

November/December 2012
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Photo by Dick Ellis

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LEE GATZKE

NextBuk Outdoors Only in deer camp

Yesterday I flipped the calendar page to reveal that November is now upon us. This morning I attacked the few remaining items on my wife's "honey-do" list and was now raking the last of the leaves off my lawn. My wife came outside in a futile attempt to add one more job to the list, and she soon realized her request was poorly timed. My eyes were glazed over and my ears were turned off. I was already in deer camp in my mind, so I wasn't tuned in to communicating with anyone who wasn't dressed in camouflage. The only chore left for me was to steer my truck into deer camp without getting a speeding ticket.

I arrived in camp to find my son, Tom, already preparing to head out to take a mid-day stand. We took a little time to explain where each of us would be hunting before Tom took off. I unpacked my truck and gathered my gear for an afternoon assault. While double checking my gear, I discovered a

few items that needed attention. At this point, I realized there wasn't any need to rush out to get on stand since it was only lunchtime on the first day of a five-day hunt.

I prepared a sandwich, opened a bag of chips and sat down to enjoy lunch. While diving into the chips, I opened the camp diary and reread the stories my family members and friends had written about hunts from years past. I could feel my blood pressure dropping as I laughed at the half-truths posted on these precious pages. There wasn't one story shared that didn't take liberties with how the events actually took place. It just made the read that much more enjoyable and had the effect of making each author set the story telling bar a little higher than the last.

Between eating lunch, reading the entire 16 years' worth of camp diary stories, and some last minute adjustments to my hunting gear, a couple hours had passed. I was putting



Tom's eight-pointer carried 13.5-inch G-2s, a 21-inch inside spread, and grossed 157 inches.

on my boots prior to heading out to take an afternoon stand when Tom opened the cabin door. The look on his face told me he had good news to share. "I set up in a spot we've never hunted and gave a series of loud mouth calls," he said. "Within two

minutes the biggest eight-pointer I've ever seen comes running up to my tree looking for the lonely doe begging for attention." From Tom's position directly above the buck, he wound up having to wait for the buck to move its head so

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TOM CARPENTER

Are You Ready? Plan A for opening day

This is going to be a great year for gun deer hunting in Wisconsin.

No matter what your opinion on the for-now defunct October early seasons, experienced deer hunters know: Not pestering those whitetails with an October “warning hunt” is going to make for a great opening day of gun season this year. I can hardly contain myself! Are you ready to make the most of it?

Ask yourself these questions and make a “Plan A” you can follow through on for success on the season’s greatest day.

Attitude I: Are You Here To Shoot A Deer Or Not?

It’s amazing how many opening day gunners don’t plan on shooting a deer unless it’s a

huge buck. I say to each his own. It lets some deer live to come past my stand.

More problematic is not deciding what kind of deer meets your opening day standards. The thoughts go like this: *Here comes one. Are the antlers big enough? It’s awfully early in the morning yet.* Or: *That’s not a fawn but is it a big enough doe? I think I’ll just wait on my antlerless tag for later. Well maybe not.*

And the opportunity is gone. Indecision and hesitation save oodles of deer each year—deer that move on, hunker into their hidey holes and you never see again.

I have regretted passing up legal deer with opening-day cockiness. But I have never regretted taking the first legal deer that came along. Never. That’s how you eat venison

instead of cow in winter.

Attitude II: Are You Prepared To Hunt Every Minute Of Opening Day?

If your answer is “no,” fine. But you are exponentially decreasing your chances for success. If your answer is “yes,” I’m betting you’re going to get a deer—or have a good opportunity—on opening day.

Realize you probably won’t shoot a deer at the crack of dawn. Yes, it does happen. But the follow-up hours, all the way to sunset, are just as full of potential. The mid-morning hours, right to and through noon, are *prime* time. Deer move now, often on their own, trying to sneak back to their

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The Hunt.

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DAN MOERICKE

The “Up Nort” Report

The make-up test

I got a real bad feeling in the pit of my stomach when I walked into the room where my final exam was supposed to be, only to find it empty. It was a required college course that I had no interest in, so I took it as a four-week summer class to get it over with in the minimum time possible. I’ll admit it, I didn’t go to the class, but I *did* study the material enough to pass the exams. The flaw with that strategy was that the classroom announcements of the time change for the final exam didn’t make it on my calendar.

Under the circumstances, I had no choice but to go to the professor and grovel for a chance to take a make-up test.

He grudgingly allowed it. I passed the class and really hadn’t thought about it again for decades—until last November.

You see, last fall I had a big test, and, unfortunately, while I was in the right place at the right time, I didn’t pass it.

For years now some of my bow hunting buddies and I have converged on the Eagle River area for a “rut camp” during the first week of November. We

have a cabin to stay in, so we’re not really “camping,” but it’s a great time to get together, talk smart, eat too much and spend entire days doing whatever each of us wants in the great expanse that is the Nicolet National Forest.

Arriving at camp first, I unpacked my stuff, fired a few arrows, and

immediately hit the woods. In my wildest fantasy, I’d shoot a big buck and have it hanging on the pole when the rest of the guys showed up. Less than two hours later, sitting in my new climbing stand on the edge of a small clearing in the middle of the big woods, that dream started to materialize when I saw the buck

of a lifetime ... well, *my* lifetime at least.

The first indication I had of the buck’s presence was the sound of what turned out to be his antlers rattling through the lower limbs of a hemlock tree about 80 yards behind me. Standing up and turning in my stand I was able to see a high rack being thrown back and forth through the tree branches. I hit the call with two soft grunts, and, after tending to his scrape,

“You see, last fall I had a big test, and, unfortunately, while I was in the right place at the right time, I didn’t pass it.”



The author heads back into the woods for his make-up exam.

the buck began working his way slowly across the clearing in my direction.

As he stepped into the clearing, I got my first good look at him. Now, I’m

not much into measuring and monikers like the boys on the outdoor TV shows, so I can’t give you a name or a number.

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TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds: *Tree sparrow*

Over its lifetime this hardy and handsome but misnamed little native sparrow will spend less time in mature trees than almost any other songbird. Go figure! The tree sparrow nests on the open plains just south of the arctic circle but winters in Wisconsin and elsewhere across the northern U.S. Look for one during deer season this year or while on a November hike! Tree sparrows prefer hedgerows, brushy areas, roadsides, and thickets near open fields filled with weeds and grass, where they forage on the ground for seeds.

Look for the tree sparrow’s chestnut-colored back and cap, with the same colored stripe running through the eye. The breast is clear gray (not striped or streaked) and displays one dark splotch.

Listen for the musical *see-ler* or *tsee* calls that members of a flock make while feeding together.

Attract tree sparrows all winter long with hulled sunflowers seeds or white millet. Tree sparrows are confirmed ground feeders, and they will gladly clean

up what other birds drop. But you should also spread some seed on the ground between snowfalls, specifically for tree sparrows.

Did you know that a tree sparrow will hover around a seed pod, flapping wings at it to dislodge the seeds? Then the bird will flutter to the ground to glean its harvest. 



Native son Tom Carpenter writes about the outdoor world for a variety of national and regional publications.

TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

Wonders of the whitetail

When you and your young hunter are getting ready for deer season, driving to camp or visiting quietly while on stand or in the blind, why not fill them in on some of the wonders of the whitetail? Here are a few facts and insights to pop their eyes and build their respect for the world's greatest big game animal—one that we call our own right here in Wisconsin.

Wonders of Range

What other animal is so highly successful under so many different conditions? Certainly the whitetail's adaptability calls for our wonder and respect. Whitetails thrive from South America, through Central America and Mexico, across the United States from east to west and north to south, and on up to the far northern Canadian bush. Whitetails have been spotted as far north as Great Slave Lake. Now that's adaptable.

Wonders of Personality

What makes these deer so successful under so many different conditions? Whitetails are masters at evasion. No other game animal exhibits such steely nerves in the presence of danger. Evolution has eliminated deer that panic and left us to hunt these wily, elusive, skulking hiders that can seemingly disappear off the face of the Earth while surviving below your very nose.

Wonders of Athletics

A sneaking deer can tip-toe gingerly through "cornflake" leaves and not make a crackle, crunch or sound of any type. In these situations, whitetails walk on the points of their hooves to minimize the amount of noisy surface area that is compressed below.

The trot is probably the whitetail's most graceful gait. With head up and tail erect, the deer's legs move but the body seems to float across space.

Full gear is a gallop. Two or three long strides are followed by a leap that can cover up to 30 feet of ground in one bound! Top speeds of 35 mph are possible. Few predators can hope to catch a healthy, galloping deer; most won't even bother to try.

A deer can cut, veer and dodge in an instant without losing stride. If you've ever butchered your own whitetail, you know why. The front legs are not connected to the body via sockets. Rather, the front legs are attached only by tendons and ligaments. You can easily remove a leg from the deer's body with your pocket knife. Without joints, those front quarters can shift and shimmy at will.

From a standing start, most any whitetail can leap a 6- to 7-foot-high barrier. With a little speed behind it, an 8- to 9-foot barrier is easily surmountable.

Wonders of Senses

A whitetail's senses are so good it is a wonder that we sensory-challenged humans ever kill a deer.

Smell is the whitetail's first line of sensory defense. A whitetail trusts his nose fully and will rely solely on the information that the nose provides, without confirmation from another sense. Whitetails trust their noses like we do our eyes.

Consider that big, black, moist business end. A deer's snout is long for a reason. Hundreds of square inches of smelling tissue—folds upon folds of it—process air, collect information and send it to the whitetail's brain, where the space devoted to interpreting smells is large and highly developed.

Hunters of all ages.

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The thrill and memories of first hunts will last a lifetime.

