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TEXAS BOWHUNTERS' JOURNAL

Passing Along the Tradition!

By Michael Middleton

It never fails as I start receiving new material from you, the readers, that a common theme just kind of develops without actually even trying. Never before has that been more evident than this month, as there are multiple articles that have been submitted that share a common basis; hunting with your children!

I'm encouraged about the future direction of our sport based on the articles and pictures that I received both for the newsletter and the website, TexasBowhunter.com. It certainly makes me feel proud to be a bowhunter! I hope it provides the same pride for you, whether you have children or not.

Thank you to you parents that are getting your children involved in

hunting and the outdoors, and teaching them the values that will guide them in their lives as they grow into adults. And to those of you that have served your time, I applaud your efforts as well.

If you've not yet had a chance to stop by the website, www.texasbowhunter.com, I encourage you to do so. Our Live Hunt features have been a tremendous success, as we report from the field with daily updates on our hunting opportunities, as they progress. You can also download previous issues of Texas Bowhunters' Journal from the site, plus I'm working on converting all of the articles from every issue into html format so you can view them online, by month or by author. While you're there, be sure to sign the Guestbook!

As usual, I really appreciate all of your submissions, and with the success of the website, the content and quality of the articles has increased. I think you'll enjoy this month's journal. I'd love to hear your comments!

Tracking 101

by Bill Bahr

The spike buck was standing broadside at 15 yards...relaxed, with head down and front leg forward, and I was at full draw getting ready to take the perfect shot on this chilly December evening. How many times over the previous five years of unsuccessful bow hunting had I dreamed of this moment?

“Forget about all that”.....I told myself as I squeezed the release and watched my arrow fly straight and true from the ancient PSE Vulcan compound bow. The buck leaped high and twisted away from my position, disappearing into the dark cedars as if he'd not even been scratched. “Douglas”, I asked my 10-year-old son, “did you see the arrow?” “He's not going very far Dad” came the reply, “you hit him right behind his front leg.” Doug confirmed what I had already seen, and I thought our tracking job would be short and easyWe had been hunting for three days on a small ranch, 20 miles northwest of Utopia, Texas. This was

Doug's first hunt, and his uncle Mark and I were ready to teach him all he needed to know about bow hunting. We saw lots of deer the first two days but none of us had been able to connect. It was the ideal way for a father to introduce his son to bow hunting and so far Doug had done a great job of sitting still for more than one hour at a time.....the buck I shot had never even sensed our presence. But that is only part of the story.

On our first day Doug and I scouted the available stand areas, selecting an existing 10-foot stand as our initial hunting location. You can imagine our surprise when less than thirty minutes later four does walked single file towards the feeder, not more than 20 yards away. Two statues couldn't have been quieter, but unfortunately we were too low and silhouetted against the evening sky. The Alpha doe looked up and spotted us, walking right up to the base of the platform, never once looking away. Several snorts later we watched as their tails flagged “goodbye suckers” as they ran off into the brush.

The next morning we hung our lock-ons as high as we could, next to each other, in a much thicker stand of white oaks overlooking the same feeder. We practiced shooting from the lock-ons, and knew that we had several good shooting lanes within our 20-yard capabilities.



Dual lock-ons, a good way for youth and adult hunters to team up.

That evening the same four does came back to the feeder, this time looking for us on the old platform, but not seeing us in our new higher location. We watched as they nervously approached, wanting to come in, but knowing something wasn't right. They were within 25 yards, just over our 20-yard self-imposed limit, and we watched in frustration as they drifted off into the evening darkness.

The third morning was cold and still.....perfect conditions for what had to be our lucky day. As I sat there, proud of my son for not complaining or moving a muscle in the sub-freezing weather, we heard the unmistakable gobbles and yelps of a flock of turkeys. I froze, realizing they were headed our way, and almost forgot to breathe as they walked right under our stands. "Can I shoot a turkey?" Doug asked in a loud whisper. The answer came with an explosion of turkeys flying in every direction, like a covey of huge quail. After regaining my breath and waiting for my pulse to go back under 200, we quietly discussed the topic of what not to do when surrounded by turkeys.

Later that morning we watched as several does and a 3-year-old spike made their morning visit to the feeder. They were shy and never came past the 20-yard limit except for one yearling doe that tempted us by walking directly below our position. I signaled Doug to take the shot but he was shaking like a leaf and nodded for me to go ahead. I aimed at the base of the neck and took the shot....straight down from my position....and missed the entire deer by about two inches. The doe sniffed at the arrow quivering in the dirt underneath her outstretched neck, and wondered what-in-the-heck kind of acorns the

oaks were dropping this year. She moved off as I waited for my frazzled nerves and Doug's snickering to settle down.

Later that afternoon a button spike and three does made their way toward us. I looked at Doug to see if he wanted the shot, but his eyes told me "no." Although I'll never forget that draw, or the way the arrow looked as it disappeared into the chest of my first buck, I'd like to forget what happened next.....

As we started to observe the usual 30-minute waiting period I asked Doug again what he had seen. The buck had been standing still, and hadn't jumped the arrow. We had seen the arrow hit and pass through, and we had heard him thrashing in the brush, just out of sight. I foolishly told Doug we could get down from our stands.... that was our first mistake.



Be sure to practice from a new tree-stand location .

Fifteen yards away, we picked up the wet arrow and confidently looked for the big splash of red that was sure to point directly to our fallen trophy. The stomach material on the arrow and no blood trail whatsoever was our first hint that this evening's work had just begun.

The buck ran about 40 yards into the cedars and lay down. At our hasty approach from the stand....the second mistake..... he had gotten up and quietly run

off. Only a few drops of blood and the matted grass told us that he had ever been there. Faced with fast approaching nightfall and only two small flashlights, the difficulty of our position now loomed as dark as the sky above us.

We walked ahead to follow one of the many game trails, guessing where a wounded buck would go. The trail lead out of the cedars and into a field of waist high grass. "I found blood" Doug shouted as he almost disappeared under the sea of grass. I caught up with him and knelt to examine the red color, which turned out to be the red base of the grass stems. Doug continued to search the grass as I circled back to the cedars where we had last seen blood.

Pitch dark and freezing cold ,the conditions seemed impossible as Mark joined in our search. A year earlier Mark and I had been in a similar situation, looking for a doe he'd arrowed too far back. Although we literally crawled on our hands and knees for hours, following the scanty drops of blood through some of the thickest and steepest terrain Texas has to offer,

we came up empty handed. It was difficult now, not to be reminded how similar to mine Mark's arrow had looked that day.

We began to work in ever widening circles, expanding our search until someone found another drop of blood. Over and over we covered the same ground, and were constantly fooled by a variety of red looking spots, stains, and shadows.

Our progress was very, very slow finding no more than a drop or two of blood every 30 or 40 yards. Luckily, Mark had brought along some fluorescent orange surveyors tape, allowing us to easily mark and return to the blood spots we found. A total of three hours later, it was old-fashioned teamwork that finally paid off.

We found the buck about 600 yards from our stands, arrowed cleanly though part of one lung and the esophagus, thus accounting for the stomach-like material we initially found. No one can explain why the pass-through shot did not leave a larger blood trail, but it didn't. Thanks to persistence and the

diligent help of two good hunting companions, we finally had something to show for three days of hunting.

I have been hunting for a good part of my life, and have tracked my fair share of wounded animals with almost 100% success, but this hunt reinforced, once again, the basics of tracking:

Numero uno, one should never, ever start after a wounded animal that has left the scene without waiting at least 20-30 minutes. Most unmolested animals will lie down and quickly bleed to death with any kind of decent shot placement. No matter if a gun or bow is used, the vitality and strength of these creatures is amazing, and if pushed they can run extremely long distances. Some hunters have the patience to wait even longer, and in my humble opinion longer is better.



Douglas Bahr and Bill Bahr with their first bowhunting buck.

Second, make sure you spend that waiting time listening

carefully. A mortally wounded animal that is down will often make plenty of noise that can give a location fix to the those patient enough to listen. In our case the spike's brief thrashing was the only reason we knew where to look, because there was no blood trail from where he was first hit.

Third, never take your eyes off of the spot the animal occupied when first hit, until you are absolutely sure you can find that spot. If possible, make mental notes of the angle of the shot, nearby reference objects, etc. as you carefully walk straight there. You should consider that location as important to your search as a forensic investigator considers a crime scene to his. Many critical clues such as tufts of hair, color and type of blood, etc. may tell exactly what you need to know. Blindly racing ahead, based on where you assume your trophy will be, is a sure-fire recipe for frustration. Take your time and proceed carefully, marking your last positive sighting with something readily visible so that you can easily return and start over if necessary.

