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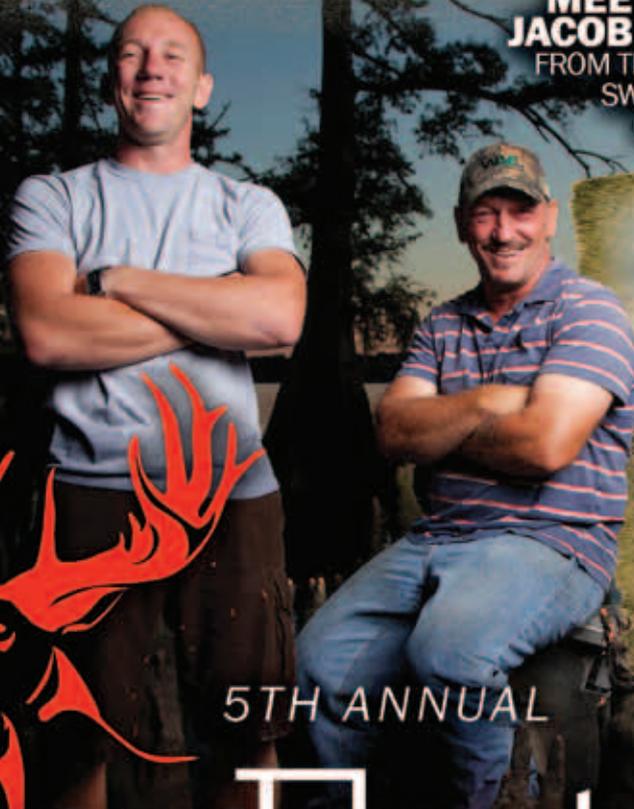
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5TH ANNUAL

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#### LIVE AUCTION

Everything deer from guns, bows, crossbows, treestands, optics and clothes will be featured in a Live Auctions on Saturday and Sunday.

#### WIN, WIN, WIN

Guided Hunting Trips, Bows, targets, arrows and more! All DeerFest attendees can enter to win great door prizes including hunting trips donated by Bluff Buck Outfitters, Hunts End Ranch and Edenwood Ranch.

#### FRIDAY NIGHT SHRIMP / FISH FRY

Schwaiss will be on hand Friday, August 8th to serve their famous shrimp / fish fry. Bring the whole family for a great meal while you enjoy DeerFest. Advance tickets recommended at [www.deerfest.com](http://www.deerfest.com).

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GARY ENGBERG

# Gary Engberg Outdoors

## Try drifting for suspended summer panfish

Recently I ran into Joe Puccio, one of the owners of Bait Rigs Tackle and the designer of the Cobra Panfish jig. This jig, with the kahle hook design, has been a winner in the panfish world for many years. Joe is an expert

on panfishing the Madison lakes with 40 plus years' experience. I talked to Joe at length about the Madison fishery and got the information from him on the pattern and technique he uses for catching suspended fish after spawning and

during the summer months.

Soon after the weather warms in the "chain" lakes of Madison and all panfish are done spawning, many bluegills, crappies and perch suspend over the lake's main basins and feed on the zoo-



Guide Wally Banfi with nice summer crappies

plankton and other small insects, worms and bugs that hatch from the lake's bottom. Lakes with a soft and mud bottom have a better bug and worm hatch, and more fish suspend on these lakes.

Puccio likes to have a buddy fish with him so that he can take advantage of the Wisconsin law that allows each angler to fish with three rods. Ideally, Joe likes to fish with six rods to cover the water column from top to bottom. The first two rods are fished deep with bottom bouncers and a 24-inch lead to a small Panfish Willowspoon (a light flutter spoon) baited with a leaf worm. These rods work the deeper water for perch, which usually relate to the bottom of the lake. The next four rods are going to be "high" rods fishing and covering the water column from above the bottom bouncer rods to the water's surface. On two of the rods Joe likes to use panfish spinner rigs with a small blade (# 0) and a piece of crawler. He uses larger split shots to get the rigs down deeper on these two rods. Adding and taking off split shots either makes the spinners sink or ride higher in the water. The last two rods are rigged with 1/32-ounce Bait Rigs Slo-Poke jigs baited with minnows, crawlers or leeches. The Slo-Poke is a swimming jig that trolls or drifts well with a horizontal presentation.

The bottom bouncer rods are close to the bottom, the Slo-Poke rods are next in the water column, and the spinner rigs are the highest up rods in this drifting pattern. Long rods work best and Puccio suggests rods at least seven feet long with a light or medium-light action. Don't use ultra-light rods because you have to make a sweeping hook set and ultra-light rods don't have the strength for that. The line to use is Berkley Trilene XL in green color for the stained water and 4- or 6-pound test monofilament.

Try to use your electronics (Lowrance) to locate both fish and forage as you drift. This is not an exact science, according to Puccio, and he experiments with adding and subtracting split

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DICK ELLIS

# On Wisconsin Outdoors

## Dethroning the King

More than nine miles off Reefpoint Marina in Racine, the first King Salmon of the early morning brings a wicked strike to a Super Frog Howie Fly and takes Molly Hall for a ride. Whether fish or angler will win the heavyweight battle hangs in the balance for several minutes. Molly works the reel to invite the King closer, and the Chinook answers with another line-screaming run.

“Keep reeling. Keep reeling,” Captain Ken Poludnianyk says again with a close watch over other rods set on the 36-foot Tiara to avoid a catastrophe of tangled line. The longtime skipper of Jack’s Charter Service should know. “Fish on” often takes on new meaning on the “Leader,” the charter boat with more tournament wins and top five finishes than any other Milwaukee charter boat. The Leader record is 14 Lake Michigan fish hooked on these Shimano rods simultaneously, with 11 fish landed.

