

Conclusion:

Just like bowhunting protection from insects needs to be multifaceted. But when our need of odorless comes into play the DEET products rank dead last. The



permanone through personal experience as well as group experience rates head and shoulders above the rest. But the most effective approach would involve clothing options that were treated with permanone.

Hunt hard and stay healthy.

Editor's Note: Kevin Johnson is an Infectious Disease Epidemiologist with the Harris County Health Department.

Confessions Of An Old/New Bowhunter

by Bill Bahr

The moment I saw those short re-curve bows in the trunk of his car, I knew that my father must have been entering his mid-life crisis, and that I must be crazy for joining him. How could he give up using his beloved 30-06 rifle that had been in our deer camp since I was four years old, or that new 7mm magnum that he had bought several years ago?

I had been my dad's constant hunting and

fishing companion, starting before I was in kindergarten. My first deer rifle came at age 10, and by my 15th birthday he had taught me to consistently break 25 out of 25 clay targets at the skeet range. In my mid-20s and a college graduate, I thought I knew everything there was to know about him and about hunting - but right now I couldn't figure the old man out. He had convinced me to come on a hunting trip over the Christmas holidays, had promised to supply everything, and here we were with nothing but a couple of stubby little bows and a few arrows. Granted, I actually had not been hunting with my dad, nor done much of anything with him, since I had gone away to college seven years earlier. Hunting had slipped into last place behind work, fast motorcycles, cute girls and hundreds of other things - and now I was scrambling through the cobwebs of my past field experience, trying to remember if I had ever even shot a bow, much less hunted with one. What I didn't know was that although he had practiced for hours and hours, my dad had never hunted with a bow either.

This time as always, dad was very patient and explained the basics of shooting a re-curve as he set up the target on the far side of our camp. He went on to explain that one had to be able to consistently hit inside the 10 ring on the target at 20 yards to insure a clean killing shot on a deer. Try as I might, a shot inside that little ring with that tough little re-curve bow at 20 yards was something I could not master. To make matters even more humiliating, my 54 year-old father was lobbing his shots inside that ring with deadly consistency. As much as I hated to admit it, for the first time in my adult life I was not a good enough shot to go into the field with a weapon.

The next morning, more out of respect for dad than anything else, I rolled out of the sleeping bag in the pre-dawn hours and smeared on face paint and zipped up the camo coveralls. December mornings in the Ozarks can be pretty chilly, and this morning the mercury edged below 32 F as we eased down the old logging road towards the tree blind he'd set up at the beginning of the season. Made of two by fours, it was barely big enough for one person, much less two grown men, and I found myself hanging off one side of the wooden seat, very much



afraid of falling on the brush and rocks below.

Two very cold hours later we still had seen nothing and the cramped, awkward position required that we change our tactics. On foot now, we still-hunted through waist-high dead grass that stood in the meadow between the tree stand and a pond about 100 yards away. As we craned our necks to see above the steep rim of the pond, my dad locked into position like a pointer on a hot covey of birds. Ever since I was a little kid, he could always spot deer before me, and this time was no exception. I strained to focus on the wooded banks of the pond, but could see nothing. Dad's eyes swung over to mine, and then back to a spot about 50 yards on the other side of the pond. There, four does were walking single file, on a trail leading down-wind out of the woods and around the pond, on what appeared to be a collision course directly into our laps. I would have given anything for a rifle or shotgun, and stood there helplessly as they closed the distance between us.

Now you need to remember that between my dad's 40 plus years in the field, and my earlier days of being a dead-eye rifle shot, we had managed to bring home some pretty big bucks, both white tail and mule deer. We were not what you would call rookie hunters, but nothing in my earlier hunting career prepared me for what happened next.

As the does walked closer and closer I started shaking like a kid with buck fever. In all my years of gun hunting I had never been this close to a deer. In one smooth and powerful motion dad drew back the 50-pound, 38-inch re-curve to full draw. Everything was perfect as the deer stepped into the 20 yard kill zone and presented quartering broadside shots. At the moment of truth, the lead doe sensed our presence and came to an eye-ball to eye-ball dead stop, with two very nervous hunters locked in her line of sight, looking like the proverbial "deer in the headlights." Seconds that seemed like hours ticked past, and I was mentally yelling at him to "shoot", but he did not. Instead he let down, lowered the bow, and

smiled. The deer were not as shocked as me, but did manage a respectable snort or two before they bounded off to safety, wondering about what kind of bowhunting wimps they had just managed to avoid.