A whitetail's hearing puts yours and mine to shame. Even on a small deer, each ear offers about 24 square inches of surface area to gather sound. What's more, each ear operates independently of the other one and is able to swivel, cup, twirl and rotate on its own to pinpoint the source of specific sounds.

an errant sound or visual suspicion usually needs another confirmation from another sense. That's why deer like to circle downwind of a place or form they're uncomfortable with. And the old hoof-stomp—where a deer thumps its hoof on the ground to try and surprise you into making a movement and giving up your position—is another

***“Share the wonders of the whitetail—
and of the hunt—
with a young hunter this season.”***

A whitetail's sight is merely good. But in one aspect, deer vision is spectacular: the eyes' ability to detect movement. Sit stone still and a deer won't recognize you at all. Make one little-bitty movement and you're pegged. Those big bulging eyes also present a 300-degree range of vision—perfect for spotting sneaky predators.

A whitetail trusts its nose on its own. A good whiff of a bad smell will put a deer on high alert—into deep hiding or sneaking or running off. But

way to get a confirming warning.

Wonders of the Hunt

Whitetails are fascinating creatures, worthy of our excitement, attention and fascination. Share the wonders of the whitetail—and of the hunt—with a young hunter this season. 

Native son Tom Carpenter writes about the outdoor world for a variety of national and regional publications.

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“Hunters who want to find native pheasants will have to do their homework and some serious scouting.”

The 2012 Wisconsin pheasant season has opened. Personally, this is one of my favorite times of the year, with great hunting and fishing. Imagine walking along the edge of a picked corn field. Your hunting dog gets “hot” and a magnificently-colored rooster pheasant flushes in shooting range. You drop it and your dog retrieves the bird on a nice November morning with an inch or two of snow on the ground. What could be better for a pheasant hunter and his dog?

The main problem is that pheasant numbers have dropped significantly

GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors Pheasant season arrives

over much of the country, including the pheasant states of Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska. The spring was warmer in most states than normal, but the rest of the year most of the prime pheasant states were in a severe drought with record high temperatures.

One of the main obstacles the last few years in wildlife conservation has been the decline of the government's main programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, which, for over 20 years, has provided habitat for pheasants and many other kinds of birds and wildlife. The CRP program has lost many of its enrollees due to high commodity prices. In Iowa the corn was needed for making ethanol fuel. Farmers can make more money with crops than signing up for the Federal government CRP program, which doesn't pay the farmers as much

money.

Wisconsin has lost much of its CRP land the last few years, and that means fewer pheasants. For the fourth year in the last five years, the Rural Mail Carrier Survey that the state runs has shown a decline in the pheasants counted. Postmasters in the 32 “pheasant” counties are sent forms to distribute to their rural mail carriers. Statistics that are kept and recorded are: route number, distance driven, and the number and sex of the pheasants that are seen. The survey is done in the third week of April and showed that pheasant numbers declined per 100 miles driven to 0.31 in 2012, which was a 26 % drop from the 0.42 in 2011. The counties that showed an increase per 100 miles driven were Lafayette (1.66), Fond du Lac (1.28), Polk (1.18), Pierce (0.51), and Dunn (0.48).

The DNR also does a spring



pheasant crowing count survey, which was virtually unchanged from 2011. This spring, 0.89 roosters were heard per square mile compared to 0.91 in 2011. But, the survey showed some large variations in project areas with declines and also increases in observed pheasants. The number of acres enrolled in the CRP program peaked in the mid-1990s with over 700,000

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CARPENTER, from page 3

core ranges after being shunted about early on. And don't discount opening evening hunting.

Strategy: Sit Tight or Move?

You've read this a million times. You know how to do it for the places you hunt: *Figure out where the hunting pressure is coming from, then take a stand on the deer's escape routes to those places, or in the places themselves, and wait.*

Gun Hunting 101. But how many of us really follow the rule? Sit tight. All day. Bring lunch. Change stands if you think it will help. I'll often move from field edges into thicker places by mid-afternoon, as deer finish traveling their regular routes and get to where they want to be.

You don't have to be the world's greatest hunting pro. Just being there all day and hunting with a purpose and a plan will make the meat pole sag that first night.

Gear: Make A list. Check It Twice. Throw Out The Junk.

Don't wait until the day before the

opener to line up your gear. Start early. Make a list, cogitate it a little bit, slash unnecessary items, add details when they pop into your mind.

Make preparation and anticipation a fun part of the hunt. Do it early. Avoid eve-of-the-opener scrambles. They're no fun and they're a good way to forget important items.

I've spent years trying to figure out how to manage what I carry into the woods. I started out as a pocket stuffer and looked like an orange Michelin Man. When fanny packs came into vogue, I'd cram one to the brim and hang extra clothes off the back, but then I had to hitch up my pants all day.

I then moved to a daypack, and that's perfect for all-day stand hunting. You can carry a lot of stuff and not really bother your hunting, because you only have to wear the thing out and back.

Pack something decent to eat. Forget about candy bars; they'll give you a sugar high, bring you crashing down, and not fill you up. Make some sandwiches, bring some fruit, a few granola bars or cookies. Lose the potato chips and other fatty snacks; they'll make you gassy and you'll smell bad to deer. Avoid drinking pop. Instead, drink water or Gatorade, which will

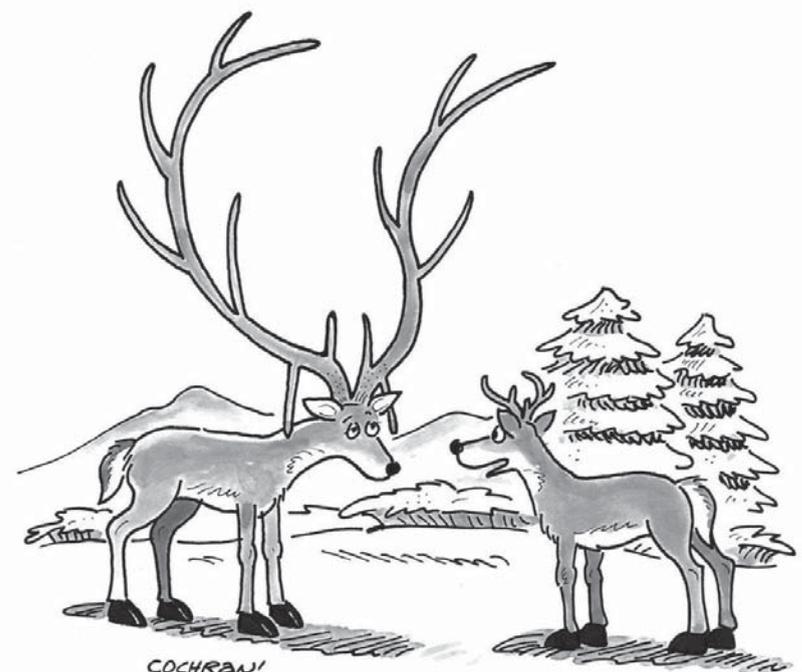
hydrate you, which is important when the weather is cold.

Conclusion

Opening day is better than Christmas, your birthday and a Packer game all rolled into one. Get your

attitude, strategy and gear lined up and you'll make the most of this day of days this year. Good luck! ^{OW}

Native son Tom Carpenter writes about the outdoor world for a variety of national and regional publications.



COCHRAN!

"DEER SEASON OPENS TOMORROW, LEROY.
YOU'D BETTER LAY LOW FOR A WHILE."

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes By Suzette

Venison comfort food

It's time for venison recipes again as we head into the fall hunting season. While I was giving thought about which recipes to share, I was reminded how much I had always enjoyed eating pot pies during my younger years. This prompted me to make my own version of a pot pie (with venison, of course) that brought back that "comfort food" feeling. ^{OW}

Venison Tenderloin With Sauce Béarnaise

1 venison tenderloin, trimmed and cut into 1 ½ pieces
¼ cup white vinegar
2 T. tarragon
1 tsp. chopped shallots
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 ¼ sticks unsalted butter
2 large egg yolks
1 ½ T. water

In small saucepan, cook vinegar, tarragon and shallots over low heat until liquid has mostly reduced, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

In another small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat until just melted. Reduce heat to very low just to keep warm.

In bottom of double boiler, heat about 1 inch of water to simmering. Place eggs and water in top of double boiler, whisking slowly until frothy. Add vinegar mixture and continue to whisk until thickened (if it seems that eggs are cooking too quickly, remove top of double boiler and continue whisking until cool). Remove from heat and slowly add melted butter while whisking continuously; cover and set aside.

Broil or grill tenderloins until desired doneness. Arrange on platter and pour sauce over all.



Venison Pot Pie

1 lb venison, cut into cubes
2 tsp. dried thyme
1 T. olive oil
1 tsp. sage
2 T. butter
1 tsp. ground mustard
2 T. flour
½ tsp. salt
1 cup beef broth
1 tsp. pepper
1 8 oz package frozen mixed vegetables
1 package 9-inch pie pastry

Preheat oven to 375°.

In large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add venison and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned.

In the meantime, melt butter in medium saucepan until just melted. Add flour and stir to form a paste. Gradually add beef broth, whisking constantly until well blended. Heat to boiling, reduce heat again to medium and stir occasionally until thickened. Add seasonings, vegetables and venison; cover and remove from heat. Allow to cool about 15 minutes.

Spray 9-inch pie plate with cooking spray and place one crust along the bottom.

Spread meat and vegetable mixture over bottom crust. Top with second crust, crimp edges, and make 4 or 5 knife slots along the top. Bake 35 to 40 minutes until crust is golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Suzette Curtis of Oshkosh cooks for a family of hunters and fishermen, and says she tries to fill their menu with recipes for meals made with venison, upland birds and fish. She does just that with great expertise. recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

MOERICKE, from page 5

All I know is, that, in over 40 years of hunting, he was the biggest buck I'd ever seen while having a bow in my hand ...by far.

He'd have to continue down the clearing and go around a big balsam if he was going to present me with a shot. Amazingly, he did just that, and I used his time behind the balsam as an opportunity to draw my bow. His pace slowed and I was forced to stay at full draw for what seemed like a really long time. Forcing myself not to look at the rack, I ended up taking a less than ideal shot when he somehow sensed my presence (maybe heard my heart pounding?) and began doing that little foot shuffling dance that bucks seem to do when signaling their imminent departure.