Like any other workout after a long layoff, Molly’s strength ebbs with each King run despite a cheering section of David Jackson and me waiting our own turn on the rods. But so does the Chinook’s stamina. Eventually, the 18-pound salmon surrenders and Molly claims victory, but not without an out-of-breath salute to one tough Great Lakes

fish.

“I should have ...,” she says, shaking a bit of life back into her hands and arms, “... kept my membership to the gym.”

Poludnianyk—Captain Ken—and Jack’s Charter Service begin to target Chinook (King) and Coho Salmon, Brown Trout, Steelhead (Rainbow Trout) and Lakers as soon as winter lets go. The Leader begins the season in Racine to chase salmon in warmer water before migrating north with the fish as summer progresses to work out of Milwaukee’s McKinley Marina.



*Molly Hall wins the fight with a nice Lake Michigan Chinook.*

Throughout the rest of the summer the primary target is King Salmon. The strong population of Kings in the big lake means an angler can find a battle with a real bruiser at any time. Last year the Leader’s largest Chinook weighed in at 29.75 pounds.

“Later in the year, we will catch fish close to 30 pounds, and there are plenty of 20- to 25- pounders out there,” said the Skipper. “The Kings tend to move in for the rest of the year. If we have a full day charter, we can move 20 miles off shore and target steelhead or bounce



*Great tasting Coho Salmon like this one caught by David Jackson are one of five Lake Michigan fish targeted by Captain Ken Poludnianyk and Jack’s Charter Service.*

the bottom for Lake Trout. But mainly Kings will be our target for the rest of the year.”

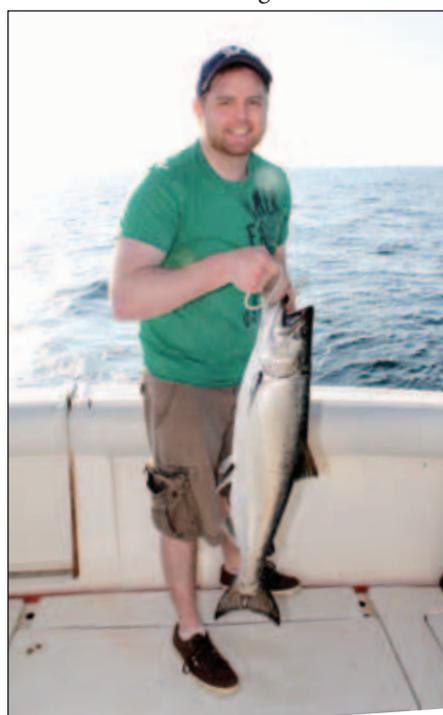
Jackson and Hall met me and Captain Ken with his boat rigged and ready at Reefpoint Marina with the first light of a new day. We walked into a tremendous charter experience. Throughout this early 2014 season, anglers have often been back to harbor with a five-fish limit per angler by 8:00 AM. With about 50 limits and just a handful of sub-limit charters already logged this year, the Skipper expected nothing less.

“It’s been very, very good,” the Captain said. “Fishing has been so hot; we’re all wondering when it’s going to slow down.”

The question was answered early on our trip. The mark of angling expertise comes not when things are good, but when things turn south ... in this case, literally. With a rapid and drastic six-degree decrease in surface water temperatures from 47.5 to 41.5 degrees nine miles off Racine in 150 feet of water, fishing died after Molly’s first King. How would the Skipper handle fish suddenly MIA on territory that had provided clients with many consecutive days of limits?

An hour later, after a calculated move to shallower, warmer water, we were back in the fish—and lots of them. In short order many Kings, several Coho

*continued on page 23*



*David Jackson with one of many Kings dethroned during an early summer assault on Lake Michigan with Jack’s Charter Service.*

## The Class of Lake Michigan

Ken Poludnianyk is also a doctor of Chiropractic and the department chair of chiropractic and massage therapy and clinic director at Herzing University in Brookfield. You might say that the professor, who fishes most of the summer, preaches what he practices.

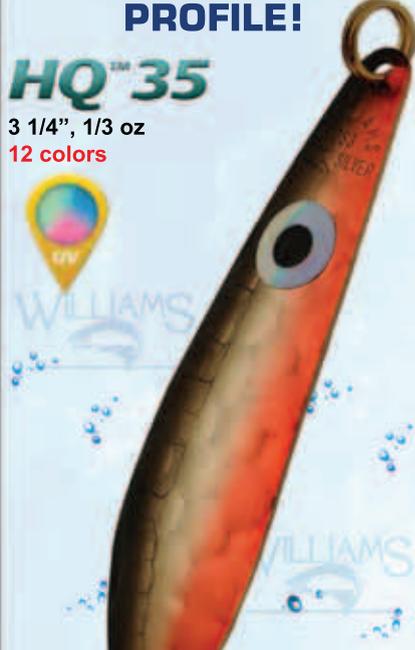
“We offer on-the-water training for anglers who like to fish Lake Michigan from their own boats,” he said. “Five or six people with their own boats can get together and schedule one charter. We’ll show them how we do it right on the water.”

The good Captain and his students are the Class of Lake Michigan. For more information, connect at 414.482.2336 or jackscharterservice.com.



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JERRY KIESOW

## Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

### The pros of going barbless

I am sitting behind my fly tying vice demonstrating how I teach the craft, and I say to the students, “I am an advocate of the barbless hook.” (I make sure everyone in my fly tying and fly fishing classes at Riveredge Nature Center in Newburg knows this.)

“Well, maybe I should clarify that,” I continue. “I believe in barbless hooks for fly fishing,” and then I explain why.

Do you use barbless hooks? If not, read on. Maybe this will change your mind. If you do, read this anyway, because you might find a tip or two.

For me it is a no-brainer. A flat hook will penetrate deeper with less effort than one with a sharp rising “bump,” which, in some instances, is double the height of the hook’s shank, though not always, depending on the manufacturer.