Last but certainly not least, take someone with you. It is amazing what another (or a younger) pair of eyes can see. And dragging even a lightweight "hill county" deer can be difficult over rugged terrain.

For sure it was a crash course; however, in one long evening Douglas passed Tracking 101 with flying colors, and Mark and I ended up with more graduate hours than we signed up for.

DEER BALLS!!

Glenn Lemke

This is a great recipe to use at camp, a backyard cookout, or for that formal meal with your in-laws! It is best prepared the day before and allowed to fully marinate. You can use backstrap or meat cut from the hams. Always try to use meat that has been tenderized. You will need the following:

Approximately ½ lb. Venison per person
Jalapeno Peppers (1/2lb.)
Red or Yellow Bell Pepper (2)
Purple Onion (1 large)
Peppered Bacon (approximately 2lbs.)
Toothpicks
Seasonings of your choice

Make a meat marinade using the following:

1 cup of Olive oil
1 cup of Worcester sauce
1 cup of Italian dressing
3 tablespoons of zesty mustard
Tabasco sauce (You be the judge!)
1 lime

Mix all ingredients together and put into your frig for several hours. Save the lime for the meat. Prepare your other ingredients. Start with you venison and cut into thin strips (1/8" thick and 6-8" long, the width will depend on the cut of meat, but usually 1" or less. Season all meat, cover with limejuice and set aside. Cut your peppers, and onions into strips about 2" long.

Take a strip of meat, place the pepper and onion strips on it and proceed to wrap it into a roll. Wrap a strip of bacon around the venison, securing everything in place with toothpicks. Next place the completed balls into a Tupperware or other plastic container. Take the marinade and pour an adequate amount over the balls. Secure a lid on your container so that it can be rotated several times while in the frig. Marinade for at least ½ day. All night is better.

Cook over hot mesquite coals and serve with a good wine or a cold Shiner Bock!

Situational Lethality

By Kevin Johnson

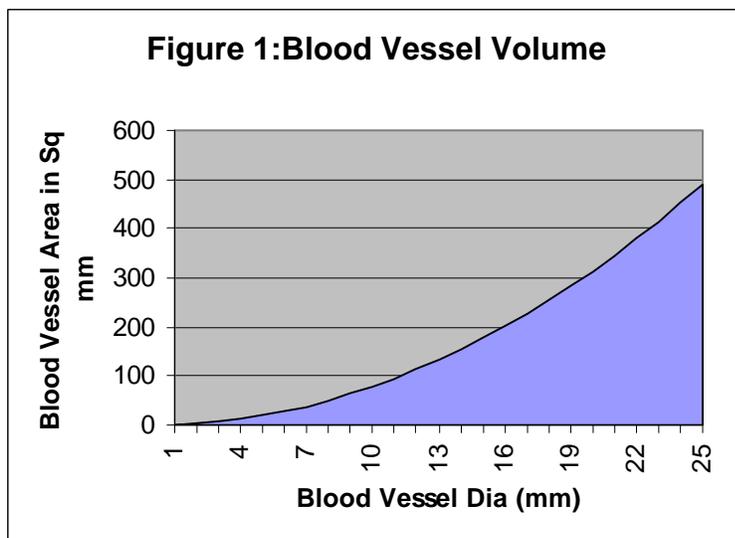
“You know Joe I just made the worst shot of my life, my arrow hit a twig and hit the deer in the ham. Funny thing is there was blood everywhere and the deer went down inside 30yds”. “Sam I don’t understand it, I hit the deer right in the lungs and she just ran off, no blood and after trailing for 300yds I just lost the trail”. These are 2 fictional stories but most of us have heard a version of them from time to time. Both boil down to what I call situational lethality. Situational lethality is composed of 2 major components, Shot Lethality and Shot Probability.

Shot Lethality

As bowhunters it is necessary for us to know what shot lethality is. Broadheads kill by hemorrhage, plain and simple. This means that it is the archer’s job to cut as many vessels as possible, the larger the better. Figure 1 shows how that the cross-sectional area of a blood vessel increases exponentially as the diameter of the vessel increases. This effects lethality in two ways. One is that the larger the cross-sectional area the more blood the vessel is capable of transporting. This translates into better bleeding if it is cut. The second way that this impacts lethality is that clotting works better on smaller vessels. As the

size of the vessel increases the body’s clotting mechanisms become less effective. Simply stated this means that it is better to cut one 10mm blood vessel than to cut 10 1mm vessels. Case in point is that we all know how lethal it is if you cut the Carotid Artery or the Jugular Vein, and similarly how non-lethal a muscle hit is. The muscle hit hits many more vessels but the lack of sizable vessels allows for bleeding to stop and the animal to recover. Now the question is where are these large vessels?

The easiest way to visualize the layout of the vessels is to look at the figures included in many anatomy textbooks that are available at the local library. The Major vessels in an animal (Man, Cat, Dog, Deer, Elk etc) are the Aorta, Superior (anterior) and Inferior (posterior) Vena Cava’s, Jugular Veins, Carotid Arteries, Renal Artery/vein, Portal Vein, Femoral Artery/Vein, Brachial Artery/Vein, and the Pulmonary Arteries/Veins. These are the main targets for your arrows. If any of these are cut death will be quick and painless, even with a field point. The trouble is that in a live moving animal pin pointing the location of these vessels is difficult at best. This is why you should shoot the largest cutting diameter broadhead that you can shoot accurately. You must also be



Careful to shoot one that your equipment has the necessary kinetic energy to guarantee a pass through. Some of the newer mechanical broadheads have cutting diameters up to 3"; however, most bowhunters do not shoot bows with adequate poundage to use these large cutting broadheads. That means that the majority of bowhunters will be using a broadhead

that will be cutting between 1 1/8" and 1 1/2". This means that you need to shoot within 1 inch of the vessel to guarantee the desired results.

Every animal has a "point of no return" when it comes to vascular damage. This is that point where enough vessels are damaged that clotting cannot occur and death from blood loss is

imminent. This can again occur from the severing of one of the major arteries listed above or the severing of 1000's of smaller ones, and that brings us to the next issue vascular density.

Vascular density is how many vessels per square inch exist in the area you are shooting. What are the top vascular organs? Below is a table that will look familiar. Then we will break the table down by organ.

Vascular Organs in Order of Vascular Density

Organ	Hypovolemic Shutdown	Size (View) White-tailed Deer Size Animal
Kidney	No	About 4" x 3" (Above) About 1" x 4" (Broadside)
Lung/heart	No	About 12" x 12" tapering to 4" (Broadside) About 12" x 8" (Above)
Liver	No	About 8" x 4" (Broadside) About 6" x 6" (Above)
Spleen	Yes	About 3" x 6" (Broadside) About 1" x 3" (Above)
Muscles	Yes	Varies
Intestines/Stomach	Yes	Entire Abdominal Cavity

First is the Kidney. This is probably the most lethal shot available; however, in a living animal it is such a small unmarked target that it should NEVER be attempted as a primary target. These are two fist-sized organs that are both on the right side of the deer and located about where the ribs end along the spine. This organ is responsible for filtering the blood and is an organ that always has blood supplied to it so even as the blood volume drops and shock settles in blood will still flow through it and therefore through any wounds in it. The only down side to this is shot is that it is a very small unmarked target.

Second is the Heart /Lung area. I am sure that most of you would have placed this one first. Well actually as far as vascular density goes it is second, but this is a larger target that is well marked by the shoulder and elbow. This area is not uniform in its vascular density though. The largest arteries and veins in the body all emerge from and go to the area that I call "The Great Vessels". This is the area that is just above the heart and about where the

trachea splits into the 2 main bronchus. This is where every bowhunter should strive to place the arrow. A shot here will put any animal down within 100yds with any broadhead. Where is this place? On a broadside deer at level attitude it is just about 1-2" above where the elbow joins the body. This also allows for some error. If you hit back you still get lungs, if you hit a little forward you get lungs, if you are low you get heart, and if you are high you get lungs. Great care must be exercised as not to hit the scapula (Shoulder) or humerus (upper arm) bones. Because of the role of blood oxygenation and circulation these organs always have blood and will bleed from a wound until there is either no more blood to bleed or bleeding stops (unlikely).