We looked at each other, and the smile on his face changed to laughter as dad watched me try to stop the buck-fever induced shakes. "Why didn't you shoot?" I finally asked. "She was looking right at me and would have jumped the arrow" he said; and I nodded, somehow understanding but not quite yet believing his explanation.

Even though that hunt happened almost 25 years ago, it's still fresh in my memory, partly because of the numerous lessons learned, but mostly because it would be my last hunt with my dad before his untimely death only four months after our first bow-hunt.

A true gentleman, skilled sportsman and devoted father and friend, he passed on to me a great love for the outdoors and all things associated. I often curse my stupidity for wasting those seven years when I was too busy to hunt or spend time with him, but more often than not I use that energy today to focus on the things

that he would have wanted me to do with a bow. Like practicing until I can consistently hit exactly what I'm shooting at, or like passing up on shots that could otherwise leave a wounded animal in the field. But the application of that wisdom almost didn't happen until nearly two decades later.

A few years after my dad's death, my wife asked me why I didn't shoot that "old ugly black re-curve bow" that I kept in the back of my hunting closet. My excuse, that it was probably "too old and dangerous" was a cop-out that kept me from having to really work at something in order to be good. Luckily, my wife is very stubborn and very smart and that year gave me an unusual surprise for a birthday present, a new PSE "Vulcan" compound bow, fully rigged and ready to hunt. For those of you too young to remember, the Vulcan was state of the art compound technology in 1980, and it really got my engines going for a short while..... until work, kids and other interruptions made me hang it in the closet for the next 15 years.

Then one day I got a phone call from my father-in-law, asking when we were going bow-hunting. This was curious because he did not own a bow, nor had he ever bow-hunted. I was tempted to find an excuse not to make plans, but he convinced me that he was serious. So we bought him a bow and both started practicing regularly, and for the next four years spent many a frustrating day in the field, learning and re-learning the tough lessons of bow-hunting, without ever shooting anything. The most important thing we did learn however was to enjoy each other's company, as well as the beauty of God's creation.

These days I shoot a fancy single-cam compound, while my 15-year-old son regularly challenges me with that 20-year-old

"Vulcan". And, I've almost fallen out a tree again, this time by watching and laughing at my 11- year-old son shake with buck fever as hard as I shook those many years ago. I've also watched with great satisfaction the arrows that have flown straight and true to the mark on the deer and wild boar that I've finally grown smart enough, and lucky enough, to harvest.

Next weekend I'll be taking my 8-year-old daughter to her first 3-D tournament. She shoots with fingers, and can't hit much of anything past 10 yards, but the smile on her face reminds me of my dad's smile those many years ago.

Follow the advise of an old / new bowhunter and take someone into the field for their first time and see the difference it will make in your lives. It is a lot of work, but you will never regret it.



Just seeing two fine bucks like these is enough to get the heart racing. Take the time this season to take a kid, or even an adult friend, out to the field to admire God's creations. It will make a difference in both of your lives!

Photo by Michael Middleton

DUALITY

BY MIKE FITZGERALD

Every now and then there comes a point in everyone's life when they weigh the progression of society's technological advances against the way things 'used to be'. Are we better served by this progression and at what cost do we compromise old fashion values and tradition to further the quest for this progression?

I was blessed to attend a recent hog hunt on a ranch owned by Jeff Curtiss of Buck Fever Outfitters just South of Victoria. Comprised of 5000 sprawling acres of huisache and mesquite, this provided the perfect habitat for the many deer and hogs we saw on our two-day stay there. I accompanied Greg 'Hammer' Klausmeyer, Jeff 'the Jagman' Gage and Jim 'Gecko' Balcom for this adventure. We arrived at the bunkhouse on Friday evening and proceeded to hastily change into our hunting attire and go scouting with Troy, the head guide and ramrod of the Buck Fever Outfitters. Arriving at one of the many stand sites that was bordered by a stock tank and windmill, I decided to hunt there, having developed a love of these South Texas scenes reminiscent of a John Cowan painting that most of us Texans have come to love and admire.