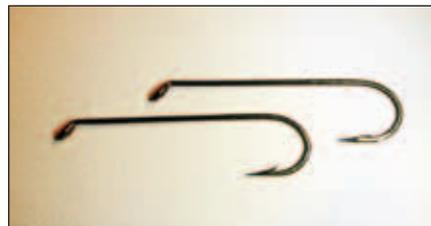
I can honestly say I do not believe I ever lose a fish because of a barbless hook. That doesn’t mean I don’t lose fish. I do, but not because I am using a bent-down barb, and that includes the big chinook salmon that come into the rivers each fall to spawn.

To emphasize that point (no pun in-

tended), last fall a salmon swam under my line and got one of my flies stuck in its dorsal fin. I had to break it off, as one must do with such a hook up. Later, I was into a school of kings that were cooperating beautifully, actually snapping up my fly. As I landed the third fish, I noticed that it had my fly in its dorsal fin. How great was that? I had caught the same fish twice within 45 minutes and retrieved my lost fly to boot. Even though the fly was barbless, it was still in the fish. A good example of why you can believe you will not lose fish because you use barbless hooks.

A caveat here would be I do not “debarb” all of my lures—only flies and small jigs. Why flies? Because, as demonstrated in the experience above, flies do not have the weight of other lures. Therefore, they do not shift around when a fish moves and/or shakes its head. It is this moving/shaking that loosens the hooks, thereby making the lure vulnerable to releasing. Thus, a barbless hook is better because it almost automatically sets deeper and is basically weightless.

I do not buy barbless hooks. I simply



Here you see the same hook with and without a barb.

flatten the barbs on regular hooks. And I do this before I tie a fly, using the jaws of the vice. Read on to see why it’s the first thing I do.

For decades I have tied my own flies, but like most tiers, I never concerned myself with the barbs. Years ago I caught myself—deeply—in the arm with a barbed hook. Two-hundred and sixty-four dollars later, the doctor had removed the hook and given me a tetanus shot. This was not a fly hook but it got me thinking, and I began experimenting with barbless flies.

On another day, again years ago, while changing flies, I tied the selected fly onto my tippet and noticed it still had a barb. I took my forceps to squeeze the barb flat. As I did so, the hook broke. Not good. I had tied the fly, carried it around in my vest for who knows how long before tying it to the tippet. Then, when I was ready to fish, I needed to crimp the barb and the hook broke. All that wasted time and materials gone in less than a second. So now I flatten the barb



Author flattens the barb of the hook with the jaws of his vice before tying.



Author flattens the barb on all his flies, be they large or small.

before I start tying. If the hook breaks, I am only out a hook ... no time, materials or effort. Makes sense to me.

One final fact to help you decide if you want to go barbless or not: the main advantage of the barbless hook is that it is much easier to remove when you practice catch and release, be it from a fish or from yourself. When it is the latter, in your body, you will find barbless has much less “ouch.”

See you in the river. Keep a good thought! 

Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors. To keep track of what he is doing and where, see his photos, and read some of his other writings, including his book, “Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer,” check out his website: [jerrykiesowoc.com](http://jerrykiesowoc.com).

DIANE SCHAUER

## An Update From The Field

### Greg Karch, angler educator

In 2011, I wrote an article for *On Wisconsin Outdoors* about “Angler Educator Greg Karch, a Man on a Mission to Save a Sport.” Greg continues to provide Kids Fishing Clinics at an incredible rate. He held his 100th clinic at High Cliff State Park on June 7th. Greg held three clinics during the two days of Free Fishing Weekend.

Greg has also been recognized this year by Wildlife Forever, which named him their “Partner in Action,” a national award. On June 5th, 2014, Greg and eight others received recognition as Wisconsin Invader Crusaders, a category of Individual Volunteer. He continues to educate hundreds of people a year about how to fish, and he always includes the message to “Clean, Drain, Dry” to prevent the spread of invasive species.

For more information on Greg Karch and his fishing clinics, visit [www.Learn2FishWithUs.org](http://www.Learn2FishWithUs.org).



Diane Schauer is the aquatic invasive species coordinator for Calumet County.



Greg Karch receiving his Invader Crusader Award from DNR Secretary Stepp.

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JOHN LINDEMAN

## Drag'n For Winnebago 'Eyes

### The big reveal

For several years, a close friend of mine has been throwing around an interesting description of a technique he uses to catch fish, mostly walleyes, on Lake Winnebago: "drag'n."

What makes that so interesting, did I hear you say? It's interesting because I think he crafted this description to lead me toward an incorrect conclusion. He wasn't being secretive, just securing the upper hand.

It's great that he resides in fishing heaven, situated between Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan's Green Bay. His beautifully huge boat is also fantastic. I'm happy for him, but can't I catch a few more walleyes than him on occasion?

This is how the typical phone conversation concerning drag'n unfolds.

"A mixed bag, including several walleyes," I gasped. "You must have been trolling. Tell me you were using my quick-release trolling weights."

"Nope to all of that," Jon Markley of Appleton, Wisconsin, cryptically states season after season. "I was drag'n!"

Since I'm supposed to know how



Drag'n specialist Jon Markley of Appleton hoists his second walleye for an OWO photo before its release.

to fish a little bit, I would shrug off my ignorance with evasive follow-up conversation and give him his props. "That drag'n thing has really been working for you on 'Bago," is what I usually forced out.

All kidding aside, we make a pretty good team on the water. By the time we get together each season, it's usually early summer and time to deploy the planner boards to search for active fish. A recent trip, however, brought this whole drag'n thing to a head. On this particular day, 'Bago walleyes were hiding better than we were searching, despite a decent chop on the water.

And then it happened.