The next is the Liver. The liver is a very vascular and dynamic organ that also filters the blood and therefore will always have a blood supply. In addition to that all blood that is pumped to the lower half of the body has to return through the liver via the portal vein. This makes the liver so vascular that it is a great organ to hit. The only downsides are that almost always the rumen (stomach) has to be

penetrated in order to hit the liver. This organ is also rich in clotting factors so marginal hits will clot well and seal off the bleeding.

The last three are shots that should be avoided. While the spleen is very vascularly dense it will contract and the blood flow will stop once hypovolemic shock sets in. The other 2 organs lack adequate density to be considered consistent or viable targets for archers. Notice also that all CNS organs were left off. While these organs are quite vascularly dense they are also well protected by bony structures.

Shot Probability

This is a section that should be considered "Common Sense" but I have seen enough to know that it is not. This revolves around a triad of factors. These are the skill of the archer, the ability of the game animal to move, and the shot window. Each of these is equally important and all play a role in where the arrow lands.

We will first talk about the ability of the game to move. A lot of hunter will say "I have no control over that!" But on the contrary you do! All animals are able to move but alert animals are more likely to do so. So the first step is to keep animals unalerted to your

presence. This means scent/sound/sight discipline, as well as hunting in areas where deer are calmer. This usually means getting away from the feeder and water holes and hunting trails leading to and from these areas. It also means keeping your equipment quiet. Heavier arrows, limb savers, string silencers, and a properly tuned bow will be quieter and less likely to spook game than a 5gr/# speed demon. If you apply all of this the deer will not move and thereby leave more room for error on the other side.

The shot window refers to the size of the target you are aiming at. If you are trying to hit the Jugular furrow on an animal that is quartering to you the target is only the size of a golf ball. But the heart lung is the size of a basketball, which is easier to hit? If you learn the anatomy (bony and soft tissue) inside and out you will learn the windows and will see that many shots are available, but the ability of the game to move will keep you from making the shot. Case in point is the head on shot. Large window (size of softball),

but any movement by the animal closes it. The only way I would take this shot is if I was on the ground, the deer was calm and unaware, I was already drawn and the range was <10yds. That will never happen. This is an area that a few hours of studying a month in the off season can pay huge dividends.

Skills of the archer refer to shooting skill, tuning skill (bow and broadheads), and range estimation skill. All of these combine to allow the archer to hit a target at an unmarked range with a razor sharp broadhead. Shooting skill is pure and simple, just requires lots of practice and nothing else can substitute for that. Tuning skill must be learned; however, it can be purchased from the local archery shop in the form of "Tech-time" to help you tune your bow and broadhead. Range estimation can again be either learned or purchased in the form of a Lazer Rangefinder. This is the only type of range estimation device that I have any faith in. These all combine to give you your "Kill Zone Size" at various ranges.

When you combine these three elements the "Functional Kill Zone Size" or Shot probability emerges.

If the animal has the ability to react 4" and your kill zone size is 5" then in order to maintain a close to 100% shot probability the shot window has to be greater than 9" (4+5). Now before you start flaming I know that you can't measure how much the deer will move, but you can do everything that you can to ensure that movement is minimal. You can also do everything you can to decrease the size of your groups. Once this is done you can also "Aim Low" deer usually drop when they move and aiming at the heart (right at the elbow) will usually mean a dead deer. If they do not drop you get heart, if they drop a little you get great vessels, and if they drop a lot you get lungs.

Shot lethality and Shot probability combine into "Situational Lethality". In other words what is the lethality of the shot situation you are presented. If the answer is anything other than "animal down inside 150yds with 100% confidence" you should hold out for a better shot lethality, period. Hunt hard and smart.

Taters 'N Onions

By Thomas Langston

“Hey, Warren, are you goin’ over to Roberts sometime this week to deliver or pick up some parts or something?”

“So what if I am,” said Warren, “so what’s it to ya.”

“Well,” I says, “I was just wondering if you would ask Robert something for me?”

“Why don’t you ask him your own self,” Warren blurted.

“I don’t know,” I said, “but I was just kinda wondering if you would ask him if he is goin’ to bring some taters ‘n onions with us on our next huntin’ trip.”

“Like I said,” said Warren with an emphatic stare and agitated voice, “Why don’t you ask him your own damned lazy self?”

“Well you see,” I started, “you know the first time we were

gonna go huntin’ with Robert, I volunteered to bring some taters ‘n onions and I thought he was going to through a hissy fit! He said we wasn’t goin ta have no damned onions atoll!

“I asked him why and he said because the damned things stink.

“So I said what do you mean they stink and he said, ‘well, the danged things just stink and that all there is to it!’

“I told him that he didn’t have to sleep with ‘um and that they was for cookin’ and eatin’ and such.”

“That’s a heck of an attitude to have,” Warren said. I agreed, and told Warren that on our second trip to Alaska Robert had taken my sack of onions and threwed them plum out into one of the lakes we were camped on up in Alaska. “You don’t mean it,” Warren said.

“Yea, he darned sure did and I aim to take some on our next trip whether he likes it or not.

“You know, I noticed that he didn’t throw out none of that Caribou I cooked up for um in Alaska on our first trip. I thought I’d never hear the end to their complaining about my cute little Cabelas watch what you can tell if the tide’s comin in or out on.

“So on the next trip I left it at home and all of them spent the whole time asking me about the tide and whether or not I lost my watch.”

“Well if you don’t like all the naggin’,” said Warren, “why don’t you just stay home.”

“Well Warren,” I said, “it’s just traditional, that’s all there is to it. It’s just traditional.”

“You mean it’s traditional for you to nag about all the hard times everyone gives you cause your such a likable old cuss,” said Warren.

“No,” I said, “its just tradition what keeps us all together.”

“So what is it your getting me into,” Warren finally said.

So I began to tell Warren about how Robert's "Country Crock" just kinda disappeared on one of our trips to Texas to hunt Whitetail. Then I continued in telling how one of those irradiated pins, on Robert's bow, just kinda got painted over on one of our hog hunts. Then I told him about how all of Martin's toilet paper just kinda fell in the river, and about how and on the last day of the hunt and while we was packin' to come home, the "Country Crock" just suddenly reappeared.

Then I told him that since Robert had forbid me to bring any more onions, that I just wanted him to ask Robert if he would bring them for our next trip to Alaska. Then when Robert suddenly discovers the onions in his baggage after we all get out in the bush, we will all just kindly thank him for his thoughtfulness. Warren agreed and that set the stage for our next hunt.

So Warren planted the seed, and shore 'nuff ole Robert must have smelled a rat cause he called me up immediately to ask me had I got all the buckets that I had agreed to take, and the paper towels, soap and such. And just as I had expected, we hadn't hit the plane door till they was all giggling and speculatin' about who I was goin' to sit beside, all because on our last trip I had to sit beside one of them modern type business ladies what had on so much perfume I had to ask to change seats or gag. True to form, we hadn't hit the ground in Anchorage till they had all managed to ask me about the tide at least once, knowin' full well I done left that cute little watch of mine at home. Hell, it only cost me twenty dollars and it can do most anything but turn a few backflips; lights up in the dark and everything.

Well we made it on into Aniak and before long we was unpackin' and packin' again. Shore nuff, after about an hour of that we had bags and sack strown all over the

yard and we was all scratchin' our heads trying to figger out why in the hell we had brought so dad-gum much junk.

After a piece, we all just sort of sat down and rested some when the outfitter come up and wanted to haggle some about whether or not we was gonna take one raft and a canoe or whether he was goin' to give us the two rafts he had agreed to. So ole Robert, he went on into the outfitter's house and that when I went to work. There was onions 'n taters in his socks. There was onions 'n taters in his duffle bag! Taters in his wet lock bag and onions in with his overnight shavin' kit! He had bags of taters 'n onions stowed up in some of the most unimaginable places and in a final fit of rebellion, I shoved a whole bag of um up in his sleepin' bag. Hell, he never should uh messed with this ole Texan. After all, taters 'n onions is just traditional and that all there is to it!

Oh! I was gona tell y'all about "ole grandpa." He tentatively scored out at 132.5 gross and 129 net. He was 19 inches wide and had twelve points. We had all been shootin' broadheads good to 60 yards before we

went to Alaska. On about the third day of our Texas hunt, and 'cause I hadn't seen no mature deer come to the feeder, I put my shoes back on and crawled out of the tree stand at six o'clock and eased on down about 50 yards below the feeder; sat right down on the ground.

