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Texas Bowhunters' Journal
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TEXAS BOWHUNTERS' JOURNAL

Good Intentions!

By Michael Middleton

How's the old saying go? "The road to failure is paved with good intentions," or something to that effect? It appears that your editor is a little ambitious with his intentions and a little short on time to deliver. What, with building a new house (obviously not with the proceeds generated from this little publication!) and my lovely bride with the proverbial bun in the oven and actually having to work at work, I've been unable to devote time to publishing a new issue of TBJ, much less creating a web page and soliciting stories and advertising! Anyway, thanks for your patience. Don't forget also that the frequency of Texas Bowhunters' Journal is dependent on the stories generated from its readership. . . THAT's YOU! Without your stories, there is no newsletter to publish. I know that many of you have had opportunities to

do some exotic and/or hog hunting during this offseason, and I'm sure our readers are anxious to hear your success stories.

From a purely selfish standpoint, I've got an itch to do a little bowfishing, but I have no idea how to get started. If you have any experience in this area, please send an e-mail to txbow@dialaccess.com and let me know if you can write an article about techniques, regulations, equipment, tactics or anything else that might help our readers (or at least me!) get started.

I've learned my lesson about promising what we intend to do in future issues of the Journal (heck, I can't even guarantee there will be future issues!) so I'll just shut up now and let you kick back and enjoy this month's Journal! By the time you read this, it will be less than 100 days until the October opener!

The Boy Who Would Be a Man

By Louie Adams

Jason's eyes were big as silver dollars; he tried to control his excitement, but his youth betrayed him. A fourteen-year-old boy-- try as he will-- can never control that much excitement. God meant it that way for the joy of the father.

"Dad, she was right there. I just knew she was mine. But when I drew on her, she looked straight up at me and just stood there. I didn't know what to do and before I could make up my mind she snorted and was gone. Everything was going so good and then it went to pot."

"Well Son, you will find that's hunting. If it was easy, anyone could do it. You chose to do it the hard way. There will be another time, and when it comes you will remember and be ready. But from now on you will remember the color of her hide, the blackness of her hooves and nose. Those things you will never forget."

"Dad, my heart was beating so loud I thought

she could hear it. Is it always like that?"

"Son, when you stop feeling that excitement it's time to quit."

It is now some seven years later that this recollection comes to mind while I stand by the fire. We shared a hundred campfires during the passing of those years, and many more talks, talks that covered everything from deer hunting to dating.

It was now the night of the day of Christmas. We burned brush Christmas day and the fire, which could be seen from the front window of our home, was growing low. Jason said to me, "Dad, let's go check on the fire." Not only was Jason my son, but time together taught me to read his feelings. Something was on his mind.

We walked outside to the fire. The hunters' moon would occasionally shine bright, breaking through the clouds, then be briefly covered from view, as the wind moved the clouds. Jason rearranged the fire as I watched. Once it caught, he backed up and sat down, a sure sign he wanted to talk.

"Dad, I guess its no secret how I feel about Kim and how

she feels about me. My tour of duty in Korea is for a year. If we can hold it together while I am gone, we will probably get married when I get back."

I tried to fight back a tear or two and answered, "That is what your Mom and I figured." The tears were not because of apprehension, but rather the moment and time. As we sat there and I listened, those hundred other campfires came to mind. What he said was so important but where he chose to talk was what moved me inside. There beside a fire he looked at me and said "Dad. I really love her."

"Son, I understand, and the time comes to most. Just make sure this is what you both want and commit yourself one to the other."

It struck me so that there was no apprehension in his voice about speaking of love and marriage. It was then the reality of our relationship really struck me, the openness, honesty, and trust in talking to me. He knew his feelings would not be betrayed but understood and respected. The flame of the fire showed the youth of his

.

face, but also the determination of a man choosing a course in life. Once more pride welled up inside me.

It was the close of our last day together. The day after Christmas he would fly to Korea for a year tour of duty. Never had he been away for that long or so far from home. The strain was beginning to show on the whole family. There was so much to say and so little time to say it.

The next day he nervously gathered his things and loaded them into the car. The trip to the airport was quiet and too quick. We grabbed a bite to eat in the airport and the family sat and made nervous conversation knowing our time together was almost over. Then the call came, "American Airlines flight 342 now boarding."

Everyone got up and began their goodbyes. He kissed his three sisters and told them to write. With his arms around his Mom, she cried. He said "Don't worry Mom, it will be O.K." As she cried she said, "We love you, and we will miss you." He turned to me, bent down and picked up his

duffel. Standing for just a moment, he looked at me and as tears started down his cheek, he put his arm around my neck and said "I love you Dad." Filled with pride with my arms around him I said, "I love you, too, and don't forget who you are." He pulled away and walked out the door to the loading gate. We watched him all the way to the plane. He never looked back. His hand went to his face a time or two to wipe the tears.

The girls left from the airport for a trip and I went home alone. Once at home there was an urge that struck me. So with my bow in hand and quiver on my back, I returned to the remains of the fire from the night before. I rearranged the remaining wood, and the fire soon picked up. I felt a sense of loneliness but at the same time a sense of completeness. There beside the fire the thoughts of a young boy who became a man filled my mind. He would be missed. But by the grace of God, the experience he found around the campfire with bow in hand, he was prepared to choose his course in life. By that same grace we will share another fire and the boy that became a man will walk once more through the woods with his bow. But I will always hold in my heart a fourteen-year-old boy with camouflage

on his face and eyes as big as silver dollars. For it was through his experiences as a bowhunter he grew to be a man.

Bowhunting Hot Links!