"Let's go try drag'n," Jon said, barely audible over the hum of the 9.9 four-stroke trolling motor.

My heart nearly exploded out of my chest, but my body remained seated calmly in the air-ride seat of his German-engineered fishing vessel. My mind raced. It's not drifting, but could it be speed trolling?

Then the marching orders started coming. Get the anchor; leave some slack; grab the crawlers; get the jig box.

What followed was a few hours of the easiest and most enjoyable fishing I have had in quite some time. It turns out "drag'n" is the perfect description of the technique. Cast a jig tipped with a portion of night crawler and D-R-A-G it across the bottom.

Of course, I wasn't able to do it correctly at first. Much needed instruction and demonstration from my good 'ole fishing partner followed. The instruction included casting the lightest jig possible atop the reefs, letting it sink to the bottom. Instead of hopping it back just above the snags, drag it back right through the snags. The crucial step that triggers the fish is creating the

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TOM LUBA

## Head Lamps and Bucketmouths

### A young angler's calling

I was about 10 when I first read about night bassin'. Being highly impressionable, first thing I said to my dad when I finished reading was, "I wanna go night fishing."

I don't think Dad was too excited about the prospect, but nevertheless he said, "Okay, but we'll do it when we go up north on summer vacation."

I think he figured I wouldn't hold him to it. But when I brought it up, he knew he was nailed.

We hit the water about 10 PM, me with my aunt's closed-face Zebco spooled with Dacron line and a casting size three-treble hook Injured Minnow bait on the business end that weighed about a pound.

The night started out hassle free. Zap the bait out, with a large "pa-loosh" when it hit the water. Then the props sputtered and gurgled as I retrieved.

After several tries, my next cast hit near a log. Instead of just one loud "pa-loosh" when my bait landed, there were two in quick succession.

"I got one," I screamed. Luckily, the line was strong and my dad was able to grab the fish without getting hooked. It was only about a 2-pounder, but I was stoked. It made my vacation.

I hadn't thought of that night until we were out one evening last summer. Darkness had set in and we were slowly fishing toward the landing via trolling motor when I remembered.

No big ones handy, but I did have a smaller spinning sized Injured Minnow with me. My first cast sailed out. No big "pa-loosh" when it hit, just a modest "plonk."

Suddenly, a new splash invaded the night, and, just like years ago, I felt the pull on the line, then a loud thrashing sound as the fish broke water. I flipped on my headlamp just as the fish blew up out of the water again and landed back with a loud smack. I quickly got the bass in and slid it back into the water. All that there

was to see in the headlamp beam were a whole bunch of bubbles where it had jumped and re-entered the lake. The quiet of the night returned.

But it wasn't the last fish to raise hell with the Injured Minnow that night. We slowed down and caught a half dozen more. And in the dark and quiet of the night, when there wasn't another boat around to spoil the solitude, the timing was perfect to grab a small piece of the outdoor experience ... night fishing for largemouth bass.

That night brought back the fond memory of the first night bass I ever caught on a surface lure in startling clarity—something that no amount of money can buy.

In summer there are a lot of lakes that have a ton of boat traffic. Learning how to fish them at night might just be the best way to catch their bass. Just remember to store everything but the essentials in your lockers. Knowing exactly where everything is on the deck after dark avoids potential problems like broken rods and hooks where you don't need them.

Also, know where you are on the water. Getting familiar with the area you'll be fishing in daylight makes it much easier to adjust after dark. And be sure to wear your personal flotation device and a cap light or headlamp. Moving the wrong way and ending up in the water can be costly in the nighttime environment.

Make sure you have your bug juice, outerwear and line clipper ready to fight mosquitoes, dampness, and wear and tear on your teeth from biting line. As long as you are prepared, night fishing can be quite rewarding. And being aware of all your surroundings can turn it into a very pleasant alternative to working the day shift. 

*Tom Luba is a freelance outdoor writer and bass fishing fan from New London, Wisconsin. Tom fishes as much as he can and never gets tired of setting the hook....*

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GLENN WALKER

# Get After Summer Smallies!

## Battling with Bronzebacks

The months of summer have many great things associated with them: long days filled with sunshine and warmth, cookouts, and fantastic smallmouth fishing! To effectively chase these brown fish, as many anglers refer to them, I will discuss five lures that will help you catch these fish and look at key situations when they should be used.

**Topwater plugs** not only allow you to mimic baitfish on the surface, but they also put you in the position to have some fun when a behemoth smallie explodes up through the water to attack your lure. The two styles of baits to use in this situation include poppers and walk-the-dog style baits. Topwater plugs shine when smallmouth, perhaps located on a point, sandbar or rock pile, are feeding on baitfish. How active they are when feeding dictates how much action to put into your plug.

I use a walk-the-dog style plug if a bass needs to be coaxed a little into coming up to hit my topwater. I slowly walk it across the surface of the water, driving monster smallmouth wild, especially with the lure's ever-changing color pallet.

**Crankbaits** are a great lure, because you can quickly cover a lot of water and

effectively mimic several things that a smallmouth may be feeding on. These eye-catching lures look like the tasty morsels a smallmouth eats, such as shad, perch or crawdads.

Covering a shoreline, weedline or point is very easy to do with a crankbait. They are also a good choice in the areas where once topwater-feeding smallies have stopped feeding. A crankbait fished through an inactive school of smallmouth may help turn those fish back on to feeding.

A **Carolina-Rig** is something that some anglers won't touch with a 10-foot pole, while others rely on it religiously. I began to experiment with this technique a few summers ago with success. Remember to use the lightest weight you can get by with to maintain bottom contact and that your leader length depends greatly on the water clarity. I use an 18- to 24-inch Fluorocarbon leader with a 3/8- to 3/4- oz brass weight. Both of these items depend on depth and clarity of the water.