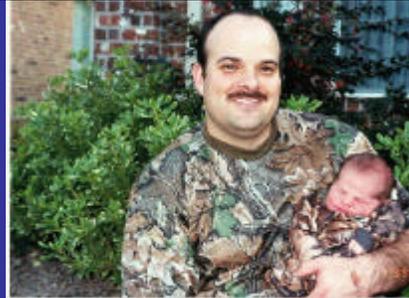


I had just lit up a smoke when I spied a nice buck down in the holler. He had really long tines, some of um about 10 inches, but was only a six point. I wanted to take a shot at him but before I did, "ole grandpa" come walkin' up from behind. He walked in behind one of them algereta type bushes and stopped.

I let one fly at 65 yards, 62 yards to bush what I measured later with my laser rangefinder what I done left in the tree stand, and broke his spine. It never hurts to

be in the right place at the right time and have an angel flying along side to help guide your arrow!

Bowhunter's Album



Kevin Johnson with his new son, Ryan Andrew!



Gabe Young, age 6, with his Bugscuffle hog.



David Harkins with a fine archery buck!



Keith Latimer hunted long and hard for this 142" Brownwood buck.

Read all about it at [TexasBowhunter.com!](http://TexasBowhunter.com)

See more great hunting pictures and stories at [TexasBowhunter.com!](http://TexasBowhunter.com)

WAS IT A SUCCESS OR NOT?: Part 1

By Glenn Lemke

How do you judge one successful hunt from another? How many times during the days following a hunting trip are you asked, “Did you have any success?” Did you kill one?” For most hunters and fishermen, myself included, the success of that hunting or fishing trip is too often based on whether we bagged that whitetail or caught a limit of trout. We tend to forget that there are many other factors that make that trip a successful one.

Recently, I embarked on one of those lifetime adventures that are not readily available to most of us on a regular basis. Taking an elk with my bow has been a dream for some time and only recently did I have the opportunity to try to make that dream come true. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has a large Texas following and each year the various chapters hold banquets to raise money to help support the Foundation.



Figure 1 Two exceptional elk in the entrance to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation building in Mussula, Montana

Many outfitters from across the nation donate hunts to be auctioned off at these functions. I was able to secure one of these hunts last spring and I began to make plans and arrangements for my dream hunt. The following is my account of that nine day hunt in the Beaverhead area of Montana, the preparation that went into it, and the successful outcome.

My hunt was arranged with Thunderbow Outfitters of Swan Valley, Montana. Mike Robinson is the owner and top guide for the operation and I made contact with Mike in early

March to see what I would need to do. He let me know that it was necessary for me to quickly apply for my non-resident license and tags. The deadline was right around the corner, but he told me he was on his way to Texas for a hunting show and he would personally bring me all the necessary paperwork. I really appreciated this move on his part because it gave me an opportunity to meet him prior to the actual hunt. After meeting Mike, securing the paperwork and sending in my \$800 for a guaranteed non-resident license, I felt pretty good about this adventure. We locked in dates. I was told by many “old” elk hunters that I



Mike Robinson, on the right is the owner of ThunderBow Outfitters. He chats with Shane, who also guides and is the wrangler for the operation.



Figure 2 Dudley Primeaux of Elgin, Texas.

had the best week for the rut and bugling activity.

I would be headed for Montana on September 20th. I made contact with a travel agent in Missoula, Montana, and arranged air transportation. I got information about bringing meat and horns back with high anticipation. My next step in the process was determining what to take and what not to take and preparing my somewhat out of shape body for the mountain hunt. I read every bowhunting article I could get hold of. I rented and purchased videos from Realtree, Carlton, Knight

and Hale, and watched the Outdoor channel. I ordered calls from Carlton, new camo from Cabela's, and new boots from BassPro Shops. The expense bill just kept getting bigger and I was still nearly three months away!

It was a good thing that I had long distance coverage on my mobile and that Mike had a mobile. It was very difficult to get in touch with him during the summer because of his float trips, rafting trips, and pack trips. Man what a life! We were able to communicate and I found out that my hunting partner would be a young man

named Dudley Primeaux, from Elgin, Texas. Through email and the telephone, Dudley and I quickly became friends. We shared the fact that neither of us had ever been elk hunting before.

I spent the better part of August shooting and tuning my two bows, purchasing new arrows, new broadheads, and whatever else new I could find. It didn't seem like I could go in Academy without spending a \$100 on elk hunting stuff! My wife just kept tabs and kept reminding me of the new clothes she had to have and that there was a jewelry show coming up in October. I just smiled because I knew that the Texas Trophy Hunters show was in late August and there was lots of elk stuff there!

Most airlines are restrictive of the number of pieces of luggage you are allowed. Delta is no exception. I knew that one piece had to be my double bow case and so the other had to be large enough to carry all of my gear and clothing for nine days. I purchased a special outfitter duffle at the hunting show and it proved one of my most valuable finds. I packed and repacked that duffle at least twenty five times in the course of a month. There was always something else that needed to go along or so I thought.

As the days grew closer to departure time, I began to get that itch that's always been there shortly before I leave for a hunt. My excitement was growing as the minutes ticked away. It was hard to sleep on Sunday night as I was ready to board that plane and fly 1500 miles in search of a trophy bull. Arriving at Houston International on Monday morning, I must have at least looked the part of a hunter because the sky cabbie asked " mulies or elk?" Oh, it felt great! I kissed my bride goodbye and proceeded to find that big jet. I was finally on my way to "Big Sky Country".

Recovering from the Unrecovered

By Michael Middleton

It was December 7, 1995 when I shot my first deer, first animal for that matter, with my bow. It was a beautiful 10 point with an inside spread of over eighteen inches. A Pope and Young qualifier, for certain. I had managed to stalk within fifteen yards of the unsuspecting deer as he fed directly under my tree stand. I had driven to about a quarter mile from my tree stand, which was situated about 8 feet above the ground in a mesquite tree in the middle of the road along the cutoff fence that dissects our Webb County ranch. As I walked along the fence toward the tree, I noticed the deer feeding on the corn I had scattered on the road earlier that morning. I quickly crossed the fence and, using the brush as a shield, managed to get within effective range of the deer. As I approached the deer, I chose to leave three broahead-tipped carbon arrows on the ground behind me, as I had no quiver for my bow. As I positioned myself for a shot, I had to step out from behind the brush as the deer walked away from me. Amazingly, the massive buck

quickly turned his head in my direction, leaving me exposed, standing in the open with absolutely no cover. However, the deer never noticed me and continued feeding, turning back to walk along the edge of the fence, at a perfect quartering-away angle. I managed to draw my bow, undetected, and fire an arrow at the deer. The broadhead quickly entered the deer, knocking it immediately to the ground.

I had hunted with a bow for three archery seasons prior to 1995, shooting a light-weight Jennings bow purchased from a popular discount store, that I received for Christmas several years back. I occasionally shot the bow while I was in college, but usually not consistently until a couple of weeks before the archery season. Once gun season arrived, I quickly returned to hunting with my Remington 700 BDL, 30-06, although I occasionally carried my Jennings along with me while sitting in the eight-foot box blind. No real danger that I would ever draw it back in the small space of the crate. But in this particular year, about a month before the gun season began, my dad, Glenn Lemke (ok, step-dad if you want to get technical) purchased a Pearson Spoiler II bow and gave it to me as an early Christmas present.

Finally, a “real” bow that was just like my dad’s!

I committed to shooting it every day before the season started. However, during the first week I had the bow, I injured my left shoulder while straining to pull back the 72 pound bow. It was quite a leap jumping from 45 pounds to 72 pounds. I tried every day after that for a week to draw the bow back, at a reduced poundage, but only managed to re-aggravate the shoulder. With my hunt now a couple of weeks away, I was concerned that the shoulder injury would keep me from hunting with my new weapon. I decided to give the shoulder two and a half weeks to recuperate, which would leave me three days to shoot the bow before the hunt. The plan worked, and now I was standing on the ranch, having shot and knocked down a true trophy whitetail!

The deer was on the ground, tangled in the fence and kicking his feet, struggling to get up. I quickly regained my composure and retreated about ten feet to retrieve my arrows that lay on the ground behind me. As I

turned back to look at the buck, he had managed to get back to his feet and was now running into the brush. The buck stumbled once more, then regained his footing and disappeared in the black brush, mesquite and prickly pear. I quickly ran to the fence where the buck had originally fallen. There was some hair on the fence, but only a small drop of blood on the ground below. My heart sank as I frantically searched for more blood. A sickening feeling bubbled in my stomach as I discovered a triangular blade buried just beneath the dirt. Upon further inspection, I realized that the blade from my Thunderhead 100 had a nick in it. It was now becoming obvious that the arrow must have deflected off the barbed-wire that I had given no thought to when I squeezed the release.