- The Bowsite – www.bowsite.com
The ultimate bowhunting web page, with articles, chats and interactive conferences
- Topo/Arial Maps – www.terraserver.microsoft.com/ - Click on your area to locate USGS maps.
- Edersbow - www.edersbow.com
The definitive bowhunting source. Check out this on-line magazine, catalogue and discussion forum.
- http://members.tripod.com/~DFW_Bowsite/main.htm - TexasT's website for Dallas/Ft. Worth area Bowsites, including Elk Bowhunter, JPBruni, CAT and Coyote65! Hmm, very interesting!
- Troy Green's Hunting and Fishing Adventures! – www.petronet.net/troy/ - Go with Troy on exciting hunting adventures through his Live Hunt Updates and pictures
- Cagle's Creek and Timber - www.creekandtimber.com – Shop on-line for fishing and hunting gear.

Good Friends and Big Bucks

By Rusty Plemons

I'm not quite sure where this story really begins but the title of this article seems to sum it up rather well. I am very fortunate to have become good friends with Steve Ford. Steve runs Big Game Management in Schackelford County in North Central Texas. He has been managing about 7500 acres of prime mesquite and cactus country for big whitetails for the last several years. The 7500 acres is actually two separate ranches, one being the Cook Field Ranch and the other being the Howsley Ranch. He has only allowed rifle hunting in the past on these ranches and has consistently done a fine job of getting people on good deer. This past year, however, I talked him into letting me bowhunt. He also let me invite one of my best friends up to hunt as well, this being Mike Boone. Mike is a game warden in East Texas (Hardin County) and he is quite an archer. Just for the record though, I am the better shot of the two. I

like to say this because sometimes Mike gets confused and thinks he's the better shot.

Needless to say Mike and I never thought the opening of bow season would get here but it finally did. Steve and I had located a couple of good bucks and had taken video and still pictures of a beautiful eight point that was pretty regular around an area that Steve calls the "chicken pens". Once Mike arrived we sat up a couple of tripods and got ready for the afternoon hunt. It was real windy that first afternoon but it didn't seem to slow down the deer activity. I saw about thirty deer, of which half were bucks. I saw the big eight point we were after but he never presented a good shot and I didn't want to take the chance of wounding him. Mike saw about twenty deer with about half being bucks as well, but no shooters. That night over the campfire I told Mike that I wanted him to go and try to get a shot at the big eight point and that I was going to go hunt another spot where Steve had seen a real whopper. The next morning came quick and we were in our tripods well before light. Mike threw a bunch of corn out in front of his stand and said he could hear the deer eating the corn, but it was still too dark to see. As it started to

get light, Mike could start to make out horns and he realized the big eight was one of the deer feeding in front of him. Mike waited another ten nerve wracking minutes until it was light enough to shoot. Finally, it got light enough and the deer gave him a good broadside shot at twenty-six yards. The arrow flew true and Mike had his first trophy buck with a bow. I'm not sure who was more excited, him or me. His eight point buck had a 17" inside spread with up to 10" tines. What a beautiful buck! It's not very often that everything goes exactly as you planned it, especially in bowhunting.

This trip was going way too good so far. We had one good buck down, we were eating some great food and getting to do it with good friends. At this point I still had a day and a half left to hunt. That afternoon Murphy's Law set in on my hunt. The game plan was that Mike was going to video out of a tripod, 100 yards from where I was setup. I would be overlooking a feeder in a rolling, mesquite and cactus filled, portion of the ranch. This is the same place where Steve had seen a buck that he describes as a

24" ten point with twelve to thirteen inch tines. He said it would score between 160-165 Boone and Crockett. We got in our tripods by 3 PM and I saw my first deer at 4:15. It was a young buck and he was coming to the corn I had spread in front of me. Then out of the blue, following the young buck out of the mesquite bottom, was a buck that took my breath away. I couldn't believe this. It was too good to be true!

He was a perfect ten point with matching kickers off of his back tines, making him a twelve point. I judged him to score in the mid-140's but at this point in the hunt, what he scored was irrelevant. All I knew was that I wanted to harvest this buck. This would be by far the largest buck I would have ever shot with a bow. By this time, the young buck was eating corn out in front of me at about twenty yards. The big buck came in, quartering towards me, and walked right on past the young buck and started eating corn. This is where Murphy's Law came in. While throwing out corn in my shooting lanes before my hunt, the bottom of the corn sack busted and



Rusty Plemons and Mike Boone revel in Mike's first trophy buck with a bow. The eight point buck, with 17 inch spread, was taken from Big Game Management in Shackelford County.

dropped about 20 pounds of corn in an area outside of my shooting lanes. We spread the pile out the best we could but there was still a lot in that spot. Well, you guessed it. That is where he was now feeding. I could see his horns through the mesquite trees. He was only 25 yards away and seemed to be teasing me. He sat and ate in that same spot for the next twenty minutes as if his nose was nailed to the ground. In that twenty minutes an additional five or six deer showed up and started eating corn in my shooting lanes anywhere from 16 to 30 yards from me. To make a long story short, eleven deer came in that afternoon and ten of them came into my shooting lanes. He was the only one

that didn't. Right before dark a group of hogs came in and ran all the deer off, including big boy. That's what it is all about though, the thrill of the hunt. By the way, Mike had the video going and was getting great footage of the big buck so anytime I want to see the deer I can pop the tape into the VCR. That buck was never seen again the whole season by anyone. Where did he come from and where did he go? I'm not sure, but I will be after him next year again, and on that you can bet.

Before we left I did manage to shoot two hogs with my bow and I even got one of the shots on video as well.

The whole trip was a huge success from beginning to end. I can't thank Steve enough for having us out to hunt. I'll end by asking, how can you go wrong with good friends and big bucks?

I would like to say something about Steve's hunting operation. He feeds his ranches year-round and takes some great deer every year. This year he harvested some very respectable deer. The widest buck was a 24"-10 point, and they harvested a buck with 15 points (both of these deer were "150's" class bucks). I harvested a great eight point during rifle season. It had 12" tines and scored 134 B&C. Steve is a firm believer in letting his bucks reach maturity before they are harvested. There are no high fences and the deer are as wild and free roaming as you get. If you would like to find out more about his hunting operation then you should check out his web-site at www.biggamemgmt.com.