The shot wasn't good, and I got that same bad feeling in the pit of my stomach as I had when I walked into that empty classroom. (Most everyone who has bow hunted for any length of time knows what I mean.) The only silver lining I could pull out of the next

two cloudy days of searching was that I convinced myself that the hit wasn't fatal and the Nicolet giant still roams the swamp.

Lots of sleepless nights and second guessing ensued. The buck's image is still crystal clear in my mind, which brings me to the season at hand. I'm viewing it as a make-up test. I've done plenty of studying. I've re-positioned my stand, scouted trails, made mock scrapes complete with licking branches, and shot lots of arrows. I can only hope that I get another chance.

Anticipation is high. If the deer gods can sense my groveling and are willing to allow me a make-up test, hopefully this time I'll pass.

Just sayin' ^{OW}

Pass or fail, I'll let you know in the next issue how I did.

Dan Moericke is an avid and successful Wisconsin fisherman from Wausau and an occasional guest on outdoor fishing programs. On the water, he always tells us some version of the truth.

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Steve Niere of Watertown sends us a photo of Grandson **Jake Fick of Hartland** and the 16-point buck taken in Dodge County during the October 6-7 youth hunt. The buck dressed out at 250 pounds and sported an inside spread of 24-1/2 inches.

JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

Reel Recovery brings real help for men with cancer

Online Fly Fishing Q&A *with Jerry Kiesow*
Check it out at OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/FlyFishing

The man operating the electric motor in the front of the boat, the “guide,” said to the man in the back of the boat, the “guest,” “Aim your cast to land right between those two old wood pilings on shore. Retrieve fast enough so you can feel the crankbait ticking the rocks. That will get action if they are in the mood.”

The man did as he was told. Halfway through the retrieve, his rod bent and he was on to the first fish of the day. Success on the first cast. Not a bad way to start.

Where are we? Why are we here? Glad you asked.

We (I am in the boat too) are on the Black River, on the west side of La Crosse. The man in front is Don, a *fishing buddy*, and the man in back is Bob, a *participant*. (I too am a fishing buddy.) I cannot give you last names because we only mentioned them once as we introduced ourselves two nights ago in the first of many “courageous conversations.” Since then only first names were used, and I can never remember names.

We are in Onalaska attending a Reel Recovery retreat. This morning, the final morning of the two and a half day event, we are fishing for bass, or whatever else may find our lures appealing. No ... that is not totally correct. Not “we,” not “our.” I, as a buddy, am not allowed to fish. Maybe I better backtrack and explain everything in more detail.

Nine years ago, 2003, one member of a group of fly fishermen was battling brain cancer. Several guys in that “fraternity” noticed that fly fishing had a positive effect on their buddy. If fly fishing could help him, why not others? This prompted them to create a nonprofit organization they christened Reel Recovery. Since then it has grown into a national organization for men dealing with all forms of cancer by combining fly fishing with courageous conversations and, hopefully, ending with a brand new ongoing support group for those men.

Retreats are held year round in many states. This was the first time in Wisconsin. There are two prime groups of individuals at a retreat: the aforementioned participants and volunteer fishing buddies. Both participants and buddies apply through the organization’s website, ReelRecovery.org, by filling out applications. Each retreat is limited to 12 -14 participants and at least that many volunteers. They always try to get one-on-one matchups.

The organization’s goal is to provide a quiet, secure place where participants can openly discuss their disease and experiences associated with it. For a break, they provide fly fishing instruction and fishing opportunities, helping form and/or enhance a healing connection with nature. Everything for the participants is provided: lodging, food, equipment. The only expense for them is travel to and from the retreat. Most volunteers are from the local area.

The heart of the retreat is the courageous conversations. Participants sit in a circle. This depicts,



Scott had plenty of opportunity to practice his roll casts as he tries for trout.

“The organization’s goal is to provide a quiet, secure place where participants can openly discuss their disease and experiences associated with it.”

at least during this time together, that there is no beginning and no end to the connection between these men. The conversations are led by a facilitator, who opens each conversation with a question.

The opening questions were: “What is the name on your birth certificate; where were you born; and where do you live now?” And: “Name the least liked food and/or flavor.” Simple questions putting everyone at ease with each other.

Then: “Give your first name and tell your cancer story.” Not so easy. Answers ranged from prostate to liver, lung, jaw, and others—many with side effects and/or other complications. Some circle members were cured, some were not.

Other questions probed: “What main rules have you been living with that have helped or hurt you? How does fly fishing compare to your struggles with cancer?” And: “What do you want to leave behind as you leave the retreat tomorrow?”

While these questions were being addressed, fishing buddies were keeping the equipment in shape and planning where they would be taking each participant to fish. A couple brought boats, so there were opportunities for warm water fishing—mainly bass. Most would pursue trout in the many streams in the area.

On the morning of the second day, to open the fishing portion of the retreat, everyone gathered outside. The participants were shown a table full of vests. These would be theirs to use for the next

couple of days. Each vest had names of previous wearers written on it. These men would add their names to whichever vest they chose. Ted, the facilitator, mentioned that he knew that at least one vest, one he wore years ago, had 52 names on it. The participants then paired with a buddy, and everyone went to Pettibone Park where participants were either introduced to fly fishing or had their learning curve extended. There were even a few fish caught.

After lunch, we all went fishing with new, different buddies.

My partner, Scott, and I went to one of the trout streams the local buddies had mapped out for us. Like all streams in the area, it was small, narrow. The first portion we fished—pardon me—he fished brought him a lot of practice roll casting, lots of brush. Later, another portion of the same stream gave him all the casting room he needed. We saw trout, had a few hits, but no hook ups.

The next morning I was in the boat with the team I opened the story with. Tom caught perhaps 15 bass in about three hours. We all had fun.

In the afternoon the final circle formed outside—participants in the center, fishing buddies around them. Then the final question to the participants was asked: “How would you change the rules of being a man and what action will you take to have a better life?” The answers were short and direct. As each reply was given, Ted placed his right hand on the man’s chest, gave a blessing of hope to accomplish the change and action just mentioned, then ended with Reel Recovery’s motto.

After all had answered, the participants locked thumbs, touching fists. The buddies placed a hand on a shoulder of the inner circle. Together, they raised their hands, broke, and shouted the R.R. motto: “Be Well! Fish On!”

A final gift of a box of flies was given to each participant. Names and address were shared. A new support group had been formed. Another retreat was over. Everyone agreed, “It was a huge success. Hopefully, another will happen next year.”

If you want to get involved, or are just curious, go to www.reelrecovery.org. You won’t be disappointed. And, for you lady readers, there are also women’s events, but you will have to find out about them on your own. Men are not allowed.

Remember, if you have questions, go to our website: www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com, scroll down and click on fly fishing. You can email your questions to me from there. Now, get out there, wet a line, and enjoy. See you in or on the river.

Keep a good thought! 

Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors. He conducts fly fishing/tying classes at Riveredge Nature Center, Newburg. To keep track of what he is doing, when, and to enjoy his photos and read some of his other writings, including his book, “Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer,” check out his website: www.jerrykiesowoc.com.

PRESENTS

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— Fishing Guide — DENNIS RADLOFF

DENNIS RADLOFF

Late Season Live Bait Rigging

Using live bait is always an effective way to target muskies during cold water temperatures for a variety of reasons. The first reason being that live bait offers the most natural presentation possible. Another great element of using live bait is the ability to have a great presentation in the strike zone 100 percent of the time.

The varieties of live bait quick strike rigs are many and various. I have used several of them with varying results and success. My preferred live bait rig is a very simple system that a friend of mine shared with me some time ago. I make the rig using a 2/0 treble hook, a #2 walleye hook, 36-inch 120-pound test 7 strand leader material, one swivel, a small split shot, and a 2-ounce rubber core sinker.

On one end of the leader I attach the swivel using a crimp for the tag end. On the other end, before attaching the treble hook, I slide the #2 walleye hook onto the leader. The #2 walleye hook is supposed to move freely on the leader. Then I attach the treble hook on the other end of the leader using a crimp to secure the tag end. I bend one of the hooks on the treble hook sideways to be used to secure the treble hook to the side of the sucker.

Attaching the rig to the sucker is easily achieved by hooking the sliding



Don Lavery with a 44-inch musky caught and released on live bait while working a southeast Wisconsin lake with the author.

#2 walleye hook through the upper lip of the sucker, then attaching the treble hook on the side of the sucker located in the middle section of the body. The bent hook gets poked in and out just under the skin of the sucker. Once the hooks are attached to the sucker, I secure a small split shot on the back side of the #2 walleye hook to keep the leader from sliding forward, which will prevent the sucker from curling as you move forward. Finally, attach the 2-ounce rubber core sinker to the line just above the swivel of the leader.

This rig works great on suckers in the 14-inch and smaller size. I prefer to use suckers in the 12- to 14-inch size range because I have found I get more action and strikes on this size, offering more opportunities throughout a day on the water.

I also like the “hook up” percentages I get with this rig combo on the 12- to 14-inch suckers. They look very natural in the water, the

amount of hardware is minimal, and the conversion of fish in the net has been by far the greatest for me compared to other rigs.

The best way to get a great hook set when using any live bait rig is when the fish is running away from you with the sucker. If the fish is swimming away from you, go ahead and point the rod tip at the fish and hammer back with a solid hook set with a tight drag setting. If the fish stops swimming away from you before you get a chance to set the hooks, the next best option is to use your trolling motor to position the boat directly above the fish, and with the fish directly below, you can hammer a good hook set from overhead. 

Captain Dennis Radloff operates Sterling Guide Service. He guides on the waters of Green Bay and Southeastern Wisconsin seven days a week April through November. Contact Dennis through his website sterlingmusky.com or at 262.443.9993.

GATZKE, from page 2

he could place his arrow between the antlers down into the vitals. The buck ran 40 yards before tipping over. He found out how difficult it is to load a limp, mature buck into the back of a pickup by himself.

As we stood at the open tailgate of Tom's pickup, admiring his buck, he filled me in on the particulars of his last minute decision to try this new spot and aggressively mouth call to attempt to draw a buck to him. He'd thought about trying a new tactic and figured this new spot would be perfect for doing it.