What you use for a plastic on your C-rig is up to you. A small creature bait works well for me the majority of the summer, as do shad and lizards. Experimenting with baits until the fish tell you

what they are keying in on is important to having a successful day on the water. Dragging this rig over sand bars, rock humps and along a break line can put some very nice fish in your boat.

**Tubes** are a great go-to bait when fishing for smallmouth. As we have all seen from the Lake Erie fishermen, tubes can catch some huge smallies. Using them across rock piles, over off-shore hump or along weedlines entices smallmouth into biting.

Every company that manufactures plastic baits makes a tube, and every angler has their preference of size and color. If you are just starting out fishing tubes, a 4-inch tube is a reliable standard. Natural colors that represent crawfish work well, but don't be afraid to try some bright colors if the water is stained or natural colors if the water is clear. Mostly, I like to use a green pumpkin tube with some variety of flakes in it.

Dangling a **Drop Shot** with a small finesse worm or other small plastic bait is an excellent way to pinpoint and catch cover-orientated smallmouths. Locating key fish holding structure with your Humminbird electronics is the first step to finding the right areas for fishing a drop shot.



A big ol' summertime smallmouth.

I look for rock piles, the tip of a point or a hump that has deep water close by and baitfish around it. Like fishing a Carolina-rig, I use the lightest possible weight to give my bait a very natural look. I'll nose hook a variety of soft plastic baits, such as finesse worms, leeches and shad imitations. Next, I make a long cast and let my rig settle to the bottom. Then I slightly twitch the bait, or, if there is wind or current present, I hold

*continued on page 25*

JOHN LUTHENS

# Summer Creek

## Watery childhood memories

It never did have a proper name, the finest stretch of water I have ever known. I'll call it "Summer Creek." Long summer days were designed for such a place.

Farther north, toward the county line, it met up with colder waters and higher flow and it became the Yellow River. It gave way to deep oak and maple valleys and then it was trout water. But back of the house where I grew up in Barron County, the creek was small and warm and nameless. It was fond of running through cow pastures, holding hope of bullfrogs and chubs.

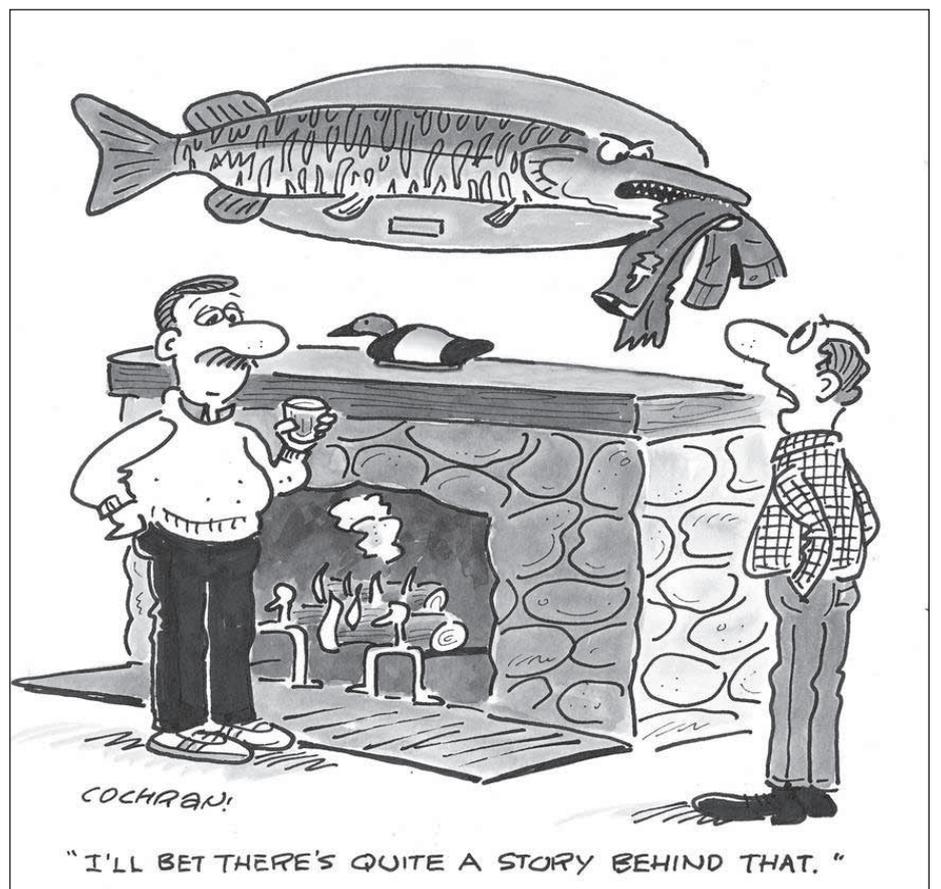
The water loafed along a railway track, and I'd put pennies on the rails for passing trains to flatten. I braved the tangles below the raised grade for lunches of

wild raspberries and blackberries. I was hesitant to be reminded of school, but I marked the thickest tangles as the spots where the grouse would be found in autumn.

There was a grassy island midstream of the widest stretch. My brother and I spent an entire summer building a rough-hewn bridge and island encampment that would have made Huckleberry Finn proud. We set off firecrackers on the Fourth of July to celebrate our construction prowess. The farmer who owned the land hiked over to see about the ruckus and to make sure we weren't burning down the island. He shook his head and smiled in remembrance of his own misspent youth.

One humid morning we enticed a

*continued on page 25*



DAVE DUWE

## Bigger Isn't Always Better

### Small lures catch large fish

For years, everybody has talked about big baits catching big fish; however, being a guide, I figured out that that isn't the panacea it's made out to be. I've been using small lures and small baits for the past two decades and have amazed clients with how small a lure can be and still catch very large fish. The biggest factor in downsizing your presentation is that earlier in the year all the bait fish and minnows are very small. So by downsizing, you are matching the food source in the lake. In addition to downsizing the lure, I have found that small hooks will present the bait in a more natural and more productive way.