TBJ

A Family Affair

By Stickman

I got married about five years ago. My wife and I dated for about a year before we were married. During that time I was between leases, so we never talked about my hunting habits or the fact that during hunting season, I would be out of town for weekends or even weeks sometimes. I had always hunted with my dad and grandfather, where it was just the guys, so I guess I just took it for granted that she would understand it was a hunting thing. Once we were married, I started to tell her about my hunting and about how excited my mother would be about getting us out of the house during hunting season and being able to get some things done around the house without anyone under foot. My wife did not share my mother's views. Being used to an all guy camp, I felt that I had to try and make her understand that it was something that guys did and that she wouldn't have any fun there. As time went by I realized that it bothered her when I would talk about hunting and didn't include her. One day a buddy of mine invited us out to a birthday party/dove hunt at his house. We bought hunting licenses and went to the party. We went out into the field and

spent the rest of the day bird hunting. My wife told me the next day that she really had a good time. It was at that time that I realized that I had the most fun hunting and it wasn't with the guys. She was very excited about being out in the field and doing something that she had never done. Upon seeing how excited she was about going bird hunting, I told her that we would buy her shotgun that was more suitable for her. Her response floored me. She told me that before she got a shotgun, she wanted a bow. I had always tried to keep her out of that part of my life for reasons I will never understand. At that time, I realized that this was a perfect opportunity for me to do the thing that I enjoy the most with the person that I love the most. The time that I get to spend with my wife and young son is less than I would like, but I am thankful that I get to spend it doing something that we all enjoy. If you ever have the chance to take your wife, husband, son or daughter hunting, or just doing something in the outdoors, do it. You may find that they enjoy the outdoors just as much as you do!

Bowsite Bash at the King!

By Michael Middleton

Recently a group of Bowsiters (www.bowsite.com) from across Texas decided to get together to meet each other face to face, and to enjoy a hunt together. After debating on a location, it was finally agreed that we would meet for a hunt at the famed King Ranch, to hunt for hogs, turkey and nilgai, outfitted by Four Arrows Outfitters. The group, which consisted of Jerry Pedersen (Doc), Keith Latimer (Elk Bowhunter), Brandon Halfmann (Bud), Casey Morris (Morris 92), Glenn Lemke (Anachoa Mt. Man) and me (G2), booked the hunt through Jerry Pedersen's shop, Paris Archery and Outfitters, located in Paris, Texas. Although most of us had never met face to face, we had already become quite good friends through the Bowsite. Glenn, Casey and I rode together to Kingsville from the Houston area, while Jerry and Keith agreed to carpool from northeast Texas and Bud ventured solo from San Angelo.

Keith and Jerry arrived on Thursday for some advance scouting. When the rest of the group arrived, we looked to Jerry for guidance, since he had hunted the King for nilgai on several occasions, and had successfully harvested nilgai on three of those hunts. Armed with his advice, and with information gleaned from fellow Bowsiter Troy Green, (an accomplished nilgai hunter in his own right) through his live hunt updates on his website, we set out to bag these elusive critters. Prior to the hunt, I had no idea what a nilgai looked like, much less how to hunt one. After conferring with the sources mentioned above, I learned that they were extremely large animals, weighing from 350 to 500 lbs, and that they were very tough and wary animals. I was told to think of a nilgai as a whitetail with a turkey on its back. . .excellent sense of smell and hearing with incredible eyesight. And unlike whitetail deer, nilgai are not curious by nature, and will bolt at the first sign of danger without looking back. The best way to hunt these animals, I was told, was to find a fresh "dung pile" (yes, I said dung pile!) and set up near it and wait for it to return to add more dung to the pile. I was a bit skeptical at first, fearing this was one of those

"snipe hunt" routines that college guys take their dates on, but after conferring with several other hunters, decided that this method was as good as any other.



Michael Middleton checks the freshness of a nilgai dung pile on the King Ranch

I sat in my ladder stand watching dung piles Friday evening, Saturday morning and Saturday evening, without so much as seeing an animal. My frustration level was about to peak as I sat back at camp mulling over the fact that out of over 40 hunters, none of us had yet bagged a nilgai. At about 11 pm on Saturday night, however, a group of hunters arrived back at camp shouting that one of the hunters had successfully harvested a nice bull. I quickly grabbed my camera and ran to the pickup, where everybody had gathered to get a glimpse of

the magnificent blue bull. The size of the bull was incredible. It looked like a horse! Just seeing this animal renewed my enthusiasm to continue hunting. I couldn't wait until the next morning.

I sat in my stand for a couple of hours on Sunday morning, and once again saw nothing. I decided that I would use the remaining couple of hours before our party was to meet prior to check out to go on the offensive. I marked my location and headed deeper into the oaks to still-hunt for a nilgai. About 300 yards into the brush, I stumbled across a pair of bulls walking about 75 yards from me. I stopped and waited to see which direction they were going. I managed to stalk within about 50 yards of one of the bulls, and I would have taken a shot at that distance had it been a clear shot. However, there was



Casey Morris (Morris92) heads afield in search of a nilgai bull.

too much brush between me and the bull. I attempted to get closer, but the bulls started walking directly away from me. I had to attempt to walk quickly to keep up, but quietly enough to keep them from hearing me. That proved to be an impossible chore, as they kept getting further away. I lost sight of them several times before I began stalking more quickly, and unfortunately one of them either heard me or saw me. Either way, they wasted no time in vacating the area! But the excitement of stalking to within close range of these two bulls, and being just short of being able to take a shot, had my heart thumping with excitement.