There's a bond that happens when it's you and one of your kids sharing something like a moment of triumph. That type of camaraderie happens in deer camp and is best shared with family and close friends. Texting, emailing, or posting your experiences on social media just don't compare to “being there,” sharing in person a moment that gets to the core of who we are. There are things that only happen in deer camp that I wait all year to experience and share with those in attendance. In Wisconsin we have a rich tradition of carrying on many different types of deer camps, and the one thing they have in common is that they measure success in the experience of being there, not tags filled.

The day after Tom shot his buck, he sat down at the shaky table in camp, pen in hand, diligently logging into the camp diary his story of how his hunt unfolded. I looked over his shoulder long enough to read the beginning lines. It started out by loosely quoting the Bananas At Large song “The 30-Point Buck,” something to the effect of how his buck weighed 2000 pounds and with every step there was a sh-shakin' of the ground.

Oh, boy. Time to put on the knee-high rubber boots! 

Lee Gatzke is a member of NextBuk Outdoors, creators of tactical deer hunting videos. Gatzke can be reached at www.nextbukoutdoors.com.

**“I make the rig using a
2/0 treble hook,
a #2 walleye hook,
36-inch 120-pound test
7 strand leader material,
one swivel, a small split
shot, and a 2-ounce
rubber core sinker.”**

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MIKE FOSS

Diary Of A Wisconsin Bear Guide

Adjusting to being busted

The first hunter was cautious in his conversation. The second was the seasoned veteran. The third was the leader of the pack. All three were archery hunters. I only had a few spots left open for the 2012 Wisconsin bear season and wanted to fill them as soon as possible, so I sweetened the pot.

"I have this beautiful log cabin bunkhouse that sleeps four," I said. "I will include it with your hunt."

The next day Northern Wisconsin Outfitters' 2012 bear hunt was totally booked.

George Ruther from Vail, Colorado, Dale Bestul from Iola, Wisconsin and Duane Cherek from East Troy, Wisconsin would eventually make it to Northern Wisconsin Outfitters bear camp. George would fly into Minneapolis, rent a vehicle and venture four hours northwest into Wisconsin. Duane would drive up alone, and Dale had to make an overnight pit stop at

an old bear camp near the Wisconsin-Michigan border.

When the three were finally together at bear camp, I immediately noticed Dale was the joker. Duane, perhaps because this was his first bear hunt, was quiet and content to sit back and listen. George more or less knew what to expect, and if anything went wrong, the other two would finger point in fun that he was the one that was in charge of setting up this hunt. But, there would be no finger pointing on this hunt.

Orchestrating these group hunts can be challenging; the way the economy and gas prices have been, sometimes two or three hunters will drive up together, so everything has to be predetermined. These three would be hunting on a private section of 640 acres. Two would be traveling by ATV to reach their stands and one would walk in.

All three bait stations had very



Amigo Dale Bestul with his bear.

respectable bears coming in. Some were very large and these hunters knew it. The night before each season begins our guides and I have a question and answer period, trying to cover again as much information as possible to prepare my hunters. You only have one chance at these big educated bears. The tiniest details can make you or break you, and it was one of those tiny details that I forgot to mention that I believe cost George one of those once in a lifetime bears. I take it to heart when an opportunity is missed because I know the chance for a second bear of that stature is very slim.

The Three Amigos' preparation was flawless; their clothes were scent free, their showers were scent free, and they left each day with just enough, but not too much, hunting gear for a long sit. George was to sneak in, bait his bait station, retreat, sit and wait. Everything went as planned. He was entertained by smaller bears throughout the day, and, with five minutes of shooting time left, the big bear he was told about—the one he was holding out for—slowly crept in, unaware that George held vigil above.

The tiny detail that I forgot to mention? George knew it right away. The bear opened up the bait and laid down facing away from the hunter. Time was ticking for the archery shot that would never happen. When

replenishing the bait, the logs that cover the bait were placed vertical and not parallel. When the monster bear approached the bait station and opened the bait pit up, he laid vertical to the hunter, offering no shot. Without saying it, I knew it and George knew it; this probably was his one opportunity.

George hunted hard for the next four days and saw the big bear one more time. But the bear knew where the hunter was sitting in ambush. From the near miss on, his big bear would only come in after dark. Caution, and learning from mistakes, is the difference between wearing a tag earlier in life and growing old enough to have stories told about you.

Dale Bestul's hunt went as planned too. For two days, all day long, he had bear activity. On the third day, before his hunt, he said, "This is the day." Well, before dark on that day we got the call. It was time to help with a very nice 200-pound boar.

First time bear hunter Duane Cherek sat back and listened and soaked in the information that was presented to him. After day one was over, he came back to camp nodding his head in approval; no shooters, but it was cool watching those bears. He really didn't have to tell me his story on the third day. Duane's "what just happened look"

continued on page 22

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NEWS

Sage Events, Inc. has confirmed that Pat Reeve and Nicole Jones will be the featured seminar speakers at this year's Wisconsin State Hunting Expo, formerly known as the Wisconsin Deer Classic. In addition to Pat and Nicole, from *Driven TV*, the Wisconsin State Hunting Expo will be featuring an indoor, pop-up, 3D archery shoot. Mark your calendars now, because you do not want to miss the next Hunting Expo at Shopko Hall in Green Bay!

And there's more. Northeast Wisconsin Sport Fishin' Show is moving to Appleton! The new home of the Sport Fishin' Show is Players Choice of the Fox Cities. Coincidentally, in 2012, *Outdoor Life* ranked Appleton, WI the number one city in America to live in, if you are an outdoors person. To celebrate this move, Sage Events, Inc. will be giving away over \$20,000 in door prizes at the Fishin' Show!

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ENGBERG, from page 7

acres in the program. Now, with high grain prices, the CRP enrollment is less than 370,000 acres and losing more acreage every year.

The Conservation Reserve Program has given pheasants the most important thing that they need, which is habitat, and that is dwindling fast, as is the land available for pheasants and all wildlife. The future doesn't look bright, either, with more and more CRP acres being returned to row crops every year. There is little doubt that this loss of permanent cover has affected pheasant populations and other grassland wildlife.

Hunters that want to find native pheasants will have to do their homework and some serious scouting. Look for cattail marshes, shelterbelts, and a mixture of landscapes with some thick cover for the birds during a normal Wisconsin winter. Look for idle grassland that would be a good location for raising a brood of pheasants. There still are scattered areas that have wild pheasants, but like I said, you have to do your scouting and talk to locals and knock on some farmers' doors for hunting permission and to find out if they see any pheasants in the area.

The other alternative for the pheasant hunter is to hunt public hunting grounds where stocked pheasants are released before and during the season. There are 32 counties where the Wisconsin DNR stocks pheasants that are raised at the State Game Farm in Poynette, Wisconsin. This year the state hopes to stock 54,000 birds on the numerous public hunting lands throughout the southern third of the state. Last year



Author and Katie the Lab with some public hunting grounds pheasants.

the DNR stocked just less than 50,000 birds. The public lands where pheasants are stocked, and any other pheasant information, can be found at www.dnr.wi.gov on the pheasant page. Pheasants are stocked before the season opener, twice a week the first few weeks and then once a week till the beginning of December. The

season is open till December 31, and some of the best hunting can be late in the season when most hunters are home watching football games.

Be sure to pick up a copy of the 2012 Small Game Regulations (pages 12-13), because there are a few special regulations like the hunting grounds where you can shoot both roosters and hens if you pick up the free leg tags at a state outlet. There also are some public hunting lands where pheasant hunting closes at 2:00 PM the first few weeks of the season. Hunters must have a valid small game license and a pheasant habit stamp.

The season opens the weekend of October 20-21 and on the 20th the season opens at 12:00 noon. Opening weekend a hunter may shoot one cock pheasant with a possession limit of two pheasants. After opening weekend, the daily limit is two cocks a day with a possession limit of four birds.

For the purist or someone who doesn't like public hunting grounds, there still are native pheasants scattered all over the southern third of the state. Do some research and scouting in the counties that I've mentioned. Additional counties with a good population of wild birds are Dane, Green, Rock, Iowa, Sauk, and Lafayette.

Pheasants are tough and hardy birds, and if given a fair chance and some decent habitat, they will hold their own and, hopefully, increase in number in the future.

Visit Gary at garyengbergoutdoors.com.

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With 340,000 acres of public land and 18,000 acres of water, it's easy to see **why so many outdoors enthusiasts choose to hunt and fish in Price County**. On November 19th, during the 2012 gun-deer season, plan to attend a Wild Game Feed in Fifield. Contact us for information or to order a free Sportsman's Map 800.269.4505. [Click on Price County](#).

It's a Dickens of a Christmas! Step back in time with **carriage rides, Living Windows, a tour of historic homes, quilt show and Enchanted Forest of Trees**. Visit the Rippin' Good Cookie Outlet and enjoy carolers and

a gingerbread house display, all in historic Ripon. [Click on Green Lake County](#).

Fishing is great in the fall and winter in Washburn County. Over 950 lakes make the area a fisherman's dream. **The area is very popular for Walleye, Musky, Northern, Bass and Panfish**. Order a free visitor guide for a list of area lakes, fishing guides, bait and tackle shops and more. [Click on Washburn County](#).

Clark County is all about monsters! **Monster bucks. Monster holiday shopping. Monster snow activities**. Clark County ... for all the seasons of your life! [Click on Clark County](#).

Hunting season is here and Marinette County—*The Real North*—is the place to bag your trophy mount. Whether you prefer hunting by gun or by bow, we have acre upon acre of **public hunting land where deer, grouse, turkey and other wild game** are waiting for you! [Click on Marinette County](#).

Sparta may be known as the "Bicycling Capital of America" but there are also **300 miles of funded snowmobile trails throughout the county** to ride all winter long! Also popular is cross country skiing and snowshoeing. [Click on Monroe County](#).