I proceeded to climb into a tripod at 6:30 PM, approximately 18 yards over a corn feeder, and settled down for the wait. At dusk I watched a trio of Black Duck hens make their way to water and marveled at their aqua dynamic fluidness as they paddled through the water. Awhile later I watched with wariness as a skunk made it's way under my stand to water.

During this time I spied over 13 deer, mostly does with twin fawns, and two nice eight points circled behind me towards the water. After hearing their snorts of alarm I regretted not having showered after the drive down from Houston. At dusk the feeder sounded it's dinner bell, and my senses went on full alert awaiting the rush of feral hogs to the feeder.....nothing happened.

At around 9:15, I heard a commotion behind me and turned on my blue light, knocked an arrow on the string of my compound bow, and awaited the arrival of pork tenderloin on the hoof. Well, the hogs arrived all right but I could not pick them up in my Toxonics sight through the peep and had to forego my plans for fresh hog meat for the present....it was just too dark.

Later that night after a meal of Gumbo, prepared by yours truly, that was hotter than Texas sunshine in August, I

made the decision to forego the morning hunt and scout and find a water source to hunt the following afternoon. The ample libations may have had a small role in this decision.

The following afternoon grew hot and still, as 'Gecko' and myself scouted a few locations that we thought would be suitable. After pulling up to one of the water holes and jumping a 200-pound hog from a wallow, I decided I would hunt there without benefit of a feeder that evening.

As the day grew as long as my anticipation I readied myself for the hunt. We were the Groovin Bowhunters of Texas and had made a pact that we would hunt in full wig-o-flage for this evening's hunt. Hammer was in full battle regalia...long haired wig and bubba teeth armed with his trusty ol' Bear bow, which he shoots without a release aid. Gecko was in lime green face paint and desert storm commando fatigues, I was in a Gene Shalit/Super Mario Brothers wig and mustache and Mossy Oak Break-up camo. I had decided to take along my new TQ takedown Longhorn Recurve set at 48# at 28". My reasoning being that I would hunt with my compound till dark, then switch to my 'curve' at dark which I shoot instinctively and do not need the benefit of lights or sights.

Well...I arrived at the road leading to the water hole at 5:30PM and parked ½ mile out. I had an arrow ready for my Recurve and my compound slung

on my back. My thinking was that I could shoot much faster with the Recurve should a quick shot opportunity present itself. As I neared the water hole, the assembled cattle started lowing and moving out upon my arrival. I saw three hogs move out from the waters edge, one I estimated at 300 pounds, and two smaller 'eaters' in the 80 pound class. I ducked down behind some goat weed and began a crawl towards the water's edge.

At this point I began a mental debate with myself. Should I risk unslinging my compound to utilize that with which I am comfortable and which is more powerful and modern? Or do I defy convention and utilize the more primitive tool with which I have practiced long and hard and pay homage to my ancestors of old, and tune in to the call of the wild? As I neared, I saw another hog wallowing in the mud on the far side 100 yards away. I crawled closer, working within 20 yards when two white wing Doves spooked and flew from the water's edge. In one motion I stood, nocked my arrow and stepped forward, as the hog began to rise. In one fluid motion, without thinking and with the skill borne of primal ancestors and instincts, I drew my TQ Recurve and loosed an arrow.

Mike Fitzgerald with his first Trad. Kill, with TQ takedown Longhorn Recurve set at 48# at 28" draw!

Twenty minutes and much calming of my racing heart later, I ventured to water's edge and saw what all archers dream to see....major blood sign. I attempted to track the hog by myself but ran into sparse, and then no sign after 60 yards. About this time, the larger of the original hogs (I think it was him) decided to backtrack the trail he originally ran up. I was standing in the open with only sparse vegetation and could do no more than holler at the advancing boar to turn him from his intended path...it worked!

I decided, at this point, to go back to the bunkhouse and enlist the help of Steve Heflin, the resident guide for the weekend. We hopped on his A.T.V. after he loaded a fresh clip in his pistol, and proceeded back to the site of the last blood sign. (Firearms are not permitted on this Archery only hunt by the hunters).

After going back to where I had left an arrow stuck in the ground to mark the last sign, Steve proceeded to demonstrate his superior eyesight in finding sparse droplets that I myself could



not see. We no more than advanced 20 yards when I saw an odd color amongst the green vegetation and claimed my 'trophy.' My first trad. kill. In retrospect I look back at the rush and excitement of taking this animal by traditional methods and count it as one of my greatest accomplishments. Even though I still, and will, hunt with a compound, I take great pride and joy from the method of harvest of this worthy animal.