None of our group was able to bag a nilgai on this trip. In fact, besides the bull taken on Saturday night (which you can read about in this issue of the

Journal!), none of the other 40 hunters managed to harvest a nilgai. From our group, Jerry was able to take a nice turkey and Glenn a javelina.

Although we were not able to fill our 172 quart Igloos with delectable nilgai meat, we accomplished our goal of meeting a great group of guys and we really had a good time. If you would be interested in joining us on our next Bowsite adventure, probably in January, send me an e-mail at txbow@dialaccess.com, or keep an eye on the Texas Conference at www.bowsite.com. For more exciting nilgai hunting action, check out Troy's website at <http://www.petronet.net/troy/>.

Special thanks to Richard Stewart for contributing his exciting story to the TBJ!



Bud and Morris92 watch and learn as Doc shows them the proper form to shoot a nilgai!



Jerry Pedersen (Doc) with his King Ranch turkey

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NORMAN THE NILGAI

By Richard Stewart

Thank you for your interest in one of the most memorable hunts I've ever experienced! A friend of mine called a few years ago and ask if I would like to join him and a few friends for a bow hunt on the King Ranch. My initial response was "why do you want to spend that kind of money?" After Ricky Cox told me how inexpensive the hunt was, I said "you must be kidding, I would pay that amount just to ride on the ranch!" The hunt was for nilgai, turkey, and hogs. What a deal! Our initial adventure was awesome. However, we were not successful in our quest for the unbelievably elusive nilgai. My late father always told me "Patience Hunter Patience." Unfortunately I didn't show enough to take advantage of a sure kill that first year. I scouted for a half of a day to find what I thought was the "PERFECT" place; five trails crossing under a huge mesquite tree with several dung piles within easy bow range. I set up my tree stand and sat down only to see that a bush was

blocking what I thought was my best shooting lane. I decided to raise my stand a few feet higher. Just as I moved my stand 2 feet higher a bull walked directly under my tree. BIG MISTAKE. (for me). This prelude sets up for all the events that that would happen on my next hunt! (By the way, I had absolutely no shot at the bull.) PATIENCE!

This last April, a group of friends and I visited "FOUR ARROWS" to try again for a nilgai. Probably the best thing that Terry Lowrey (MY PARTNER IN CRIME) and I did was to take extra day to scout for a place to hunt. Unfortunately, inconsiderate hunters had caused the area that I wanted to hunt to be off limits!

Terry and I found an area that looked promising on Thursday afternoon. Friday morning gave Terry a chance to see a lot of turkey, deer and other wildlife, but no nilgai. I saw zip at a spot that showed a lot of signs of hog activity and nilgai. Being the impatient hunter, I decided to scout for a better location to place my tree stand. After walking close to a mile from the dirt road, I thought to myself that if I could find a fresh dung pile, that I would set up and not look anywhere else. I had not

walked more than 50 more yards after thinking that when I came across what must have happened only seconds before! I went straight back to the truck to get my equipment and went back to my spot to set up . Friday afternoon I didn't even see a sparrow!! One of the hunters that I had met at the camp, who had killed 3 nilgais over several previous hunts, gave me his advice which sounded a lot like my father. He said if you find a good spot "sit on it and don't leave it". Saturday morning was just about like Friday, except that around 9:30, just as I decided to put a hook in the tree next to me so that I would have a better place to hang my bow, a small [30lbs.] javelina came down the trail to my left at about 10 yards and hauled ---, due to my poor timing. Little did I know that this was foreshadowing for the afternoon hunt. I climbed into my tree stand around 4:00 p.m. I glanced at my watch at 7:00. Needing to relieve myself, I grabbed my plastic bottle from my back pack so I could take care of business. With both hands full, and at the most inopportune moment, "NORMAN"[the name that my wife gave to him] came down a trail behind me,

while my bow hanging on my newly installed hook! These "CRITTERS" are by far the spookiest animal that I have ever hunted. I tried to gather some sense of composure, and at the same time, grab my bow and set down all my other paraphernalia without making a sound. The bull was about 40 yards behind my left shoulder during this exercise. I was hunting in a draw, and the wind was swirling and he spooked; but to my good fortune he ran back toward me on his most comfortable trail. As he trotted past a bush I drew back for a shot. He heard the draw and started to bolt as I shot. The shot was a little higher than I would have wanted, but since I was 17 feet up in the tree, the arrow did it's job. At impact, I saw blood, and after waiting the usual amount of time, I went to check for a blood trail. Because of the size of these animals and the way that he ran after I arrowed him, tracking was not a major problem. I only tracked for maybe 50 yards and did not want to press him. My friend Terry was hunting on trail that we scouted earlier. I didn't



Terry Lowrey congratulates Richard Stewart, right, on a fine nilgai bull.

want to mess up his hunt but we had made a deal on the way from our bay houses that if one of us was fortunate enough to harvest one of these beast that we would split the bounty, and since darkness was creeping in I went for his help. [LIKE ANY GOOD FRIEND, HE WAS THERE!!] We went back to my stand and started to follow my markers. Like I said, he was not hard to track due to the heavy hoof marks and blood trail. We followed the trail for 100+ yards and then, at a fork in the trail, the blood became spotty, and with flashlights the trail became hard to follow. We did the normal backtrack and circles and we decided that Terry would go up the right trail and

I would go to the left. About that time Terry yelled that he had found blood. Then, as he turned around, he yelled again. As I was running toward him Terry yelled "HERE HE IS". I don't know which one of us was the most excited. They are truly an awesome animal and, no matter whether you hunt with a gun, bow, or a cannon, they will give you the challenge of your life. As anyone who hunts knows, killing is the easiest part of the hunt; the real work starts thereafter.



Richard Stewart with his #4 SCI nilgai, "Norman."