A family memory ... are you getting together with family and friends on fall hunting trips, for Thanksgiving, Christmas? How does one say "Thank You" for a great experience? Give a lasting memory. **Wolf Pack Adventures can help with a certificate** for that great adventure,

fishing, hunting, dining, relaxing. Talk about it and click to see what Sheboygan County has to offer. [Click on Sheboygan County](#).

The Hayward Area welcomes families, friends, weekend get-a-way couples and Christmas lovers of all ages to experience an old fashioned Christmas with new modern world technology as **thousands of LED lights 'paint' businesses of the Hayward Area into a holiday glow**. Lodging, dining, shopping and special events make Hayward your only choice for holiday shopping and fun! [Click on Sawyer County](#).

The Waukesha Gun Club is Wisconsin's largest **shotgun only club**. It features Trap, Sporting Clays, Skeet and two enclosed 5-Stand fields (The only ones in the state!). Leagues in each venue are available all year. The club lies on 88 plus acres and is the perfect place for business or family outings. **Whether it be a banquet, shooting event, private party** or just a place to hold a meeting, the Waukesha Gun Club will be happy to accommodate you! [Click on Waukesha County](#).

Explore more than 100 miles of Door County trails this season while **hiking, skiing and snowshoeing**. With over 300 miles of shoreline, eclectic shops and galleries, performing arts and culinary delights, this is right where you need to be. Your Stories. Our Setting. Like Nowhere Else. [Click on Door County](#).

Visit Ashland this Holiday Season and take part in the **Christmas Cash Raffle** where you can Win Big Chamber Bucks! And speaking of Bucks, bag a Buck during hunting season in Ashland County! Shop Ashland the day after Thanksgiving. Watch the **"Garland City of the North Christmas Parade,"** December 1, 4pm, Historic Main Street. [Click on Ashland County](#).

Duck, duck, goose! Fish, turkey, deer! Whatever you're in pursuit of, you can find it all here! Pool 9 of the Mississippi is part of why this river is so great. Visit us along the Great River Road—we're open year 'round at the Grandview Motel. [Click on Crawford County](#).

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November & December set a slower pace by the lake. Fishermen are still dropping their lines from offshore. Kayakers are still launching from our South Beach. And now, with the opening of **Duluth Trading Company** in downtown Port Washington, you can outfit yourself for the season! For all the activities we have to offer, *click on Ozaukee County.*

The chill of Fall has settled over the beautiful rolling hills of Green County. **It's an excellent time to "tune up" your archery skills for the hunting season at Hunting Woodland's** indoor archery range located at 2830 County DR, Monroe, WI. Hunting Woodlands also carries a full line of guns, ammunition and archery supplies. *Click on Green County.*

Richland County is a great place to stay, explore, and sight see. Check out this year's 1st Annual Rotary Lights in the Park (animated and lighted Christmas trees). The display will be open November 21 – January 2. Check out our website for more information and a list of upcoming community events. *Click on Richland County.*

Adams County Petenwell and Castle Rock Parks, on the 2nd and 4th largest lakes in WI, are open year round for camping with heated shower/restroom facilities. **Enjoy ice fishing and winter camping** with immediate access to over 200 miles of scenic snowmobile trails. *Click on Adams County.*

Fall "turnover" time is here! **Great fishing on over 400 area lakes in Polk County!** Perch, Walleyes, Pike and Panfish will be feeding heavily before ice cover. Snowmobilers will be hoping for an early snow season on over **360 miles of groomed trails.** Visit the Polk County Information Center website, *click on Polk County.*

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A young Wolf River angler with a dandy stringer of walleye caught in November 2011. Photo by John Faucher.

JOEL KUNZ

On Wisconsin's Rivers Cold water river walleye and sauger

inches that have weighed well more than 10 pounds.

Good places for fall trophy fish include almost any pool on the Wisconsin, Mississippi and also the Fox River at DePere. The Wolf River gives up a few big walleye each fall, but the majority of the action there is for the large population of eater-sized males that usually flood the lower end of the system. Fishing is good from the mouth at Lake Poygan all the way to New London. All you have to do is find deep water and a hungry school of walleye using it as an ambush point. They may be sitting in the deepest part of the hole or can be found using the transitions above it or below it. They also use the back edge of the hole to trap baitfish or sit in the river eddie current whose swirling waters gather the weak swimming baitfish. It's the same at The Dells on the Wisconsin River along with other places I visit this time of year, including Nekoosa, Petenwell and the Castle Rock dam areas. Action is usually good, eater-sized fish the general focus, the ramps are usually open and they are all less than a two hour drive from my house, which is an easy day trip. I game plan by calling ahead, then supporting that local bait shop.

Sauger are another consideration in Wisconsin's fantastic fall river fisheries. When I was a kid, we saw very few and when we did, it was loads of little ones from someplace on the Wisconsin. Now things have changed. The Rock and Wisconsin Rivers have been giving up some nice sized fish. In fact, slot size limits that require anglers to release any walleye or sauger between 20 and 28 inches may have played a part in a rumored potential state record sauger having to be released. I've caught

some in the slot limit that I've had to release. That's OK. We caught plenty of walleye that day; it was CPR (Catch-Photograph-Release) all the way.

I've also been catching a few good sized sauger in the lower end of the Wolf River in the fall. The regulations state that there is no minimum size limit on walleye and sauger and that your daily bag limit is *five* of which only *one* of them may be a sauger. So please check your fish to make sure you are not over the limit on sauger, and, if you would, take this writer's suggestion and CPR any sauger caught on the Wolf River this time of year. I let them go on the Wisconsin too. If you've ever caught a 3-plus-pound sauger, then you would too.

Tactics are simple this time of year. For me, that is pretty much 90 percent jig and minnow from a vertical position working my bow mount trolling motor. I use one rod, keeping my off hand warm, and usually do better than anyone trying to work two, especially in some areas where there might be a snag or two. I suggest having rod #2 set in case you have to break something off. That way, the rest of the boat gets to fish instead of chasing your snags all day. You can retie while the big motor is running when returning to the top of the drift. *And*, if you are returning to the top of a drift in a group of boats and you are going faster or causing a big enough wave that someone in your boat *or another* cannot comfortably tie a knot, then you are going too fast. Just sayin.' The big wall of water can also put the fish off the bite. It's cold, so go slow. Fish are hungry. You'll do fine.

Ten percent of the time I'm anchored on an outside bend or off a transition and pitching a jig or trolling

a three-way rig with a small crankbait where legal. I do this mostly when cold or windy conditions force me to a tactic where I can keep warmer with the use of a small propane heater. That's not usually an option when sitting on a bump seat perched over a foot pedal adjusting for the wind and current.

Here is another fall walleye fishing observation gained over years of application. Have two like spots: one in the wind and one not, and you are almost sure to find the fish underneath the windy one. I like to make sure to plug all water intakes and never use my live well this time of year due to the potential for freezing. Some biodegradable RV antifreeze in the bilge and live well lines will keep them and the pumps from freezing and cracking, which can create a potential hole in the boat. I have seen it many times over the years. Wear a life preserver, carry a cell phone, make sure all your batteries are fully charged and that your outboard motor is ready for action in the cold weather. I always change my lower unit fluid prior to fishing this time of year just in case. Fresh non-ethanol gas too. Make sure your trailer is in good shape and make sure to bring sand for slippery boat ramps. Do your best to remember to pause and let your trailer drain over the water when launching or retrieving your boat. That helps keep water on the ramp to a minimum and cuts down on slippery conditions. Most importantly, be safe, have fun and catch some fish. 

For more information about the Wolf River system from Joel "Doc" Kunz, visit his website at DocsWaters.com or his video magazine at LifeOnTheWolf.com. You can find both of those pages and his personal page on Facebook.

Well here it is— my favorite time of the year to be on one of Wisconsin's great walleye and sauger filled rivers. Now, that may surprise some of you a bit considering the popularity of the spring walleye run throughout the state, but it is true and there are a few very good reasons.

First of all, there is less angling pressure. Many hunters are in the woods hunting or taking care of the many details required to be successful when chasing that big buck or doe. After all, whether it's the search for a trophy or meat for the dinner table, it is the activity and camaraderie that makes it worth the effort. Much is the same for fall walleye fishing as quite often true trophy fish are caught this time of year. In fact, a big female walleye is the heaviest of the year right before the winter ice-up period of low activity. That is because they are already full of developing eggs and feed heavily, stocking up on as much food as they can handle before it gets scarce. Make sense? It sure does, and it's the reason why I've landed walleye just over 28

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DAVE LEMKE

Outdoor Adventure Foundation Meets NASA

Dreams come true

What do the aspirations of two men in North Dakota, a Wisconsin bear hunt, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) all have in common?

The connection makes for an intriguing story formed by an interesting chain of events. The start of these events is when two men saw a passion for the outdoors in the dreams of young individuals whose health is less than fortunate. Brian Solum and Curt Kenner of North Dakota decided those dreams needed to come true, so they started The Outdoor Adventure Foundation (OAF) to make that happen.

The mission of this newly formed foundation was to provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor adventures for youths and young adults under the age of 25 who have been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. They also wanted to provide these same adventures to combat disabled veterans under the age of 40 who are wheelchair bound or lost a limb due to combat. In the next five years the concept of this all volunteer, nonprofit national organization expanded quickly to having 14 state chapters across the U. S., including Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Chapter of the



Ryan arriving at Bear camp.

OAF (WIOAF) was started by Mark and Kathy Lemke, along with some very dedicated volunteers, in 2012. Collectively they worked hard to put together their first fundraising banquet early in the year. The goal of the OAF was heartfelt by many in the community, and they responded with an outpouring to make the banquet a huge success. With the money they raised they were ready to make some dreams come true for those less fortunate in Wisconsin.

A Walleye Fishing Adventure

One of the great advantages of the OAF is the networking between the chapters for outdoor adventures that are available for the participants. The first adventure the WIOAF could provide came from an offer by the National OAF Organization and the Minnesota Chapter. They put together a walleye fishing adventure on Lake of the Woods at Zippel Bay Resort. A number of fishing guides were there to provide their services and asked the other chapters if they would like to bring someone there for a walleye fishing trip.