For live bait fishing, my favorite presentation is the split shot rig, which is a small number 12 Kahle hook with a small

round split shot. I find that the small hook with the ultra-small split shot is such a subtle approach that the fish are fooled easier. The split shot rig that I've been using exclusively since I began guiding has become my go-to presentation no matter what body of water I am on. With the small split shot rig, I have caught largemouth as big as seven pounds and 8-pound walleyes.

On Lake Geneva or other lakes with a significant smallmouth bass population, when the fish are in pre-spawn or scattered within the water column, I find that they are chasing the pods of bait fish. When they are actively feeding in this manner, you want to mimic the bait fish as much as possible. My best success has come on Arkie's pink-headed Shinee

Hineees, which look like small shiner minnows within the lake. The presentation is important in imitating the swimming bait fish. A long cast and slow jerky retrieve will imitate best.

In the case of walleyes, most people like to use 4- to 4 ½-inch stick baits, but in lakes like Delavan Lake, after the crappies spawn, there is a plethora of 1 ½- to 2-inch crappies that the walleyes aggressively feed on. To match the bait fish, I prefer to troll 1- to 2-inch crankbaits. I like to troll the crankbaits with small Church planer boards. Being that it is a crappie food source, I use a pearl-colored crankbait and add black specs with a Sharpie marker. Most of my small crankbaits that are used are either 300 series Bandits or Arkie crappie crankbaits. The

A split-shot rigged crappie caught on Lake Geneva



smaller crankbait will out-fish the larger presentation by about five to one.

Just because the lure is designed for crappies or panfish doesn't mean that it only works for those fish. Depending on the time of year, a smaller bait will work better for larger game fish. 

Dave Duwe is owner of Dave Duwe's Guide service and has been guiding the lakes of south-eastern Wisconsin for 15 years, specializing in Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Find him at [fishlakegeneva.com](http://fishlakegeneva.com) or [fishdelavanlake.com](http://fishdelavanlake.com).

MIKE YURK

## Bassology

### The first sinking worm

It seems plastic baits in general have become a major part of bass fishing. I remember the first time I saw a plastic worm when I was a kid and saying to myself, "How can anything get caught on this?"

Some years later, as I got into bass fishing, I realized how wrong I had been with my first assessment of plastic worms. I discovered plastic worms, as well as any number of other plastic baits, are dynamite on bass.

In the last few years, sinking worms fished either Texas rigged or wacky style have been the rage in bass fishing. It is easy to forget sinking worms have actually been around for at least 30 years, if not longer.

#### Bill's Worm

I was first introduced to a worm called "Bill's Worm" in the late 1980s by a fisherman who fished for bass on smaller lakes in Waushara County in eastern Wisconsin. Bill's Worm is a pre-rigged 6-inch worm on a three hook rig. The worm sank in the water by itself without any extra weight. It had a monofilament leader with a loop on the end we attached to a swivel on our line, fishing it without any other weight. We fished above weed beds on one of these small lakes and ran the

worm right over the top.

Bass came out of the weeds to slam the worm and we had a good day of fishing. I had forgotten about Bill's Worms for a number of years after that. A couple of years ago another fishing buddy and I decided to try them again. I spent a few days fishing them, now in northwestern Wisconsin bass lakes, and found them to be just as effective, so I added them to my arsenal of plastic bass baits.

#### Now Known As "The Worm"

Since I first started fishing Bill's Worms in the 1980s, the bait went through a couple of different owners and a name change. It is now simply called "The Worm."

The Worm comes in three sizes: 8-inch Magnum, 6 ¼-inch Standard, and a 4-inch Junior. They are rigged with either regular hooks or weedless hooks. They still have three hooks, except the Standard size weedless, which has only two hooks. The Junior size does not come with weedless hooks.

I have found the Standard size works well for most of my fishing. It comes in 50 different colors, so there is a variety to choose from. My favorite colors are either grape or purple, plain by themselves or

with a red tail, and brown with an orange tail.

The Worm is designed to twist and turn in the water as it is retrieved. To reduce line twist and to maintain the action of the bait, it is necessary to attach it to a ball-bearing swivel. The Worm is heavy enough to cast by itself. I have found that using 6- or 8- pound line on a light to medium spinning light rod seems to work the best with The Worm. Heavier line or rods will make it more difficult to both cast and get the desired action from The Worm.

A split shot placed just above the swivel works well, but my experience has shown that the split shot is not necessary unless you want the worm to drop faster in the water. However, I have found that in addition to the twisting and turning the bait goes through as it is retrieved, it also drops in the water with a very casual movement fish find attractive, which might be lost if the split shot is used.

As I found some 30 years ago, Bill's Worm—and now The Worm—is ideal to fish over weed beds. It brings fish out of the weeds to attack it. I found the technique of lifting the rod tip to move the bait and then reeling up the slack, which works on all plastics, works with The



The Worm, a pre-rigged plastic worm, was one of the earliest sinking worms. Mike Yurk shows off a bass taken with The Worm that was worked over a weed bed in a northwestern Wisconsin lake.

Worm. Also, a slow and steady retrieve can be effective.

Although The Worm has been around for a while, it is still a valuable plastic bait worth adding to the tackle box. 

Mike Yurk has published more than 600 articles in national and regional outdoor publications. He has published five books on outdoor subjects. He is a retired Army officer and lives in Hudson, Wisconsin. Contact Mike at [bassinmajor@yahoo.com](mailto:bassinmajor@yahoo.com).