I went immediately to the spot that the deer had stumbled. It was there that I truly began to panic. I found the Beman 30/50, broken off at the outsert into which the broadhead had been attached. There was faint blood about four inches up the shaft, with a small piece of flesh that woven between the now splintered tip of the shaft. I knew immediately that it was not a good hit. I backed off

of my search and retreated to the cabin to get my Chocolate lab, Tito. As I was alone on my trip, I knew Tito would be the only hope I had of recovering this deer. After about an hour, Tito and I headed back out to attempt to find the deer. We searched for the remaining couple of hours of daylight and well into the night. We awoke at daylight the next morning to resume our search. It was a fruitless effort. No blood, and the tracks had quickly become mingled with countless other splayed hooves.

I slept very little during the night, awakening several times to read the notes I had jotted down that evening in my journal. Each time I read it, I became flush with sadness, disappointment, anger and a range of other emotions. I recounted the mistakes I had made that had resulted in my wounding a deer. I should have practiced more with the new bow. Why did I attempt to draw a 72 pound bow while I was accustomed to 45 pounds? What was I thinking when I attempted to shoot through a barbed-wire fence? I should have found someone else to help me track the animal. I replayed the shot in my mind. Maybe I only superficially wounded the buck. I called my brother, Martin and described the blood

and flesh that I found on the arrow. I explained it to my dad and also phoned my best friend, Scott Thomas. I was looking, hoping, for them to reassure me that the animal would survive. They all tried to comfort me, but the pain was still there.

I've mentioned that deer very few times to even fewer people since then, partly due to the embarrassment of wounding an animal, and partly because I haven't wanted to feed non-hunters and anti-hunters with more ammunition to use against bowhunting. I decided that the only way I could get over my devastation was to learn from the mistakes I made. I became a bowhunter that day. The next evening, I made a perfect shot on a hog at about 12 yards for my first bow kill ever. It was the start to regaining my confidence. That off season, I dedicated myself to shooting at least 30 shots per day nearly every day. I learned about tuning my bow and discovered through trial and error the best shooting arrows for my setup. I spent a couple hundred dollars changing rests until I found the one I was most comfortable

with. I vowed that day that I would never lose another wounded deer.

Unfortunately, last season I did lose another deer to a misplaced arrow. In spite of my dedication to the sport, and to becoming the best bowhunter I can be, I shot a small buck, hitting the chest cavity but not obtaining the desired pass-through shot. As the buck disappeared over the ridge and into the brush with the arrow sticking out of his chest cavity, I was confident that the buck was mortally wounded, but knew that it might require a difficult tracking job as there was no exit wound for the blood to flow out of onto the ground. I remained in the tree for an hour and a half until it got dark, marked the area where the buck entered the forest and retreated to get some help from my hunting party and the outfitter's tracking dog. Even after an exhaustive search by our Bugscuffle guide and his tracking dog, Outlaw, we were unable to find the animal.

That second unrecovered animal was even tougher to take than the first. I had hoped that it would not ever happen to me again, and I thought I took all the proper precautions to ensure that it

didn't. After struggling continuously with my emotions, I've accepted the fact that unrecovered animals are simply a fact of life if you hunt long enough with a bow. What we, as responsible bowhunters, must do is take every possible precaution to minimize the number of losses we incur.

Minimizing the number of wounded animals begins with education. It is your responsibility as a bowhunter to become educated on proper shot placement, shot selection and equipment setup. Knowing when not to take a shot is as important as knowing where to shoot. I would contend that the majority of animals wounded by bowhunters are a result of shooting at a target that is either at a poor angle, such as quartering to the hunter, or because vitals are obstructed by brush or other objects, as was the aforementioned buck on the other side of the fence. You don't have to be a biology major to learn where a deer's vital organs, such as lungs, heart and major arteries, are located and the best shot placement that will allow you to sever them.

THE STAND

By Louie Adams

The phone rang. It was my son, Jason. “Dad, what do you think about putting a deer stand in the patch of woods by the house?” he said.

“Where is Amy?” I responded.

Amy is my son’s wife, and, at that time, was about to give birth just any hour. “Well, the pains are coming about every hour. She said I was driving her crazy, but it is she that is driving me crazy. She wanted me to get out of the house. Her mother is here, and she said she would call the minute it looked like something was going to happen,” Jason said.

“Son, don’t you think you need to be there?”

“No, she will call. I don’t think it is going to happen right away,” he answered. “I will be there in a little while,” and with that he hung up the phone.

No sooner had I hung up the phone and my oldest daughter, Olivia, called asking, “Have you heard from Jason?”

“Yes, he is coming over to put up a deer stand. Amy is having pains about an hour apart,” I said.

“I will be over in a little bit. If anything happens we will all be together,” Olivia responded and hung up the phone.

My twin daughters, April and Rose, walked in the room and asked who was on the phone. I told them it was their brother and sister. They were on their way over. The twins then asked how Amy was doing. I told them the pains were about an hour apart.

“What on earth is Jason coming here for with Amy about to have a baby?” April asked.

My answer was, “Well, you will have to ask him that yourself, but he said he was going to put up a deer stand.”

“A deer stand, what on earth for? He won’t have time to use it when the baby gets here.” To which I again responded, “You will have to ask him that.” I then added, “Livvy is on her way, too.”

The girls just laughed, then walked out of the room. It was not long until Jason

arrived and came in asking, “Where is the deer stand?”

I told him, “Out in the shed with the others”. Out the back door he went.

He no sooner got out the door and Livvy drove up. “Where’s Bubba?” she asked. Feeling like I was playing twenty questions, I answered by saying, “Out in the shed looking for a deer stand to put up.” She also headed out the back door. The twins said hello, as Jason and Livvy each came in, and when Livvy went out the back door, they were right behind her.

I stood in the kitchen and watched them come from the back, with Jason carrying a portable stand. He stuck his head in the door and said, “Come on out and help me pick a spot for this stand.”

“All right,” I said, and out the door I went. As we walked into the woods I thought this was about the dumbest thing to which I have ever been party. My son’s wife about to domino and he is putting up a deer stand. The twins and Livvy were following right behind him. And I was about as silly for being party to the whole thing.

As we walked through the woods each of the girls asked

Jason questions about Amy, when he thought the baby would be born and didn't he think he ought to be there. His answers were simple and straight forward and he seemed preoccupied with something. It did not seem like it was where to put a deer stand. The whole thing seemed a puzzle to me.

"Dad, where do you think I ought to put it?" he asked me.

"Well my opinion is, you should put it back in the shed and go home with Amy, but since we have already discussed that, let's see what we can do."

The conversation between those four kids while looking for a suitable site was like a group of magpies. They talked about the baby and the stand. They talked about when they all were kids at home together. It is funny how a parent finds out things their kids did when they were at home that often you would rather not know. In my family the two oldest did things that I would as soon the two younger not know. It seems to put ideas in their heads. They do not need

any help in finding new ideas.

I watched, listened, and provided ideas where I thought the stand should go. It was apparent to me that Jason was intent on putting up a stand, and I might as well help him get it done. During the process I realized what was really happening. It wasn't a deer stand being put up.

While the kids were growing up, one thing I was always proud of was the way they supported each other. Oh, they had their arguments, but let one of them have a problem or a need, and the others were always there to help. All the bickering was put aside, and heartfelt emotion rose to the top. Watching them now, I knew what was going on. It was time for them to pull together again. Jason was going through what was for him the most emotional time of his life. He wanted to be with his wife. Since he made her nervous, he naturally went to the place he always had for support, home and his sisters.

It was October and as we five stood in the Autumn woods of my home I swelled up probably bigger than Amy. Truthfully tears filled my eyes. I got them together

in the woods there by the big oak and we prayed once more together. We prayed and lifted up God for all the blessings He gave us and those we were about to receive. We all cried a little bit. Then, we got that stand put up.

On October 25, 1995 Kathryn Nichole Adams made her debut to the world. They put a deer stand up in her honor. The deer stand was never used. I am thankful for my grand daughter, and I am thankful for deer stands. Families have many ways of coming together; ours just happens to do it differently. Maybe when Katie grows up, PawPaw will show her the big oak, where one day her Daddy, Aunt Livvy, Aunt Rose, Aunt April, and PawPaw prayed together, to ask God to help her come into this world. A world that I hope for her, too, has deer stands.