The WIOAF sponsored 13-year-old Riley Ross, who was diagnosed with cancer and is now in remission. Riley and his brother, Evan, had a great time and also came home with a 30-inch trophy walleye that would make anyone's dream come true. The WIOAF was so happy for Riley and will get his trophy mounted for him.

A Bear Hunt

Needless to say, all the members, supporters, and donors of the OAF have a passion and love of the outdoors and would like to give back to others the experiences that have given them great pleasure. One such person is Mike Foss of the Northern Wisconsin Outfitters (NWO), who kindly donated a black bear hunt to the WIOAF. Many of you know that Mike is a regular contributing writer for *On Wisconsin Outdoors*, and, at least to this fellow *Ellis Expert*, Mike's generosity came as no surprise. Now the



Ryan admiring his trophy.

only thing the WIOAF had to do was find a deserving participant.

In the next chain of events the WIOAF sponsored Ryan Jansen to attend Mike's Bear Camp. Ryan's condition has caused him to be confined to a wheelchair, and this was his first ever hunting experience. At the bear camp rules meeting, Mike greeted Ryan as his special guest and all the guys associated with the NWO presented Ryan with some nice gifts. Ryan accomplished completing a hunter safety course and shooting his rifle at the target range, all necessary elements in preparation of his bear hunt.

The bear hunt provided Ryan the challenges of a true hunt. The first evening Ryan had to pass on a bear because the opportunity for a clean shot was obstructed by a tree. After a couple of days of inactivity by the bears, Ryan got his chance to harvest his bear on the last evening. His ethical hunting standards and perseverance revealed the great character of this 14-year-old young man. Ryan was accompanied by his father, Scott Elliason, who carried him through the woods so that he could have his picture taken where his trophy had come to rest. The WIOAF will have a rug made from the bear for Ryan.

Many of the OAF adventures are filmed, and this hunt was no exception. Peter Mikhael of Big Rock Outdoor Productions guided and filmed the hunt

on land that his father intended to be used on black bear hunts for children with illnesses or disabilities. The film of Ryan's hunt will be shown sometime this fall on Battle Scraps (www.battlescraps.com), a website that helps spread awareness for these types of programs like the OAF.

NASA, The Medical College and Bears

Now what in the world does this have to do with NASA is the last link in the chain. Even though astronauts exercise daily, their leg muscles undergo weakening because they do not have the gravity that the leg muscles normally would have to work against in the weightlessness of space. This same leg muscle loss occurs from inactivity among people that are bedridden or those who suffer from a debilitating disease or injury. NASA has funded research at the Medical College of Wisconsin laboratory by Professor Danny Riley to study this phenomenon. The study uses muscle biopsies from these individuals to assess the process of muscle loss and suggest a means of prevention.

While at bear camp I discovered this intriguing study from Valentine Vogel. With an expertise in field research, osteology, and anatomy, Valentine suggested that black bears

continued on 21

DAVE DUWE

Fall Walleye Bite

Tactics for finding and catching fish

Fishing Year 'Round
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Dave Duwe with a late fall walleye.

Just because it's hunting season doesn't mean that it's time to put away your boat. As the end of open water fishing nears, the late fall bite becomes some of the most exceptional fishing of the whole year. But you have to be able to handle the cold. During the late fall months, I enjoy walleye fishing. Most of the summer is spent fishing largemouth bass or northern pike. With clients, it's usually a live bait bite.

In fall the best presentation is a crankbait. Whether it's casted or trolled, success can be had by all who are willing to bear the cold temperatures. Different than other times of the year, an angler can have success at either day or nighttime hours. However, I personally still find the first hour of light and dusk to be the most productive for numbers of walleyes.

The two methods I employ to catch walleyes are trolling or casting crankbaits. Trolling is a very effective way to cover water and catch a lot of fall feeding fish. I look for weedlines in the lake I am fishing that still have green (alive) weeds associated with scattered rock bottom. Main lake points are always a good bet. During daytime hours I troll 15-17 feet of water; during nighttime hours I tend to be in shallower water, approximately 12-14 feet. I feel that at night the walleyes slide up the weedline to feed.

My favored bait while trolling is a Bomber Fat Free shad. The color of choice is pearl with black dots applied with a Sharpie marker. I want to match the bait fish in the lake and resemble the black crappie. Your color choice may be different depending on your body of water. I use 10-pound silver thread to aid in getting optimal depth for the crankbait.

When trolling, my preference is a 7-foot medium light Fenwick casting rod, teamed with Revo

baitcasting reel. The lighter action rod seems to keep the treble hooks of the crankbaits from pulling out of the fish.

While fishing, I only use one pole per person; the use of planer boards seems to be less effective. The fish are in small (spot on spot) areas, so exact presentation is the key. I try to initiate a strike by gradually pumping the rod; this adds a very enticing pause to the lure. When getting a strike, you never want to set the hook. Instead, make sure that the fish has it and then lightly pull back. I seem to get bit more often when my trolling speed is 1.3 mph to 1.7 mph. With weedline trolling, the worst enemy is the weed itself. If your lure gets fouled, you need to remove the weed. Not only will your lure not run effectively, it also won't get eaten. Check your lure often and make sure it has good vibrations.

My second choice of fall crankbait fishing is jerkbait. My jerkbait fishing is almost exclusively done at night. In late fall the water is clear after turnover, making the walleyes spooky in the shallower water, less than 10 feet. My bait of choice is the Smithwick suspending rogue. The only color option is chrome/blue or chrome/black. I like using 10-pound Silver Thread on a medium action spinning combo. My jerkbait rod is 6'6" medium action Fenwick teamed with a Plueger President XT reel.

I find the best fall fishing occurs when there is wind. I always fish on the windward side of the lake. Like trolling, the main lake points are the best place to fish. Water depth varies greatly. I have caught suspended walleyes in 20 feet of water and as shallow as 6 feet of water. Keep in mind these fish are feeding, so where the bait fish are, the walleyes will be. I have caught 20-30 walleyes in one small location, so fish an

area out before moving locations.

The retrieve I find most effective is a couple fast cranks to get depth, then a couple cranks and a pause. With water temperatures cold, I don't aggressively jerk the lure. Most of the time, the strike will feel like extra weight or a weed. I use a normal hook set when fishing a jerkbait; you have more slack in the line and need to get the hooks embedded.

Good lake choices for crankbait walleye fishing in southeastern Wisconsin include Delavan and Geneva Lake in Walworth County, Pike Lake in Washington County and Lac La Belle in Waukesha County.

Make sure if you are fishing at night in fall that you are aware of your surroundings. Most lake districts remove their navigation buoys late in the year. Check the fishing regulations for any special rules before keeping any walleyes.

You will find the last days of open water season will provide exceptional successes. Be prepared ... it is fishing for the heartiest of souls. 

Dave Duwe, owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service, has been guiding the lakes of Southeastern Wisconsin for 15 years, specializing in Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Go to fishlakegeneva.com or fishdelavanlake.com.

LEMKE, from page 20

hold the secret to preventing muscle loss because they do not exhibit muscle shrinkage after months of inactivity during hibernation. This new study aims to find if the black bears have discovered a mechanism to preserve muscle loss and to transfer this knowledge to prevent muscle loss among astronauts and individuals during periods of inactivity. The black bear muscle assessment study has been funded in large part by the Medical College of Wisconsin and from contributions from multiple team members.

Together with individuals from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Bear Hunters

Association, and students, black bear leg muscle samples were surgically taken during the active summer period and at the end of the hibernation period. The next muscle sample needed to complete the study was right before denning, when the black bears muscle should be at its largest. It is not permissible to anesthetize bears in the fall because they could be destined for human consumption and medicating a bear before hibernation could endanger its ability to survive the winter. So the best way to collect these samples was from bears that were harvested during the hunting season.

From the cooperation of bear guides and hunters, Valentine was able to collect samples needed to complete the study. Not only did Ryan's bear

aid in the research study, but it may have helped his own plight. Isn't it unexpected how life sometimes comes around full circle? The opportunity for all this to transpire wouldn't have been possible without the gracious gift from Keith Polebitski. After many years of waiting to obtain a harvest tag for bear hunting, he transferred his tag to make Ryan's dream come true. Anyone that would be willing to do the same grand gesture would very much be appreciated by the OAF so that another dream could come true.

Since its induction, the OAF has helped many participants' dreams come true, and some of them are no longer with us today. Through volunteer work, donations, and gifts to the OAF, know that you have helped to create fond

memories that will last in the minds of these families for years to come. The WIOAF will be holding its 2nd Annual Fund Raising Dinner Banquet on March 23, 2013. For information on the event or how you can contribute, contact the WIOAF at wioaf.org.

As an OAF representative, I considered it a privilege to be involved and part of Ryan's hunting experience. I believe Ryan's comments on his bear hunt say it best for all of us: "It was awesome and it doesn't get any better than this." 

David Lemke operates Soaring Eagle Guide Service on his home waters of the Wolf River System and in Langlade, Forest, Oneida, and Vilas counties. Visit his website at www.1soaringeagle.com.

S. WILKERSON

Surplus Firearms *Chinese junk, or is it?*

During the 1980s, Chinese products began to trickle into America. By 1990, the trickle became a flood. Among the first Chinese goods to enter America were Chinese guns, most of which were really well-made and inexpensive copies of established designs. These included Kalashnikovs, Makarovs, SKSs, semi-auto M14s and the venerable Colt 1911A1, the focus of this article.

The version featured here is pretty typical of the breed. It was made by Norinco and is an exact copy of a pre-Series 70 Colt 1911 and all of the parts are interchangeable with real Colts, with the exception of the grip screw bushings, of all things, and maybe the sights. Made sometime between the late 1980s and the Clinton ban on the importation of Chinese firearms in 1994, the gun is built like a tank. Most of the inexpensive 1911s on the market today have cast metal frames and slides and MIM internals. Not the Chinese 1911. Every piece is made of forged and machined steel.