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Four Arrows has a three-wheeler and trailer available to haul your kill back to camp. Driving back to camp, we ran across the rest of our hunting party. My other "good friend" in this group, Ricky Cox, who thinks he is a "BENFORD 5000", said "Hell, I can drag that thing out by myself!" Two hours and a half a mile later, with assorted scratches bumps and stickers, and with 8 men; "NORMAN" was loaded in the truck. We got back to camp a little after 11:00 PM. It was one heck of a hunting trip and without my seven friends it would not have been so special!!!

Currently "NORMAN" will rank #4 with Safari Club International. Pope and Young does not measure nilgai. Anyone who enjoys being in "GOD'S" country should try to spend some time in South Texas.

THANK GUYS!



Richard prepares to hoist this awesomely large animal. The bull was taken on the King Ranch, outfitted by Four Arrows Outfitters.

Richard's Equipment List

BOW: PSE Fire Flite Elite ["BETSY"]

ARROW : Easton GameGetter 2216 II

BROADHEAD: 125 gr. Thunderhead

RELEASE: TM Hunter Fletch Hunter

ARROW REST: TM Hunter

SIGHT: Adjustable cross hair

STAND: Alumi Lite tree stand

Wild Game Pizza Pie

2 Cans Crescent Rolls
 1 lb. Ground Venison
 1 lb. Wild Pork Pan Sausage
 (may substitute venison)

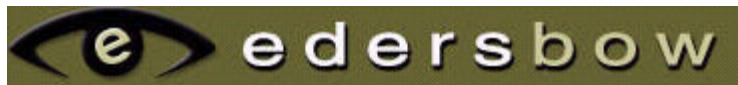
1 4 oz Can Mushrooms, drained
 1 15 oz Can Whole Kernal Corn
 1 12 oz Can Tomato Paste
 8 oz Shredded Mozzarella
 Cheese

8 oz Shredded Mild Cheddar
 Cheese

Brown ground venison and sausage in skillet. Stir in tomato paste, corn and mushrooms. Put half of each cheese in skillet, save other half for topping. Heat until cheese fully melted.

Line bottom of large casserole dish with crescent rolls. Pour filling onto the crescent roll lining. Top with remaining cheese and cook in oven at 375° for 13-15 minutes. Serve with crescent rolls and butter.

TBJ



It Still Beats Working!

By Roy Boyd

October 3rd was the opening day of the 1998 archery season in Texas, at least for most of the bow hunters in the state. For me it was not. I found myself in a fire department van with six other cops. We were headed to Anniston, Alabama for specialized SWAT training. There would be no hunting for me on that opening day. Oh, the sacrifices I make for my chosen occupation.

Fortunately I had one of Capstick's books to kill time on the thirteen hour trip. The sergeant knew me rather well and told me I was not allowed to bring my bow along. It did not

matter. Alabama's archery season did not begin until the fifteenth of October. We would return on the tenth.

After a long week in beautiful Alabama I was home at last. On Wednesday, the thirteenth, I got off work at 4:30 p.m. I rushed home and gathered my bow, hunting clothes, and my doe deer decoy. I changed clothes as quickly as possible and left for my deer lease.

When I arrived, I realized I had left my sitting bucket at home. There was no time to return for it, so I would have to make do. I walked to where my ground blind was located and placed my deer decoy in what I believed was an excellent spot. I had been itching to try out that decoy for nine months now. I could just see the deer running into bow range to check out the doe they had not seen before. I imagined this scenario numerous times while scouting out my hunting locations. This would be the test. At least I hoped it would.

I was squatting down in my ground blind shortly after five. With no bucket to sit on, I soon found myself sitting on my feet to get high enough to see over the burlap. This was not the most comfortable position, and I found my left foot going to sleep rather

quickly. I alternated squatting and sitting on my feet in order to keep my foot from going to sleep.

Around six o'clock I was squatting behind the burlap when I noticed movement on the trail. The trail that lead to my blind, and my deer decoy. Through the burlap I could see the deer making its way towards me. I could not tell if the deer was a doe or a buck. It did not matter. This was archery season, and I would take either one.

Before the deer got to one of my shooting lanes it stopped and bolted in the other direction. I could not believe what I had just witnessed. The deer panicked and ran away when it saw my decoy. How could this be? That deer was supposed to come to the decoy, look towards it, and give me the opportunity to make the perfect shot that I had been practicing all yearlong.

I did not make the shot that day. Oh, well. That's hunting. It was better than working late or anything else I would have been doing if I were not out hunting that day.

TBJ

Win a TBJ Cap!

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Bowhunting & Blessings

By Dennis Mulder

As I made my way through the darkness towards my stand, the night air was still and cool against my face. The night sounds were alive, and made my senses turn towards any unknown sounds, as I stumbled my way through the trail leading to my quad-pod stand, perched in the middle of a clump of cedar trees. By the time I reached my destination, I could see the reddish hue of the morning sun on the horizon.

Settling into my stand and doing all the necessary tasks of a bowhunter. . . pulling my headnet down over my shining face, choosing the arrow that I hoped would do me well this morning, putting on my shooting glove and knocking my arrow. . . all this and trying to be as quiet as possible, even though I sounded like the preverbal bull in the china store! But once I was all settled in and ready, it was now time for the waiting game.

It still amazes me, after all these years of bowhunting, how many stumps and

rocks, shadows and bushes all seem to look like deer before first light. Hell, I swear that I have even seen them move as I was staring at them. I know the more I stare the more they look like they're alive and moving! It drives me nuts!

Then as first light began to spread over the woods, all my creatures began that transformation from living creatures to the rocks and stumps, shadows and bushes I could now see! I guess that's the magic of the wilderness! Well, no sooner had the creatures of the night disappeared than the morning sound came alive!