I Want to be Like...

By Michael Middleton

Over the years, his once jet-black hair has changed to a steel gray and silver. His chiseled body no longer has the definition of a one time college football athlete and former coach. His swagger as he walks through the halls of the school where he is principal now more closely resembles that of Barney Fife than that of John Wayne. The ladies no longer giggle and whisper about how much he looks like Tom Seleck as he walks by.

Many things have changed about the man I call Dad as the years have progressed. At the age of 52, he is by no means an old man. He's still got plenty of errant shots in his bow arm! And believe me, although I can outshoot him more times than not, he can still teach us young bucks a thing or two about hunting. And about life.

I first met Glenn when I was four years old, as he is not my natural father. While I'm certainly not a proponent of divorce, and I would never say that I'm glad my parents went through it while I was a child, I am one of the rare and fortunate ones that now has two role models that I can call "Dad."

Growing up living with my step-father, it took a few years for a young child to overcome the conflict of how to love the man that married my mom and that was now my guardian, without feeling like I was betraying my natural father, whom I also love very dearly. But with a gentle touch and a compassionate heart, that man showed me that it was not disrespectful to love both men as my father. I liken it to the emotional struggle that went through earlier in the year, as I wondered if it was possible to love the second daughter my wife and I were expecting in August as much as I love my four year old daughter, Kayla. Fortunately, love has no boundaries, and I quickly overcame that concern as well!

My new father was the role model and mentor that every child should be so lucky to have. He taught me about love. He taught me about life. He taught me about respect. He taught me about discipline. He molded me by example. He showed me how to love by giving love; to me, to my brother, to my mom, and to God.

He taught me how to hunt and fish, and used them, probably unknowingly, as a tool to help teach me about love, and respect, and life. I remember the details of an early spring fishing trip on Caney Creek for white bass on my ninth birthday more than I remember any single present I received. I still

cherish the single-shot 20 gauge shotgun that my brother and I got for Christmas when I was seven as much as any gift since. I still recall blasting two quail with my first shot as the barrel rested on his shoulder while he told me where to shoot. I never even saw the birds at the base of the mesquite. I simply shot where he told me. I remember standing with the pastor at First Baptist Church on the day I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior when I was eight, and my dad teaching me how to "shake hands like a man", even as tears welled up in his eyes. In the wake of school shootings and kids killing kids, I can't help but to reflect on many of life's lessons that were impressed upon me by such simple acts.

As his physical appearance has changed, my relationship with him has changed as well. Our bond now transcends that of father and son, or teacher and pupil. We still hunt together, fish together and shoot together in his backyard. I still look to him for wisdom and compassion. I still attempt to emulate him as I rear my own children. But I now consider him one of my most treasured friends. And I can't help but think that had he not married that little child's mom, that somewhere our paths would have crossed and the friendship would have still been formed.

The Future

By Jeff Bethard

Children are our future, that is how the saying goes. Well that can't be more true in the sport that we all love. I am the proud father of a beautiful five year old daughter, named Reagan. She uttered eight little words to me recently that sent me in a tailspin. She looked up at me with those gorgeous blue eyes and said, "Daddy, I want to go hunting with you." Now to those of you who don't have children, you won't know what I mean, but to those of you who do, well you know you now have permission to spend money. I went to our local archery shop, and yes I did take her with me, and purchased one of those kits. You know the one, with the little red recurve, two cedar arrows, and a little faux leather quiver that looks more like a machete scabbard. I don't know whose smile was larger, mine or hers! After all, I had just obtained her first bow.

We headed out of the store, with the newest member of our archery society proudly dragging her shrink wrapped bundle. When we got into the

truck, the look on her face was priceless. You know it, the one that that makes your soul feel good! The look of sheer enthusiasm! Now I know why my dad wept when I harvested my first deer with a bow. Reagan must have known I was busting with pride because she scooted next to me, hugged me as hard as a five year old can, and said "Now I can be like you, because I have a bow like yours." Then it hit me like an eight pound sledge hammer; I now have to teach her how to hunt, not just teach her how to shoot, but to hunt, ethically. But for now, the basics. We returned home with so much pride that I could hardly drive. I pulled into the drive and

unloaded my new little bowhuntress and her new equipment, set up our target and the lessons began. Initially I started with form, square to the target, reach and grab the string, 3 fingers under and slowly draw, placing your right index finger in the corner of your mouth. When she did this it kind of startled me. She had better form than I do and this was her first time to draw a bow!

Trying to teach a five year old to shoot is kind of like trying to teach a sumo wrestler to waltz; you know it can be done but doing it is another matter altogether. Why this and why that can be a little trying to the nervous system, but you have to keep it in perspective. I kept



5 year old, Rebecca Bethard, displays her natural shooting form!

telling myself, it's worth it keep going. Now, we bowhunters who are blessed with little girl prodigies, know that their first hunt/harvest ranks right up there with walking them down the isle, or maybe it's more important than that, because I know if I teach her right, this is something that we will hopefully share the rest of our lives. I guess that holds true with little boys too.

We all need to pass our heritage on the younger generation, although me saying that sounds funny because I am still learning from my father and my grandfather. I have learned from them to hunt ethically and not abuse the animals that the Good Lord has given us, and I realized that while I was sweating in the East Texas sun and humidity teaching this little bundle of joy to respect the sport that I love so much. In doing so I came to the conclusion that I learned and am learning by the examples that I see everyday. My father and grandfather were and are still great examples of a true hunter, and I pray to God that I can set a similar example for my daughter, and future children I may have.

In essence, I guess my challenge to all bowhunters that read these words is to lead by example and reach out to as many young people as you can. Introduce them to archery and teach them to be ethical hunters and sportspeople. Take a kid hunting. Remember if you get hunting into a child's bloodstream, nothing else bad will ever get there!

TBJ

No Regrets Here!

By Zack Potter

I recently returned home from my opening weekend hunt and began to rehash the events of the hunt. I had been harboring thoughts in the back of my mind that maybe I had made a mistake in taking the deer that I had. Had I shot too early? Had I taken a deer that wasn't up to par? Should I have waited on a bigger deer? Thoughts like these had been haunting me, until I realized how silly it was to stake the worth of the experience in the size of the deer that was taken.

I will start the story from the beginning. I arrived at the lease on October 1, 1999. My hunting partner, and brother-in-law, had been there from the day before and had done some last minute scouting. Much to my

surprise, he had a deer on video that would probably score somewhere in the 140" class Pope & Young. Now let me tell you, that is a big deer for the country we hunt. We hunt about 20 miles south of San Angelo near little town called Mertzon. Anyone who is familiar with this area knows that water is scarce and so is that kind of deer. I entered into the season the next morning with more excitement than I had ever had before. I had on my mind my first Pope and Young buck. I have only been bowhunting for about the last three years and had not taken a "book" deer to this point. It was my goal for this to be the year.

The next morning started at about 5 in the AM. I got up and went through my descending procedures and then headed for the blind. The morning was considerably cooler than I had expected and my hopes were high for a tremendous hunt. On stand an hour before sunrise just like always, I began to feel the wonderful solitude that only comes from being in the deer woods (and I use the term woods figuratively as you can see in the picture). As the sun began to come up, I enjoyed listening to the birds sing, watching the rabbits scamper, and being able to be a part of the whole thing. I saw only a

very few deer that morning but I had as much fun on stand as I believe I have ever had before. The evening hunt was very similar to the morning hunt. The day was hot and there was very little activity. While I didn't see many deer, I enjoyed the privilege of being able to be there.

The evening was filled with stories and memories of past year's hunts and adventures. Darrell and I have been hunting together for about the past four years, ever since I married his wonderful (just in case she reads this!) sister. We have become very good friends in the past few years and time at deer camp always seems to be the best time. I truly enjoyed the company.