This is not to suggest that the Norinco has the fit, finish, and finesse of a Colt Gold Cup; it does not. Rather than a nice glossy blue, it has a matte

blue finish and more than a few tool marks. The sights are fixed and hard for a middle aged guy to see. Pieces that should be tight are loose and those that should be loose are tight. The frame to slide fit does not exactly fit like a glove, and the grip safety wiggles like an exotic dancer on a pole. Shake this Norinco and it rattles. Pull the trigger and wonder if it could really be any grittier. Push down the slide stop and risk losing hunks of epidermis from your thumb.

“But if you’re buying used and come across a Norinco at a reasonable price, grab it.”

But ... rest the gun on a sandbag, fire it at 15 yards with bargain basement bullets, and watch in amazement as it shoots under two inches, which, by my standards, is pretty darn good. Imagine what someone who knows what they’re doing could do with decent ammunition.

I bought the Norinco new in the box, sans box, about a year ago, for \$475, which may have been too much. I had wanted one for years but rarely saw

an unfired one for sale at a reasonable price or when I had money. If you can believe Internet lore, they can be found cheaper. I found the gun at a Bob and Rocco Gun Show. Price was \$500, which the dealer wasn’t going to budge on until gun show buddy Toothpick Jim interjected himself into the negotiations. He asked the dealer, “What’s wrong with you? Don’t you want to make money? You know this guy wants this gun; at least offer him one free bullet so he thinks he got a

deal, and he’ll buy it.” The dealer then came down \$25 and I bought it.

Cast metal Philippine 1911s generally go for around \$500 and have a pretty good reputation. For around the same money, I got an even better 1911 copy made of forged steel. This is not to say that Norincos are not without possible pitfalls. While fairly uncommon, there is no doubt that some were put together with out-of-spec barrels which will eventually lead

to beat-up barrel lugs and excessive head spacing. On the other hand, if this is the case, the barrel can be replaced by a competent gunsmith for a reasonable charge and you will have an even better pistol. Invest in some good quality internal components, such as a trigger, and you will have a great gun at about half of the cost of a premium American-made 1911.

Not that I’m advocating that you don’t buy American. But if you’re buying used and come across a Norinco at a reasonable price, grab it.

Patriotic Americans should probably be glad that Clinton stopped the importation of Chinese firearms, like the Norinco 1911, which now sell for less than \$300 new in Canada. If he hadn’t, the Chinese would have probably put a lot of American gun companies out of business, just like they did virtually every other manufacturer of anything. Their guns were cheap, reliable, and well made. Clinton’s ban on Chinese firearms was, ultimately, in our best interests. ^{OW}

S. Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment. Contact him by email at cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

FOSS, from page 13

on his face told it all after the big bear had come in and presented the shot.

“I came to full draw,” he said. “Just as I was about to release my arrow, the big bear turned toward me, looked up at me, and slowly walked away.”

“Bears do what bears do,” I said. “Anyone thinking that a bear hunt is going to be a walk in the park is in for a big surprise. Especially if you target a certain, monster bear ... this is not easy.”

After day three of any season, bears seem to know what’s going on. They know they are being hunted, and things slow down some. Duane never had another chance at a bear on that bait station. Camp was breaking up, with many bears down and tagged and the initial five-day hunt coming to an end. Like every season, Northern Wisconsin Outfitters’ bear hunters who have not yet filled their tags but want to try their luck again are more than welcome in the coming weeks.

I got the call from Duane. I wanted him to hunt that big monster bear George was hunting, but the big bear was still nocturnal. I told my lead guide, Robert Haas, that we were going to fool this bear and set up a new bait station close by. While baiting “his” bait

station, I had seen that bear a few times only 150 yards away in a small opening. We retrieved a hollow log from another bait station and placed it and baited it with totally different bait in that opening than the bear could relate to from previous experience. The stand was set up only 11 feet off the ground, about 45 yards away from the bait, but this time Duane was using his rifle. It only took six hours for that big bear and others to find the new bait station. The stage was set for Duane’s next hunt.

On Duane’s first sit, wouldn’t you know it, that huge bear came in from Duane’s left, sat right next to the tree he was in for a few minutes and walked away. “I couldn’t get a clear shot with all the leaves and branches in the way,” he said. “I didn’t want to chance it and wound a bear of a lifetime.”

On his second and last day to hunt, Duane was going to shoot any decent bear that would show himself. The wind was wrong, but we had no choice but to hunt this stand. As it turned out, the wind died down at the end of the night. The beautiful 160-pound boar came right in, turned broadside, and the shot rang out. End of story ... but was it?

While still in his tree stand and on the phone calling to let us know his bear was down, the big



Hunter Duane Cherek.

monster bear that the Three Amigos were hunting had the last laugh. That bear walked in as if knowing he was finally safe and turned perfectly broadside, looked Duane’s way and ... slowly ... walked ... away.

Next year. ^{OW}

As a guide and owner of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters, Mike Foss has harvested bear and many deer, including several record book bucks. Contact Mike at www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com.

DOUG KLOET

Fall and Winter Heavyweight Fights

Boat fishing in the Milwaukee Harbor



Here is the author, Captain Doug Kloet, with a giant lake trout caught in March fishing the Milwaukee harbor.

People always give me really strange looks when I tell them that I was fishing out of my boat in the middle of winter. The Milwaukee harbor is the place to go for brown trout and steelhead from the months of December through March. The most enjoyable way to catch these reel screaming fish is with a good ole' spinning rod and reel with 8-pound test. Trolling has always been the choice on the Great Lakes, but this is a very effective wintertime approach.

I will never forget a day last winter when my clients and I caught 19 brown trout and one steelhead in a little under two hours in a steady rain. The brown trout were jumping everywhere on the surface. If we did not catch a fish, we would have a hit on every single cast. The weather during this time of year is not for the faint of heart but always provides for an invaluable fishing experience on the Milwaukee harbor.

Spawning

Before I get into discussing times of year when these fish spawn, let me first say that this fishery is supported by stocking. The tributary waters off of Lake Michigan in Wisconsin are not favorable to natural reproduction of trout and salmon. This is because water temperatures during the summertime

are too warm for the survival of young trout and eggs don't develop on the bottom because of heavy loads of deposits. Brown trout will begin staging in harbor areas for their spawning time around late summer, with the majority of the run occurring September to December. Steelhead will enter their spawning areas from late October to early May. Most of the steelhead spawning occurs in spring, even though more steelhead are beginning to spawn in fall. Both brown trout and steelhead will return to the areas where they were stocked during the spawn. Lake trout usually spawn in October and November. Lake trout are also protected with a closed season from October 31-March 1. They are closely protected because of their very slow growth rates.

Locations/Presentations

During the winter months, brown trout and steelhead are drawn to warm water discharges because of the presences of baitfish. The types of baitfish are shad, alewives and shiners. Water temperatures in the discharge areas will be as much as 60 degrees in the middle of winter. The presentations that are best are crankbaits, spawn sacs and jigs with Berkley Gulp. Crankbaits such as Berkley Flicker Shads and Rapala Shad Raps work because they

resemble the baitfish. For spawn sacs, using a number 4 Gamakatsu split shot/drop shot hook with a swivel about two feet above the hook works best. Above the swivel set a ¼-ounce or larger egg sinker. Make sure you have enough weight to reach the bottom. One of my favorite presentations is vertical jigging for brown trout, steelhead and lake trout. Darter head jigs in ¼-ounce are the best because of the way they twist and turn while jigged. On the jig we use

trout season opens March 1, it's time to get started. Light tackle vertical jigging with a 3/8-ounce jig works best in this deeper water, which is about 40 feet. Once a lake trout strikes, be ready for a long drag blaring fight.

Safety

Safety is of the biggest concern when fishing this time of year. Watch the weather, because the wind can be of life or death out on Lake Michigan.

“The Milwaukee harbor is the place to go for brown trout and steelhead from the months of December through March.”

a Berkley Gulp minnow.

Seawalls are another great location for these feeding brown trout and steelhead. For these areas, I mainly like to use crankbaits, with Berkley Flicker Shads being my favorite. Cast them as close to the seawalls as possible and work back to the boat. Some days the fish will be really tight to the walls. Open water areas within the Milwaukee harbor are also good for catching cruising brown trout and steelhead. Jigging works best along with crankbaits. Most of the harbor is about 30 feet. Just outside of the break walls of Milwaukee is some of the best lake trout fishing on Lake Michigan. Once the lake

The best weather website is www.weatherunderground.com. It will give you weather forecasts along with wave heights and directions. Boat maintenance is also very important. Make sure everything is in working order. In below freezing temperatures, make sure to dress very warm.

So this winter, instead of sitting on the couch watching fishing shows get out fishing. You can always DVR the shows and watch them later. 

Doug Kloet operates Captain Doug Kloet's Guide Service in southeast Wisconsin, Green Bay Wisconsin, and Northeastern Illinois. He can be reached at www.dougekloet.com or 262.705.7415.



DARRELL PENDERGRASS

First Buck: One shot changes everything



It isn't always easy being the subject of stories for people who write; eventually the attention isn't what you want, even if your dad is the writer. I know this, and I've always said I'd keep writing about my son up until he shot his first buck—I'd rather stop too soon than too late.

Jack is 12 years old. By law he can hunt by himself, so long as someone is within sight and sound of him. He was pretty insistent that he be allowed to sit alone during the Wisconsin youth hunt

this year; I should take a position in a treestand safely off in the aspen, where I could watch and be out of the way.

We got out to our spot as the gray of night was giving way to the gloom of morning. Jack slid into the ground-blind, and I stumbled over to the stand. It's cold out. Over by the barns the water troughs iced over under the overnight stars. The fields around our farm were stretching out like crystal carpets.

I figured my son might be able to hang in the blind for an hour or so, then boredom or chill would drive him out. I sat in my stand, without a gun or a bow, alone with my thoughts. Was this the day? Would we see a buck?

There's a quiet little trail that snakes along by the blind; it's behind me now. I know through experience this is the path the deer take when they come. It's been that way for years. Every so often they'll come in the back door, sneaking in from the aspen where I'm at. It's not likely, though.

Hey, a doe. What do you know? I'm keeping still and staying quiet. I don't want to spook her in case she's heading toward the blind. This might be Jack's shot right here. We'll take a doe. Wait. Oops. She's nervous about something. I try not

to move.