I bet each and everyone of you have heard that deer walking towards your location at first light, then in those agonizing moments found out it was a little red bird turning leaves looking for it's breakfast! Are they really that noisy or do our senses just get that much sharper in Gods great outdoors? In either case they have caused my heart rate to increase many times!

Then it happened I was sitting there listening to the sounds of the red bird behind me and I looked up, and out of no where a nice fat mature doe! Where the heck did she come from and how did she get there with out me seeing or

hearing her get to that location!?

Sometimes I think the good Lord just pops them up out of the ground for us, because I know that I would have seen or heard her approaching before she got to that spot.

Anyway, no matter how or when she got there, it was now the moment of truth. All the practicing, all the styrofoam targets I've killed, it was now time to make it all count. The bottom of the ninth, two outs and the score is tied. It was all up to me now. Would I choke, or do what I've been practicing all summer long?

As she stepped forward and looked the other way, I raised my Palmer recurve and picked that spot behind her shoulder. I slowly drew back, and when it was all right, the arrow was there in a flash! The arrow looked true to the mark and I felt she would be down in seconds. As the dust cleared and I sat back to gather my composer. Everything always seems to happen so fast at the moment of truth. I always replay the scene over in my mind to try and bust my confidence. The Arrow looked good. I started thinking. Did she duck? Was I too far back or too

high? All these things tempted me to check for signs early! Then, I told myself, "I know it was there and she is down!" After my wait, I eased down from my stand and looked for signs where she was standing at the time of my shot. Nothing there! I slowly walked towards the direction she exited in such a hurry! Then I see it. It's what we all like to see, the bright pink foamy blood of a good lung hit! The trail was easy to follow, down the trail and behind the second cedar tree. There she lay, not forty yards from where she was shot.

This is a special time for most of us, the joy of our accomplishment and our thanks to the good Lord above for blessing us with this fine trophy. It's really hard to put into words the feeling I get at this moment, but I know most of you, as bowhunters understand my feelings. That's why we give thanks to God above for our blessing.

The sport of bowhunting is much more than the harvesting of animals. I guess that's why we love this sport so much!

MAY YOUR ARROWS
FLY TRUE!

Bowhunting on a Budget

By Michael Middleton

Has bowhunting become too expensive for the average archer? With top-of-the-line bows costing \$600 or more and private leases costing thousands, some people fear that they are being priced right out of the market when it comes to bowhunting in Texas. There are enough new gadgets and toys on the market that even the folks with the deep pockets can make a significant dent in their bank accounts! I don't consider myself poor, by any means, but I do have other priorities that I (read: my lovely bride!) feel are much more important than spending a considerable part of my income on hunting! With a new house and a new baby under construction, I obviously have to be careful on resources I allocate toward my favorite hobby. So, is it possible to outfit yourself with quality equipment for success, at a price that won't leave you sleeping at night in your Lucky's tent blind? You bet it is! And I'm going to tell you how!

Buyers Market

You'd be surprised at the number of "archery nuts" that purchase a brand new bow every year! With the increased popularity of 3D tournaments and target archery, and with new technology making bows faster and faster, some shooters feel like they have to stay ahead of the Jones' and always have the latest and greatest model. Combine that with the fact that some archery manufacturers, such as Jennings, are selling top-end model bows for much less than in the past, and you have a buyers market for top-quality, new and slightly used bows.

Start With Your Local Pro Shop

I would encourage you to visit your local archery pro shop for equipment selections, particularly if you are new to bowhunting. A bow that is not properly fitted and tuned can lead to problems in accuracy and technique, and can be discouraging enough to make some people give up completely. Even if you have to spend a few extra dollars to get properly set



up, it will be well worth it in the long run.

Purchasing from a pro-shop doesn't necessarily mean that you are going to pay more than if you purchased from a discount store or through mail order. Keep an eye out for new-on-the-shelf bows that are a previous year's model. For example, in 1997 I purchased two "new" 1994 Hoyt Super Star bows with Fast Flight limbs, Hoyt's top-of-the-line bow in that year, for \$200. The bows, which originally retailed for \$585, had never been fired. The archery shop simply wanted to liquidate their inventory and sold them for pennies on the dollar.

Recently used bows purchased from a seller that is upgrading to a new model are also a good bet, and often come completely "loaded" with accessories such as a rest, sight, quiver, stabilizer and perhaps even arrows. Most pro shops have a bulletin board where customers can list any items or hunts they are selling. Often times, pro shop owners will allow their customers to display their used bows on their rack through consignment.

Discount Stores

Although some people (mostly pro-shop owners) frown on purchasing a bow from a discount store, such as Wal Mart or Academy, the fact remains that many times you can find decent quality bows at a good price. Bows sold at discount stores are generally not considered "top of the line" bows, but are often good starter bows for beginners. The paradox is that, as mentioned above, a beginner requires more service and attention in setting up a new bow and is not likely to get much assistance at a discount store. If you do purchase a bow from a discount store, and later require service or help in setting up your bow, you should be willing to pay a pro shop a little extra for their time.

I, personally, take advantage of the discount stores for their low prices on ancillary products. In most cases, discount stores only carry archery equipment seasonally. They will usually liquidate their inventory after the season is over by offering steep discounts, often in excess of 50%, on their seasonal items. You may recall from an article in a previous issue ("Don't Discount the Marts," January 1999) that I wrote of the many

bargains that can be found at the season's end. As examples, I recently purchased a few Kenco "Smart Timer" feeders for \$30 each, a Strong Built climbing stand for \$50, and a box of Thunderhead broadheads for \$14.

Mail Order

Ordering a bow from a mail order catalog, such as Cabela's, Bowhunter's Discount Warehouse, or Papa D's, has the same advantages (lower end bows at decent prices) as purchasing from a discount store, although generally they will have a larger selection from which to choose. However, it also has similar disadvantages, namely lack of assistance in fitting and tuning your bow.