DENNY MURAWSKA

## Fish Of 10,000 Casts? Not with a good guide

If you are like most anglers, you might have some inherent resistance to hiring a guide. First of all, it costs money; they don't come cheap. Secondly, and I believe this to be an important factor, you are admitting your own ignorance. I hate to say it is a man thing, kind of like asking for directions, but it is true. Of course you are experienced. You may know the waters intimately. Still, you have more lean days than you wish. This is particularly true when fishing for musky. Pride gets in the way of success. There are times when only a superb guide can provide a productive day on the water.

DNR stats claim it takes 30 to 50 hours to catch a legal musky. We have all heard of the "fish of 10,000 casts." I have a friend, Kevin Munson, who keeps meticulous records of his catches, and he can verify he catches one fish every 3.9 hours on guided trips. This is no exag-

geration. He has caught only one while fishing by himself. I have fished with him and he shares his picture—big, fat muskellunge boated at a phenomenal rate. In four seasons, he has taken 48 trips, with over 300 hours on the water. The final tally was 80 fish between 30 and over 50 inches. I caught my first legal musky on a guided trip with him, and we had a flurry of activity involving three fish in 10 minutes, solidly hooked with two boated. Being this happened at the beginning of our day, I felt like it was going to be much easier than it actually was. Beginner's luck.

To me, being with a guide is like having a savvy, wary old buck showing you the subtle details of his territory. Take all the mental notes you wish, but you will not likely duplicate any success you have with a guide when on your own. As the seasons progress, fish behavior changes and spots that were promising in June

become stagnant as fall approaches. New techniques are required for an action-filled day.

I see certain characteristics in the competent guides I have been fortunate to fish with. Most are very understated. They go about the business of keeping you in productive areas with a smoothness of activity that seems effortless. Many of the Mexican guides I have fished with from small pangas are almost silent. Some sing. They are happy to be on the water as well. They have taken me to places where I would have had absolutely no chance of getting by myself and kept me safe in seas that require absolute concentration and flexibility to navigate. Even here in Wisconsin, unfamiliar waters can present hazards best not faced alone.

Finally, there is camaraderie: stories to hear and stories to tell. Sharing of

Caught by author with  
OWO's Phil Schweik.



sights and sounds of those special spots filled with those mysterious beings we chase with hook and line. Never, ever view a guide as being too expensive. The memories they can provide have a value far beyond a dollar sign. *WO*

Denny Murawska has been a contributor to the wacky UP Magazine, Wishigan, Verse Wisconsin, and The Pulse. His church is the pine cathedral that surrounds him at his home near Black River Falls.

PHIL SCHWEIK

## Dog Day Muskies The hotter the better

We have all heard it: the dog days of summer are not the time to catch a big musky. With over 40 years on Wisconsin waters pounding for big fish, the cold facts tell a different story. Some of my largest muskies have come during the sweltering days of July and August.

When targeting muskies during the hot summer months, where are these fish going to be? Don't randomly work water hoping for a strike. Follow a plan, consisting of three main principles that will help you locate fish and trigger the strike despite dog day conditions.

Find the right location. Without the right location, the rest of the rules don't apply. I start the search looking for one of two things: current or depth. Heavy current areas below dams, falls, or even neck-down areas on lakes or streams can cause an increase in water flow often conducive to holding fish. Moving water is always an important factor when looking for fish, particularly during the summer. Wind plays a role as well. It

can create its own current and cause fish to move up on certain areas.

Depth is also a factor that too many anglers don't consider. They fish the same areas all season long. Some days they may find active fish but often they do not. They incorrectly conclude that the fish just weren't biting. You may not be catching fish, but they are biting somewhere. I have been fishing musky tournaments for 15 years and cannot recall one tournament when a fish wasn't caught. Someone, or many fishermen, will figure out a pattern, and depth usually is a key element, especially during the hot summer months.

Fish don't typically like warm water temperatures and will move to areas that offer cooler habitat, which can be under docks, in green weeds, by submerged wood, or they move very deep. Look at each potential holding point and determine which location, or locations, is holding active fish.

The second factor is speed. This is



Dave Krueger won the contestants division and Phil Schweik the guides division in the 2010 World Musky Hunt on Lake Tomahawk, fishing deep water on a hot August afternoon implementing the author's three-step plan.

easy. When it's hot, muskies become lethargic and don't want to move much. Trying to entice a strike using a lure that resembles actual prey moving in a normal fashion is probably not the best idea. It sounds good, and in theory it should work. But despite the apparent contradiction, the faster, more erratical-

ly you can move your lure the better the chance to move that lethargic fish.

You are hoping to trigger a reaction strike. Dog day muskies are not heavily feeding, but they will instinctively react and strike a lure offered with a different

*continued on page 24*

DAN MOERICKE

# An 'Up Nort' Report

## Pass it on

I've had a fishing pole in my hand as long as I can remember. My parents loved to fish for perch, and by the time I turned three I was in the boat with them ... cane pole in hand. After that I graduated to a spinning rod, throwing poppers for bluegills on the Marion Pond. Trout fishing, first with live bait and then with flies, followed. I was fortunate to grow up in a fishing family.

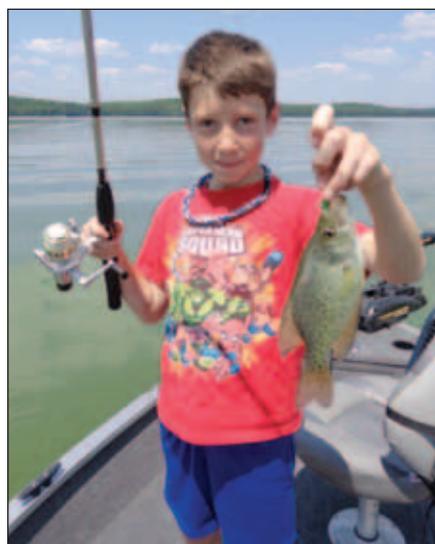
These days, however, kids' lives are filled with the ever-present cell phones, iPods, iPads, Gameboys, and lots of other electronic stuff that I don't know and don't care about. Instant/constant electronic/musical stimulation is the name of the game. Something as mundane as fishing, where action is not guaranteed and it is possible to go for an entire day without so much as a bite, well, that just seems boring. Worst of all, there may not even be a cell phone signal on some of the remote lakes! Yikes!