The next morning's hunt started much the same as the previous day's. I had chosen another stand location with hopes that I might find more activity there. The morning wasn't quite as cool as the previous, but I still held hopes of seeing a lot of game. My hopes were to be rewarded on this date. About thirty minutes before daylight, deer showed up at the feeder. With the moon overhead

and the deer only ten yards away, I could make out a couple of does and a small buck. These deer fed continuously until the feeder went off at 0700. Almost immediately after the feeder went off, more deer began to filter into the area. It wasn't long before some more mature deer began to show up. Out of the corner of my eye, I spotted a good eight point buck cautiously approaching the feeder. I watched as he entered the feeder pen and began to feed on the corn. Shortly after, another mature eight point deer came down the same path and entered the pen with the first. As I began to watch the trail more intently, I saw a nice ten point easing my way. Now let me tell you, I had a case of the fever for some reason that I could not control. By the time this deer made it to the pen, I had already picked a spot and began to draw my bow. My months of practice were about to pay off. I released the arrow on a slightly quartering away shot and made a perfect hit. The deer ran about forty yards directly away from me and then turned and headed back my way. He piled up about 25 yards from my stand. Wow! What a rush! I love this game!

I couldn't wait the standard thirty or forty five minutes until I went to retrieve this deer. I was down almost immediately and standing over my harvest. This is when I first began to have the thoughts of regret. As I stood above this wonderful animal, I remembered the 140 class deer on the video. This deer had about 110 inches at first guess. What had I done?



Nice buck, Zach! That's nothing to be ashamed of!

It wasn't until I was home that I finally caught on to how silly I was being. I had just enjoyed two days afield and harvested a fine animal. I don't know exactly when I began to believe that score was the most important part of the harvest, but I do REGRET that I ever let it get to that. I realize now how lucky I am to have had that experience and how it will make me a richer person in the end. I guess in this modern day of Bill Jordan and the likes that there is a lot of emphasis put on the score of the deer. I have realized that the emphasis

should be on the hunt and the experience, and I am thankful that I have.

While I still hope to harvest a Pope and Young buck some day, I will no longer allow myself to be caught up in the trophy hunt. I will still strive to take only mature deer with a mindset of improving overall herd health. I will strive to make every hunt an experience that will be remembered no matter what the outcome. I will strive to cherish everyday that I spend afield. I will never again believe that a mistake was made, and I will certainly not have any more regrets as long as I am still able to spend time in the deer woods!

TBJ

Hunting Healthy: I Didn't Listen, Now What?

By Kevin Johnson M.S.

Infectious Disease Epidemiologist Harris County Health Dept.

Ok, it has been a month and I know some of you did not listen to sound advice and had a run-in with some insects, and are now concerned as to what you need to do. Again we

will break it down by the incriminating bug.

Chiggers:

This one is the simplest. Keep the wounds clean, do not scratch them and if the wound becomes unbearable or looks infected see a doctor immediately.

Ticks:

Once you notice a tick attachment and remove the tick the first thing that you need to do is to save the tick. Tick identification is the first step in diagnosing almost all tick borne diseases. This is because the diseases can look similar and if you know the tick you know the disease. Most of these diseases start the same, fever, aches, rash, headache. They then progress from there. Tick identification will help the doctor help you, so remember to save those ticks.

Mosquitoes:

These carry some bad diseases as well. Luckily, here in Texas we do not have malaria and many of the more common mosquito borne diseases. What we do have are arboviral diseases. These include mainly Dengue, Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE), Eastern

Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and, St Louis Encephalitis (SLE). Dengue is a new bug here in Texas and is heading north. These diseases will present with fever (dengue), body aches, and headache. Of these, Dengue is the one I am most concerned about. Unlike the mosquitoes that carry EEE, WEE and SLE, the one that transmits Dengue is an aggressive feeder. Dengue is also a human disease, unlike the zoonotic WEE, EEE, and SLE. This means that it is easier to catch. It is commonly called "Break Bone Fever" because it makes you feel like someone is trying to break every bone in your body. This is the side of Dengue you want to see, because even though you will wish you were dead, this phase of Dengue is not as fatal. Dengue has 4 sero-types, infection with any 1 sero-type results in this "Break Bone Fever", and infections with a second sero-type result in an increased risk of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF). Texas only has only one sero-type now, but more are heading north. Within the next few years you will be hearing about more and more cases of Dengue. The way to help the doctor here is to give a 1-month travel history and have him call the Health department. They can tell him about arboviral activity in the state.

For those that took my last column seriously let this drive the point home. For those that did not, let this be a wake up call. Hunt hard and stay healthy.

Next Month: *Meat Care, How to Stay Safe*

Camphouse Fixins

Quick and Easy Round Steak

By Richard Dunkin

It won't get any easier than this!

1.) Tenderize your round steak or stew meat by Beating the *&^#%^ out of it with tenderizer mallet. (Great therapy after a hard day at work)

2.) Then brown meat in a pot. Once meat is browned, add 2-cans of cream of mushroom soup. (Do not add water)

3.) Bring to a light boil & reduce heat.

4.) Cover & simmer for 30 minutes.

Now it's time to serve over rice and add your favorite side dishes. (don't get any on your forehead it'll make your tongue slap your brains out!)

Trust me, with 5 kids, ranging from 7-11 years old, your looking for quick & easy (leaves me time for hunting!)

Look for more wild game recipes at www.texasbowhunter.com!

Dead Man on a Hillside!

By Jeff Bethard

It was early April in the beautiful Texas Hill Country; myself and four hunting buddies were treating ourselves to an offseason hog hunt in Vanderpoole.

We left our East Texas homes in a scaled down version of a military deployment, at about 11:45 p.m.. Three of the people I was hunting with on this trip are employed by the county sheriff's department, and worked the 4:00 to 11:00 shift. That put us on the road late to make our appointment with the 12:00 noon start of our hunt, considering that the drive we were embarking on was a nine hour drive from my front door to the gate of the ranch. With pickups loaded to the hilt and four wheelers in tow, we pulled away from the familiar driveway into the night. A long and arduous nine hours later, we pull into the gate of the Bug Scuffle Ranch, where we were greeted by our guide for the hunt, a vertically challenged, power lifter named Scott, who, judging by the smile on his face had had many more hours of sleep than any of us. We all exchanged hellos as

pleasantly as 5 sleep deprived rednecks from East Texas could, and turned to the chore of unloading five four wheelers and enough gear to supply a small platoon of soldiers. We had just about gotten everything unloaded and selected our bunks in the lodge, which by the way, we weren't far from falling into, when the ranch manager pulled up in his dusty Dodge pickup. Bryan Keeling, who also looked very rested, stepped out of the pick-up and greeted us with a smile, and a hearty South Texas welcome.

Bryan suggested that before we lost all of our steam from the drive, he should show us the ranch. We agreed and off we went again, up dusty caleche roads that meandered through and over some of the most beautiful Hill Country "mountains" that I have ever seen. After showing us where all the stands were, and a little about how the game reacted to the hills and valley's of the ranch, we headed back for the one thing we all craved, a nap.

We woke to find the afternoon sun still high in the sky as we prepared for the first leg of our two day journey. We chose the stands that we were to hunt that afternoon and headed out. The five four-wheelers growled off down the caleche road, as their commanders

vibrating in the seats, partially from the road and partially from excitement. I was the first to stop as the stand I chose to hunt was the closest to camp. Bryan calls it the #1 stand. I waved a good luck wave to the parade of four wheeled steeds as they roared past me, and I started my half mile walk to the stand. Maybe it was closer to 300 yards, but it was all uphill, so I say a half mile for good measure.

As I was situating myself in the lock on stand that was fashioned to a gnarly scrub oak on the side of the hill, I could still hear machines humming in the background in different areas of the ranch as my buddies made their way to their prospective stands.

Almost immediately, I began to hear signs of the game I pursued; rocks tumbling downhill from far above me, grunts and growls from unhappy, and some very happy hogs. I have hunted hogs in a lot of places, and I don't believe I have ever seen the game like I did at Bug Scuffle. Hearing those hogs alone would make the hunt, but to top it off I saw whitetail deer grazing on the ridge across from me,

Black Buck Antelope feeding in the fields below me, and Rio Grande, Tom Gobblers trying to attract the attention of a suitable mate. When you witness something like that, it reminds you of two things: there is a God, and the hunt is about more than just the kill. My serenity was broken by the shuffle of hooves on rocks, and that distinctive grunt of a group of hogs. First, out of nowhere, twelve little piglets assaulted my corn pile like a dozen mini Hoover vacuum cleaners. Then I heard the sounds of a sow pig softly talking to her brood, soft grunts and growls, deep breathing and loud snorts, followed by my little Hoovers exploding into the brush never to be seen by me again. I never saw the sow, and she disappeared as quickly as her little ones. My heart rate was about to return to normal when I again heard the tell-tale sounds of hooves on rock, scurrying toward me. The first hog to show himself was what I judged to be a hog of about 75lbs. He came out of the cedar trees and looked right at me for 15 to 30 seconds. He then decided I was nothing to fear and went back to feeding. Then another materialized, this one about the same size as the the first, then another and another and then one

more. All seemed, to me, to be about 75 to 80 lbs. I looked and picked the biggest, and the best for the smoker. I slowly came to full draw with my PSE mach 6. The black and brown oinker fed into a perfect broadside shot. I picked my spot right behind the shoulder, just a little lower than you would on a deer, and I squeezed the trigger on my release. The arrow flew true and right to the spot I had picked. I sat back and mentally noted the direction he had run, and listened intently. I heard him run uphill, and then everything went silent. I remained in the stand for another twenty minutes or so before I eased out of the stand and started back to the four-wheeler to put my bow away before we took up tracking the downed hog. When I returned to my mode of transportation I met one of my hunting companions, Vance Clements who also had a hog down. We shared the experience of each other's hunt and waited for the others, before going to retrieve our trophies.