Bow accessories, such as sights, rests, and arrows, as well as clothes, stands and feeders are generally less expensive when purchased through mail order than through a pro shop, and, in most cases, offer a larger selection than discount stores. This is a nice advantage for an experienced archer that knows exactly what he wants or someone looking to replace an existing part.



For example, if you have the equipment to build your own arrows, it is generally less expensive to purchase the shafts, fletchings and inserts through mail order than it is to buy finished arrows.

Buy On-Line

Many archers are able to take advantage of the internet by shopping for equipment and hunting leases on the world wide web. Even pro shops are taking advantage of the web by selling their products over the internet.

There are an abundance of bowhunting information pages, such as The Bowsite (www.bowsite.com), Bowhunting.net (www.bowhunting.net), and Edersbow (www.edersbow.com), that have classified pages to allow browsers to post listings for various, used archery equipment, ranging from bows to hunting vehicles to leases.

And finally, there are several auction sites that have hunting/archery listings on which you can bid. Sites such as eBay.com and

Cityauction.com allow members to sell items, auction style, to other members that want to bid on these items. You can often find great bargains on just about anything you want to buy, even on hard to find items. A friend of mine recently purchased a Swivel Limb Treestand for \$107.50, plus shipping. That's a great deal when you consider that the company is no longer producing the treestand, and when they were it normally retailed for over \$199!

Once again, even archery pro shops are taking advantage of these auction sites. I recently purchased a brand new Hoyt Striker bow for \$301, plus shipping, directly from an archery pro shop in the northwest that was looking to liquidate last year's model via eBay. The bow retailed in 1998 for \$575! I have also purchased arrows, (I bought 11 ACC Hyperspeeds that retail for \$160 for \$51!), camouflage clothing (Predator Spring Green cotton bibs for \$14), and a set of Limb Savers for \$19. The drawback to purchasing through auctions is that it truly is a hit-and-miss proposition. Someone has to be selling something you're looking for before you can bid on it. In addition, as with purchasing equipment through mail order or discount stores,

there is nobody to help you with tuning or equipment recommendations.

Build Not Buy

While only the most advanced, traditional archers build their own bows and arrows, even a novice can build basic hunting equipment, such as ground blinds, ladder stands, practice targets, tuning racks, feeders and even clothes from scrap lumber or other inexpensive materials. *NOTE: I do not recommend constructing your own treestand, as it is cheaper to buy a good one when you consider the cost of constructing your own, added to the cost of the hospital (or funeral) bills that could result from your faulty construction!* A little duct tape and bailing wire can go a long way toward keeping the costs of outfitting yourself for a hunt to a minimum!

The Actual Hunt!

Now this is where saving money can get a little tricky! First of all, go ahead and count a hunting license and archery stamp as a fixed cost. Short of hunting without them,

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which I would not encourage and will probably cost you more in the long run, you have no other option but to spend the \$35 or so on these two items each year. Secondly, the number of permanent leases in the state seems to be shrinking every year, and accordingly, the cost is increasing. Expect to pay a minimum of \$350 for a lease anywhere in Texas, and much more than that for quality leases.

There are three alternatives to a permanent lease. The first option is to hunt by the day at a day lease or outfitted hunt. There are many day hunts available to archers that range from \$75 to several hundred dollars per day, and may include guides, lodging and meals.

Another option is to hunt public lands in Texas. Contrary to most people's thinking, there is a considerable amount of public hunting lands in Texas. Check with Texas Parks and Wildlife for information on availability of public hunting in your area. I will admit, though, that I'm a bit hesitant to hunt public areas once our gun-toting brethren enter the deer woods. While I

certainly don't want to stereotype any group of hunters, I've heard too many stories of encounters with the "shoot first, find out what you got later" crowd while hunting public property.

Finally, there are still a few individual landowners that will let you hunt for free on their properties in exchange for a little manual labor, such as fence mending or barn raising. A trip to the county appraisal district can allow you to obtain the name of the owner of a piece of property that you may have been eyeing. A simple letter to the landowner may gain you permission to hunt the property. Just remember that the landowner does not owe you the right to hunt on the property. Be respectful even if you are not granted access. In the event that you are granted access, be sure to follow up on any commitments you made, and be sure to find out anybody else that might have permission to hunt the property, as well as the landowner's permission to hang stands, feeders or anything else that might alter the property.

Keep it Simple

Perhaps the biggest trap bowhunters fall into is believing all the hype in the magazines about all the new gadgets that will make you a better bowhunter. Remember that the name of the game is still to project an arrow from Point A (your bow) through Point B (your target). Stick to the basics and you'll find that you can achieve the same level of success as someone with all the bells and whistles.

The bottom line is that, like any other hobby, bowhunting will cost some money to get started. However, with a little research, ingenuity, and perhaps a little frugality, you can successfully bowhunt on a budget. On the other hand, an I.C.E. Blind might not be all that bad to sleep in!

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My First Turkey

By Al Exum

This was the first year for me to go Turkey hunting and I had two hunts set up in two parts of the state, which turned into three parts of the state. My first hunt was in Bowie, the first weekend of the season in that county. There were gobblers everywhere but they would not come to the calls. My friend I was hunting with was doing the calling. He had several years practice...I have no years practice. So my first outing did not produce a Gobbler but I still had fun just being there.