My point to this article is to draw the comparison that while we as a society rush headlong towards our destiny with modern progression, there is still the overwhelming urge and simplicity that is experienced from reliving primitive moments. Time ceases, Ishi stands beside me and the lone howl of the Timber Wolf is heard in far off and forgotten places. I will more than likely continue My 'progression' towards more primitive means of harvesting game, but would like to point out that what ever the difference in our equipment, we are brothers one in the hunt. The pack hunts as one.

I would like to thank 'Hammer' for the invite, fellowship and opportunity to express myself without the façade of acceptable society...GBOT. And for Jagman and Gecko for their acceptance and welcome into the fold. And Jeff Curtiss, owner of Buck Fever, for the opportunity at the wealth of game he has, and guide Steve Heflin for his knowledge of game and 'the bush.'

BOWSHOP BS!

Anacholia Mt Man

BS definitely has numerous terminologies in the divergence of language among the educated people of the world. Bowhunters and other arrow slingers simply know that it stands for only two things... BowShop and what goes on in the Bow Shop. The bowshop that I frequent is at least ankle to knee deep in BS almost any afternoon or night that you would dare to venture there.

Now I have changed the name and location of this famous nightlife establishment, along with the names of the people who frequent it in order to protect the innocent and to not allow any Bowsiters to take aim at the landlord with a ludicrous or liable thread. (There are enough lies already being spread at The BowShop.)

The BowShop or BS, as it will be referred to, is located in the backwoods of east Texas. (That already tells you something.) Don't expect to see flashing signs, billboards, or even Burma Shave signs directing you to this hideaway. If you blink while speeding down

the highway, forget it; you just missed the little clue hidden in the weeds that tells you to exit! If and when you find the BS (You can always pick up your cell phone and call for directions, but you'll get more BS,) you'll be welcomed by a very positive, morale- building list of requirements on the door: "No Drinkin, No Smokin, No Dippin, No Spittin, No Free Advice, and if you're offended by cable TV go away! But if you're looking for good BS, come on in!"

Big Bad John, the landlord, is a true case study of what all BS proprietors should model themselves after. He is always professionally dressed in his snow camo t-shirts, ready to take the weekly paycheck of whoever walks in the door. Big John is a walking encyclopedia of archery and bowhunting knowledge. The only problem the pilgrims have is to decipher the useful from the BS. Big John is more than willing to help with the smallest problem and also more than willing to inform you that you are full of BS.

To really get a feel for The Bowshop, you need to get

a visual picture of the layout and arrangement of the facility. To start with, it is a sizable building with a small shop and sales area as you enter the front door (by the way, this is the fire exit also!) You are greeted by some impressive mounts, donated by somebody, and the infamous cable TV. The TV is always on and you can watch whatever Big John is in the mood for, hunting or sex. (A useful hint: Never criticize the tube unless you want to be critiqued by the master!)

If you suffer from claustrophobia this may not be the place for you. Closeness is a fact of life at BS. The indoor range is a large, well lighted area that serves as a storage facility, nursery, and at times resembles the arriving luggage terminal at Houston Intercontinental. It has in the past been a zoo (literally). The target area is very large, with excessive amounts of styrofoam to capture your 20 yards or less shots. Anyone can hit the side of a barn at 20 yards. Right? Wrong! There are arrows in the ceiling, stuck in the walls, and in the metal roof! It's amazing that someone has not put an arrow into the washing machine that is stored near the target area.

There have been some incredible happenings in this

one single room. Like the time G2 was showing off to some of the females. Just as he came to full draw his shoulder came out of joint (very painful). We have not found his arrow to this day! Many bowhunters are like gun hunters, they wait until the day before the season to check out their equipment. One individual, whose name will not be mentioned, came to the BS and bragged about how great a shot he was and that he only practiced on live deer, but he felt inclined to check out his bow before he left the next day. He wanted to "fine tune it." We had been awed by his before hand presentation and were excited to see him put his arrows where his mouth was. He almost did! As he drew, both limbs of his bows collapsed. His arrow dropped a few feet in front of him and he just stood there holding a pile of junk that definitely did not resemble a compound bow.