Another deer; I can hear it. It's behind me and on the trail. The leaves rustle around its feet. I can see this deer, but I can't tell for sure whether it's a buck or not. If it is a buck, it might just be a spike. I'm not sure. But a buck is a buck, especially when you're a boy. My hopes are that it keeps heading down the path.

The doe and the mystery deer can see one another. They flick their tails in recognition of what the other one is. Eventually the doe runs off, but the mystery deer doesn't. It stands for a moment and heads on down the path. As it comes to the front of the blind, I can see it look up. I know that Jack can see this deer perfectly clear. Jack knows what it is. I wonder if he'll shoot.

A single shot rings out. The deer jumps. The leaves rustle and crackle around it as the deer bounds into the woods. Hearts are racing, breathing is deep. I come down the ladder and make my way through the woods.

Together in front of the blind Jack and I knowingly smile at one another. "It's a fork buck, Dad," Jack says. "I made a good shot. I know I made a good shot." We cautiously shake hands, because we still have to find the buck.

A short pause to collect ourselves, and then we find the blood and trail the sign for 20 yards. "There he is," Jack says. "There he is."

There a fork buck lies in the fallen leaves. A little fork buck. Jack runs his hand over the body of the deer. My son's smile is as big and as bright as it has ever been. My son isn't even a teenager, but since he could walk and talk he has lived for this moment. Through the years we have bought dozens of plastic toy deer hunting rifles. Under blankets and together on the couch we have whiled away countless winter hours watching television hunting shows. His video game collection is all about hunting, and he sleeps under a camouflage quilt. We have dreamed of this moment.

Filled with pride and with love, together we stood in the woods hugging one another as hard as any father and son have ever hugged. It's just a little fork buck, but it means everything to us.

And I've always said I'd keep writing about Jack up until he shot his first buck. ^{OW}

Darrell Pendergrass lives in Grand View, WI.



TOBIN JEWELERS

There's Something Different Going On There

Lori came home a few months ago and suggested that I visit Tobin Jewelers in New Berlin. "I had to get my watch fixed," my wife said. "There are two young Tobin brothers in there. They read *On Wisconsin Outdoors*. They hunt; they fish. And they're really nice guys. You should go in and say hi."

This wasn't the first time I had heard about Rob and Steve Tobin and their continuous stalk of, as I like to say, the *Wisconsin Natural High* found only in the field. Mike, an employee at a New Berlin business that stacks each issue of our paper on the counter for local customers, not only talks a good game of bluegills and black

Welcome Tobin Jewelers as our newest major sponsor. Not only will Tobin Jewelers sponsor their own column, they have a few thoughts as expert jewelers for the hunters and fishermen in Wisconsin. All of our advertisers enable you to pick up *On Wisconsin Outdoors* at 700 Wisconsin locations at no cost. ▶▶▶

labs, but he talks Tobin too. "You've got to meet these Tobin brothers," Mike says occasionally when I'm in his workplace. "They hunt; they fish; they do everything...you should see the pictures. They take your paper. I'm telling you...look them up. Their business is right down the street."

Back to my good-looking wife who fell for my charm and ripped-up flannel shirt and muddy boots in a Waukesha disco almost 30 years ago (really, it wasn't my dancing ability). I'm still not sure if, in reality, Lori's attempt to get me in a jewelry store in mid-July had anything to do with a looming anniversary on July 26. But I went, I saw, I talked, and actually ... I bought.

I came out of Tobin Jewelers, which also owns a store in Mequon,

with much more than something special for Lori. I came out knowing that there is indeed something different going on in there than you would normally imagine when thinking jewelry. Rob and Steve are third generation jewelers who initially caught the fever to hunt and fish Wisconsin, like so many of us, from their father and grandfather. It's an all-in-the-family addiction here, with some of the family favorites being hunting waterfowl in Horicon, icefishing the monster browns in the Milwaukee harbor, and deer hunting with bow or gun.

They are celebrating 60 years in business this year. Come see Rob, Steve, and their great staff at both stores anytime to talk diamonds, engagement rings, wedding bands,

jewelry repair, or just talk about the great outdoors.

There's much more in the Tobin backpack that will be pulled out soon and displayed over the next year in *On Wisconsin Outdoors* in print and online at OnWisconsinOutdoors.com. "Maybe we'll be offering 20 percent off for anyone who comes into the store wearing camo," Steve said. "But we will think of some great specials over the next year geared especially for the outdoorsmen of Wisconsin—and their wives and girlfriends."

"You want to hunt and fish more?" Rob asked with the look of a man who's been around the fields and streams, and the glass case, more than his share.

"Get your wife a diamond."

—Dick Ellis

ROB AND STEVE TOBIN

Tobin Travels

A different type of meeting

Every week on Friday mornings for the past couple years the entire staff of Tobin Jewelers came together to discuss evolving jobs, marketing ideas, goals for the upcoming week, and of course ... hunting and fishing. Well, maybe not the whole staff was interested in that conversation. However, with a social media craze and technology ever-booming, our meetings have recently been used to find ways for our business to *adapt* and use these positives, and even negatives, to our advantage. Don't worry. We are not going to get into that!

Not only are we trying to adapt at work, but we currently are incorporating many of these same strategies into our fall waterfowl hunts. All year we have talked with many hunters who are nervous for a low waterfowl harvest due to the drought that has scorned the whole state of Wisconsin, especially the southern hunting zone. We won't lie; we were nervous too.

After finally finding a day off in early September, we hit the road and headed out to do some scouting around our hunting fields and ponds just south of the Horicon Marsh. We had not been back since the spring turkey season (Ask Rob about his miss and how his younger brother had to show him up!). We can save that for another day. When we arrived, we found what used to be ponds and potholes full of water were now a mud pit. A few standing cornfields remained, but most of them had already been harvested and picked to nearly a barren field. I said to myself, "This is not



good. What now?" And I remember Rob answering, "What drought? Who cares? We will have to adapt."

So we hopped in the truck, and, with the use of technology, Rob pulled out his new "smart" phone and we went to work. We focused on terrain (i.e. streams, ponds where run-off filtered down into them, and even found a farmer with an irrigation system.) A full day in the truck, a tank of gas later, and about a dozen weird encounters with farmers, we finally found permission to hunt a pond that actually had water and a promising cornfield surrounding it. Although we were excited about our new hunting locations, we knew we were going to need more than just a pond and cut cornfield in Horicon to kill some ducks and geese.

We headed home, and for the next few weeks we focused our attention on our potential decoy setups, wind

direction, and, most importantly, concealment. We could write a page on all three of these, but to keep it short and sweet, decoys: Less can be more in small water, keep the wind at your back, and please don't stick out like a sore thumb.

On Sunday Sept. 30 at 5:00 AM, myself, Dad, brother, and our family friend, Chris, all met at our new water hole for a different type of meeting. The fog was thick in our headlamps as we strategized our decoy setup around the trucks. Indy, Rob's black Labrador, cried in the truck as we threw out decoys, and with *Stranglehold* rocking out through the speakers, we were reminded again that our favorite time of year had arrived.

By 6:15 AM we aligned the bank of the pond with the wind at our backs, ready and waiting for the whistling of wings above us. Shooting time was approaching, but the rise of the sun was nowhere in sight. The



direction, and, most importantly, concealment. We could write a page on all three of these, but to

fog remained thick, making it very difficult to see any approaching takers to our decoy setup. Three woodies splashed the pond right away! As we tried to keep a close watch on the wary ducks swimming in and out of the fog, shooting time finally struck and so did our 12-gauge shotgun's 3 1/2-inch loads on the lifting woodies.

With the fog sticking around all morning, the ducks seemed to be on the move and looking for some friends. The flying speed of the early migrators tested our shooting abilities. We connected on a few deep shots but were quickly reminded that a little more off season practice may be in order. We were able to scrape up a few more for an opening weekend total of four wood ducks and four green wing teal.

Although we could not have been happier with our outcome, it is not always about that. It is about the time spent with your family and friends who all love the same things you do. Or just being able to take a day off and not worry about all the other stresses of life for a few hours. All of us waterfowlers live for the sight of a duck with its wings cupped over our decoy spread!

We don't claim we are experts, just a couple weekend warriors like you with an addiction to a beautiful sunrise, the sight of one of the greatest migrations in the world, and, oh, yeah ... the smell of gunpowder.

All we can say is no matter what we do in our lives we constantly have to learn how to adapt. If you find yourself in the same situation, don't be afraid to knock on some doors and ask for permission. You may be surprised with the amount of landowners willing to let you hunt. You never know unless you ask.

Good luck and be safe! 

Rob and Steve Tobin are avid deer hunters and waterfowlers and fish throughout Wisconsin.

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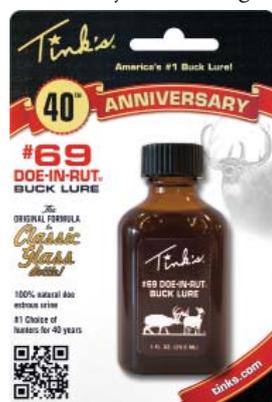
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Here's the rundown on six hunting or fishing products that you may find useful in the woods, fields and waterways. We did.

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Tink's #69. It's been around forever—well, 40 years—but that longevity is for a reason: It works, pure and simple. Because

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Product 6-Pack contributors include Tom Carpenter (T.C.) and Robb Manning (R.M.). If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it at ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

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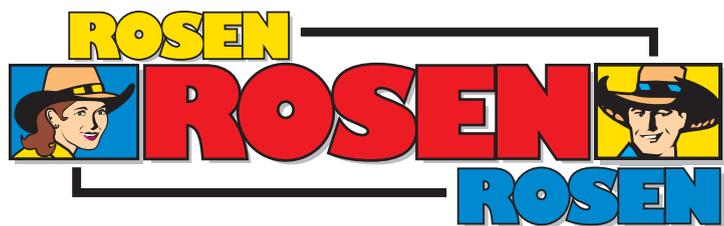
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