My second hunt was in Floresville. My hunting partner (self proclaimed professional Turkey caller) and I showed up on his turkey lease before sunrise. We set up next to a field where he said "when there ain't any Turkeys anywhere else in Texas, they are in this field." Well I guess they were in another part of Texas that morning because they weren't there. My friend got on his phone and started calling to find where they were still talking and he found a place in Austin called Austin Safari, so we went there that night and stayed in one of their bunk houses. We got up at 4:30 the next morning and went to the stand and waited till just before daylight and started

calling. The wind was blowing real hard but we heard Toms gobbling. That was a plus, so we took off to get as close as we could and started calling, but to no avail. They just weren't going to come to the calls, so we went to another area to try on another bird we heard in the distance. He was interested until two jakes showed up at a dead run and ran past him and he followed. We were kind of frustrated at this point, so we went back to the truck and he dropped me off at another stand where there was a feeder, hoping one would come in to feed. I didn't use the tripod stand that was 10 yards from the feeder because it was too open. I would have been picked off in a second. I have a portable ground blind that I set up 20 yards from the feeder, up against the brush. I sat there for only 20 minutes and heard a Tom gobble about 50 - 70 yards off straight in front of me, so I got ready. I couldn't call because I am not a caller and my friend (the self proclaimed professional turkey caller) was back at the bunk house trying to figure out what to do next, so I just sat there and waited. He gobbled again about 30 yards away, just on the other side of some brush...it seems that he was trolling for hens and decided to drop by for a bite to eat. He finally showed up after a few minutes on one side of the brush, and then he went back in. It seemed like he was checking the tripod stand out. He did a full cautious 180 around that tripod before he was satisfied there was nothing in that stand. He never gave me in my ground blind a

second look. Well, he finally came out and I came to full draw as he stopped right behind one of the feeder legs to feed on some corn. Well there I was at FULL draw, adrenaline pumping, shaking like a leaf and he sat there eating corn! It seemed like eternity before took a few steps forward. He finally did and I pinned up and let her fly. When it hit him, it knocked him down but the arrow did not pass completely through. I was a little shocked and amazed until he started to flop his good left wing, and I quickly departed my blind to finished the harvesting procedure (to put it nicely.)

This was my first turkey ever taken by any means. And it was as exciting as I had hoped it would be. I am now hooked on hunting turkeys with a bow, just like with deer and pigs.

My bow setup is a Mathews conquest light set at 54 lbs XX78 2213 arrows and a Steel Force 100 grain Sabertooth Series Broadhead.

Good huntin!!

TBJ

Product Review: ***HERCULIFT***

By David Harkins

A couple years ago, a guy on my deer lease brought down a contraption that he had made for lifting deer. Bill is an older gentleman and I guess he got tired of struggling to get his deer into his pickup. It was a one-piece device that fit into his receiver hitch. It was basically a miniature crane with a manual winch drawing a nylon rope over a pulley. To the end of the rope, he'd attach a gambrel. With his device, he could single-handedly lift a deer and haul it around the lease, dangling from the device attached to the back of his pickup.

I have to hand it to old Bill, it was pretty effective. But it definitely had its shortcomings. For one thing, it didn't swivel, so you couldn't put the deer in the back of the pickup. Also, whenever he was working on the deer, the gambrel spun around all over the place. So he had to have me or someone else hold the deer steady from the back side. Then, when you cut that first hind-quarter away from the

deer's body, the gambrel would tilt to one side. So you had to make sure you were holding on tight to the deer, or it would be dropped to the ground. And since the device was all one piece, it was difficult for one person to put it on the truck initially.

One day, back at the office, I mentioned the device to my dad, Raymond. I told him that it would work a whole lot better if that gambrel could be locked into place so that it couldn't tilt or spin. I also mentioned how nice it would be if you could swing the boom around and drop the deer into the bed of the truck. I was basically just thinking out loud. I didn't have any idea then how far he'd take that conversation!



Keith Latimer field tested the Herculift on a recent hog hunt.

Well, Dad didn't let that idea get away. He started thinking about how he could improve on that device. He came up with an idea of how the device could be broken down into smaller parts for ease of installation and storage. And he started brainstorming with a life-long friend of his, Danny Harrison. Danny had some manufacturing experience already. While I was thinking strictly hunting, they were realizing how useful such a device would be in the workplace. The next thing I knew, they had a crude prototype built and were discussing patents and marketing!

Needless to say, I have a great interest in this device, so I became their unofficial "hunting consultant" and helped make sure that the end result would have all the features that hunters would appreciate. Through trial and error, and with the creation of a lot of scrap metal, the first true working model of HERCULIFT was ready for testing. Being that it was not deer season, I went to the Bowsite Texas Conference and solicited the help of hog hunters. It is through that thread that I met our first "field tester," Keith Latimer. With the

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help of his friend, John, Keith tested the HERCULIFT on four wild hogs in early 1999. The test was a huge success! Even so, Keith made some suggestions that further improved on the effectiveness of the gambrel. Thanks again, Keith!

In March of 1999, Danny and Dad too the HERCULIFT to a trade show sponsored by the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America (PDCA) in Las Vegas. Through contacts made at that show, they sold about a dozen HERCULIFTS. Interestingly, although the trade show was attended primarily by painting contractors, almost everyone who purchased a HERCULIFT also bought the optional gambrel! Mixing business with pleasure?! Why not?!

WHAT IS THIS THING ANYWAY?

HERCULIFT is a new product, first available for sale in March, 1999. HERCULIFT is a load handling product that can be compactly stored in a vehicle, then easily assembled and mounted into a two-inch receiver

hitch in a matter of seconds. HERCULIFT makes it easy for one person to lift and load pressure washers, spray equipment, drums – even a whitetail buck! Optional accessories include an innovative gambrel that not only lifts big game animals, but also holds them steady for field dressing, skinning and quartering. This gambrel locks into place and will not spin or tilt when locked! HERCULIFT is available in two models. The HLH-1 has a certified rated load of 375 pounds. The HLH-2 has a certified rated load of 500 pounds and has an extendible boom. HERCULIFT features sturdy steel construction, a heavy duty winch and steel cable. HERCULIFT can be operated with your pickup tailgate up or down. And the winch can be installed in two different locations for operating from the ground, or from the bed of the pickup.

Want to know more? Email your mailing address to harkins@airmail.net for a full color brochure and order form.



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