One of the things I really like about the BS is the family atmosphere. Kids are always welcome. In fact the indoor range can definitely get you ready for hunting season. Picture this; You are at full draw

and all of a sudden two screaming kids chase each other out on the range. You've got to very carefully let down and wait for a clear target. You whistle to get the critters attention, get your composure and continue. You can always depend on the little ones giving you shooting advice and a hard time if you screw up.

This particular BS, even though it is located in the backwoods of East Texas is definitely into the "high tech" stuff. Big John purchased one of those "interactive video systems" some years back and it is really a crowd pleaser. It is so life like that several times clients have gotten so excited and into the sport that they have taken off the required tips and actually tried to kill one of the animals with their favorite broadheads.

The competition that is aroused at the BS is sometimes awesome. There are times when individuals are so pumped up that if one of the countermen were to put in a "minus nine instead of the normal minus three" on the interactive system, there could easily be a lynching and burning.

Big John has one of those "speed calculating machines" for his patrons to use at their convience. It's amazing how many people cannot shoot an arrow straight for ten feet. So called bowers have taken out the light bulbs, the support rods, and even missed the whole thing! One particular time, we heard Big John tell a patron who had just shattered the light bulb for the second time, " Damnit, use your other eye!"

Now what ever term you apply to BS, one thing is a given, there is always a lot of BS at the BowShop and most of that BS comes from BowShooters.

Till next time.....Its better to shoot a little BS than to shovel it!



Something in this issue "rub" you the wrong way? Let us know at journal@texasbowhunter.com

The Last Shot

By J.P. Davidsson

This issue I thought I might touch on a subject very close to every bowhunters' heart. A few inches lower than the heart to be exact; I'm referring to the stomach. This is the time of year we (hopefully) pack our freezers with the rewards of our patience, dedication, practice, long hours in the field and sincere appreciation we have for the majestic whitetail deer. If the hunting Gods are really on our side, a few turkeys and hogs may be shivering alongside our venison as well.

Wild game meals are a priority in our house and I can honestly say, the best meals I have ever consumed in my life have all been from the field and not from a grocery store or restaurant. Conversely, there have been several occasions where I've wondered if I was eating the backstraps from wombat road kill. I love to cook and I believe I now possess enough knowledge to prepare a delicious meal from just about any species of game, but this was not always the case.

Why do we humans have to learn from our mistakes? Why can't we just get it right the first time?

Experimentation is the cruelest teacher in cooking school. I literally hated to eat fish in my younger years. Why, because my Mom and Dad did *not* know how to cook it. Oh, they would try, that's for sure. I can recall many attempts at procuring a palatable meal from several different species of fish. Freshwater, saltwater, river, lake or bay, it didn't matter; they all tasted the same...very fishy. If this was how fish was supposed to taste, I was going to stick to good 'ol macaroni and cheese from a box.

So it goes without saying if I knew wild game was on the menu, I somehow instantly was invited to the neighbor's house for dinner that night.

My first attempts at cooking venison made my parents look like Emerill Lagasse and Julia Child. I took out some backstraps, put a little salt and pepper on them and headed out to the grill. I made sure to cook them for a really long time because they were "wild" and as you all well know, you have to cook that gamey flavor out of the meat. It took about six pulls before I got the chainsaw started and could take my first bite. Luckily, I had the blade sharpened a few weeks back or my wife and I would have starved. Ahh, but this was venison, a delicacy, it's supposed to be a little tough. After all, it was wild game.

I savored the delicate flavors that danced across my tastebuds and knew that I had really accomplished something. I had possibly prepared the most gamey-tasting meat you could ever eat. I cooked the gamey taste *into* the meat rather than out of it, but I was determined to not let this minor setback ruin my memory of my first venison meal. I'll always be reminded every time I drive my truck, because the drivers-side front tire hasn't lost one bit of air since I used one of those steaks to plug it.

To say I was gun-shy to try again was an understatement. A good friend came over one evening and told me to put the meat in a ziplock bag with some Italian dressing and let it marinate for a few hours, then cook the filets on the grill to medium-rare. WHAT!!! It's wild game. We'll all die! You *have* to cook it all the way through or some horrible bacteria with a really long name will eat us from the inside out! Thank God I listened to him or I might have given up on bowhunting. I often wonder how many more people would hunt if they were treated to a delicious venison meal. Try to share your bounty from this season with as many non-hunters as you possibly can and may all your chainsaws remain in the shed.

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