Bryan drove up with his wife Debbie. If you don't know Debbie, book a hunt with them and meet her, she is a hoot! The other three members of our party showed up after it was good and dark. We shared experiences and found we only had to find two hogs

this evening, mine and Vance's. We took up the search for Vance's hog first. We looked under the feeder and found a solid blood trail which we followed right to the hog who had traveled about 35 yards and collapsed. He was a nice 135 pounder, solid black with a good set of dog killers, otherwise known as teeth.

We loaded his hog into the Polaris 6 wheeler that Bryan uses at the ranch, and went to retrieve my hog.

When we got to the stand I was hunting, Bryan immediately found my

arrow covered with deep red blood, and then found the blood trail, which we followed straight uphill through some of the thickest cedar trees I have ever had the pleasure, or displeasure, of encountering. When Bryan yelled out "over here," I scraped and fought my way to my hog.

Remember, I said I thought it was about 75 lbs? Well, it turns out the black and brown boar was 145 pounds and not easy to drag through those cedar trees! We loaded my hog into the six-wheeler and headed for camp to relive our hunt, take pictures and eat supper. What made this evening even more

special was that the 135 pound hog that Vance had shot was his first bow harvested hog, so pride was very plentiful.

The other members of our group are my younger brother, Chris Bethard, and two lifelong friends Brady Welch and Cary Blundell. After a hearty supper of fried fish, french fries and hush puppies, we sat outside the lodge and got to know Bryan and Debbie. Bryan and Debbie Keeling are two of the most hospitable people I have ever met. After just minutes, we laughed and joked like we had known each other for years. And Debbie is quite the joker. She will tell you stories about hogs and just try to scare the pants off of you, and almost succeeded in doing so! We laughed at just about everyone's expense that night, but the laugh came later.

The next morning Vance and I slept in because some of the pressure was off of us. But the others came back empty handed that morning. That afternoon I hunted a different stand and saw a bunch of hogs and one real good boar that never presented a shot, but I enjoyed the hunt all the same. When I exited the stand and met the others, I found that Carey had downed a hog. We visited about his hunt, and when Bryan and Debbie



Jeff Bethard with his 135 pound hog taken with a PSE Mach 6 at the Bugscuffle Ranch in Vanderpoole.

showed up, we started the search. He hit the hog good but hogs are anything but predictable. This hog ran everywhere up hills that goats wouldn't climb, much less people. We finally located the 125lbs sow after an hour of dilligent searching. We were all worn out. Brady decided to lay down on the side of this hill for a rest. Lying on his back with his arms stretched out, he laid there trying to catch his breath. When he heard someone coming down the hill, he knew it was Debbie, but he didn't move because he thought for sure she had seen him. But she kept on coming down that hill, apparently oblivious to Brady. She was about three steps from him when he saw her flashlight shine right on his hand. What followed was pure pandemonium. She screamed, then Brady screamed because she startled him with her scream, she turned and went back up that hill in one third the time it took her to get down, before she realized it was Brady!

She said when she saw that hand, she just knew it was a dead man on the hillside! Needless to say we got a

lot of mileage out of that one!

After all the smoke cleared we got Carey's hog back to camp and feasted on grilled duck and fried potatoes.

Three of us harvested hogs that weekend and two came home with empty coolers But the real success of the hunt was the memories and the friendships that were made, and these things last a lot longer than the sausage. We are planning two more trips back to Bug Scuffle in the winter of this year. I only hope that they will live up to the previous trip!

The Last Shot

By J.P. Davidsson

Well, by now most of us have (hopefully) spent some quality time in a tree stand or ground blind and have some meat in the freezer as a reward for our efforts. Bowhunting can sometimes be a lonely sport. Not while we're back in camp with our friends, but during the quiet walks to and from the stand and the time spent just waiting and watching. The solitude is nice and everyone needs and deserves a break from everyday life. I consider my hunting time precious and very therapeutic.

I, unfortunately, have not been able to enjoy much of that solitude while in my stand. I have no idea why, but I've had no problem with loneliness lately. I constantly have at least one companion with me and sometimes five or six whenever I hunt now. They never sit still and they are constantly making noise. They especially enjoy laughing out loud at me if I make even the slightest movement. They are undoubtedly my nemesis. Call them squirrels if you like, I call them by many other names.

What started out as a love/hate relationship has swan-dived deep into the pool of despise. When I first started hunting they were cute and funny. I enjoyed watching them play "who can make the other one fall out of the tree first?" and all of the other little squirrel games. It helped the time go by a little easier and I'll admit that it was at times very entertaining. Then suddenly something happened and I haven't the foggiest what it was, but they *turned* on me. I'm not talking one squirrel here; I'm talking about the entire squirrel population of Texas! I haven't hunted outside the state in a while, but I'll bet they have a little squirrel computer network like the police and could track me down to a tree in Alaska now.

I think they held a convention in Vegas a few years back and terrorizing me was first item on their agenda. A buddy of mine claimed he saw the billboard for it while he was there.

What have I ever done to deserve this type of ridicule? I've never eaten squirrel before and never really had a reason to shoot one. I think it was just a random decision to antagonize, similar to the IRS's audit method.

It all started in Glen Rose three years ago. I was up in my lock-on and the feeder had just gone off. It was that magic time when all the sights and sounds of the woods were just beginning to come alive. I spotted some movement to my right and saw a nice "Hill Country" eight point coming my way. He was about ten yards from the feeder and suddenly this ear-piercing, blood-curdling screech nearly scares me out of my skin. The buck ran off like a cartoon character and bolted so fast he was running in the air and his hooves never touched the ground. I turned to my left, and clamped to the trunk of the tree five feet from

me is the biggest freaking squirrel I have ever seen in my life. I'd guess at least ten pounds on the hoof. It looked like a tree-dwelling hyena and was howling like one too.

The buck was in the next county and by now this freak of nature and I were duking it out 20 feet off the ground. He won the first round and accomplished his goal; the buck was gone. Now it was my turn for revenge. I broke off some branches and threw them at him as hard as I could. He ducked and dodged like Mohammed Ali and chuckled even louder but held his position. OK, this was war now and I had a mission! I stood up in my stand, hung my bow on my hook, flipped the seat up, turned sideways and with feet shoulder width apart, assumed a pitchers' stance. The half-empty (or full, for you optimists) water bottle weighed about the same as a baseball. I reared back and let a 70mph fast bottle fly. The squirrel put a move on me quicker than Deion Sanders (BTT: Before The Toe) and shifted hard and fast to the right. The bottle hit squarely on the tree exactly where the mutant rodent had been. The water squirted back at me like a fire hose and the squirrel

remained unscathed in his corner. His chattering seemed to increase in volume while I rung out my facemask.

OK, enough with these primitive weapons, it was heavy artillery time. I pulled an arrow from my quiver, knocked it and came to full draw. I was going to have squirrel shish-ka-bob for dinner tonight and savor every last bite. Heck, all my buddies would too; the thing could feed a family of eight. My finger was just about to touch off the release and the squirrel turns his head and glances to his left. Out of the corner of my eye I see the biggest buck I have ever seen in Glen Rose watching this whole escapade. I have no idea how long he had been there but he certainly wasn't scared. I'm sure he'd never witnessed anything quite like this before. I moved my bow slowly to the left to take the shot and fat boy chattered again.

About twenty minutes over a hot mesquite fire with a little barbecue sauce on the side.... Pretty darn tasty.



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