Which brings me to what showed up in my mailbox yesterday: my annual notification from the Eagle River Chamber of Commerce regarding the Guides/Kids Day scheduled for Thursday July 10th. Members of the Eagle River Guides Association and other fishing enthusiasts donate an afternoon to take kids fishing on area lakes. This will mark the 34th year that this event has taken place, thanks to guys like longtime guide Marv "Bwana" Elliott and his cronies.

A friend of mine, who like me is *not* a guide, suggested that I join in on the event 12 years ago. With more than a few reservations, I agreed to take part. I remember the first year that I participated, wondering what I had gotten myself into and, "what in the world am I going to talk about with two little kids for four hours?"

I needn't have worried ... not that year or any year since. Every year I've been pleasantly surprised at how two kids can meet for the first time, instantly become friends, and carry on a conversation about anything and everything they've ever done or ever will do. In addition, with all of the negative press that surrounds today's youth, I've come away from the event each year impressed by the polite, well-mannered kids that still exist.

One of my favorite memories occurred five or six years ago. I had two boys in my boat, one from Texas and



*It doesn't take a large fish for a kid to have a big day.*

one from Illinois, ages roughly 11 and 6, respectively. We had set up on a weed edge and were fishing for crappies, which were cooperating nicely, and everyone was busy. On the other side of the boat, I'd thrown a slip bobber rigged with a leech into deeper water, hoping for a bass or a walleye. When the slip bobber went down, I handed the rod to the older boy and told him to set the hook. He did and the battle was on! We could tell it was a good fish, and the boy was doing a nice job of playing it toward the boat when the younger boy said that he wanted to fight it. Without hesitation, the older boy handed him the rod and let him complete the job. When I slid the net under the 21-inch walleye, there were high-fives all around. As it turned out, it was the biggest walleye of the day, which, thanks to a local taxidermist, was mounted free of charge. (I'm still not sure which boy ended up getting the mount.) When event coordinators asked the boys who caught it, they said in unison, "We both did." How do you beat that?

I know the Guides/Kids Day concept is replicated in various forms in many communities around the state. It's a great opportunity to introduce kids to the sport we all love. If you can be in the Eagle River area on July 10th and would like to participate, you can contact Bill Hessey at 715.479.7395 or sign up at Eagle River Sports. Alternatively, if you have the opportunity to participate in a similar event near you, do it. You'll be glad you did.

I was fortunate to be born into a fishing family. It's a great part of my life in the 'nort' woods. I've passed it on to my

*continued on page 24*



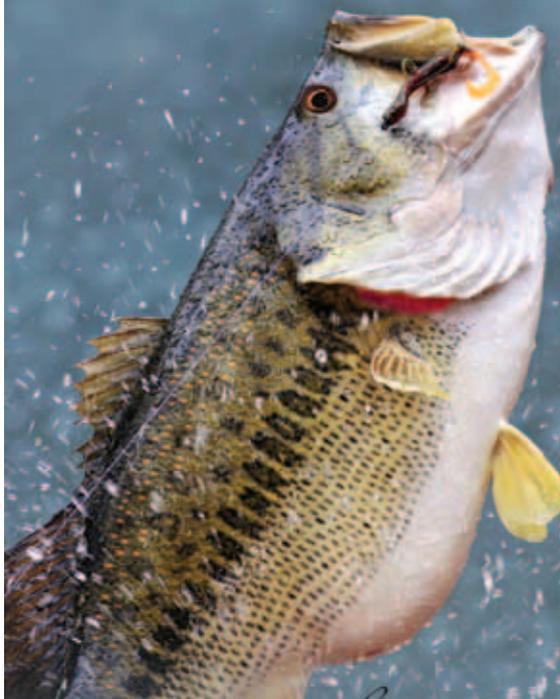
DIANE SCHAUER

## Kids Don't Float

*In the last issue of OWO I wrote about the "Kids Don't Float" program that was launched by the WDNR in 2012. It was mentioned that there would be a new lifejacket loaner station at High Cliff State Park in 2014. The photo shows the new box, built by Collin Haese as an Eagle Scout Project for Troop 81 in Neenah. Eleven "Kids Don't Float" stations are pending for 2014. Look for one near your favorite boat launch.* 

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**CLAY HELLER**

# Muskies On Top

## An explosive experience

While every technique has its own unique adrenalin-producing moments, whether it's seeing a big musky that appears to be hypnotized behind your favorite glide bait, or seeing a musky appear out of nowhere while dead sticking your favorite crankbait, or the sound of the clicker going off while trolling open water, none of these will get your heart racing quite as fast as a huge topwater strike. In my opinion, topwater strikes are some of the most exciting in all of musky fishing.

While some people say that the best time to throw topwater is whenever it doesn't bounce on the ice, I personally believe that early summer through fall is the most effective time of the year. Of

course there are always exceptions and we have gotten fish very early in the year using topwater, but, in general, once the water temperature reaches the mid to upper 60s that is when I start to reach for topwaters.

There are a variety of different styles of topwater baits to choose from: prop style baits, walk the dog baits and creepers. My personal favorite is prop style baits, such as the Bucher Top Raider, Musky Buster Lowrider or the new Lake X family of lures. I like this style of topwater best for a couple of reasons. First is that they are great search lures. You can cover water quickly with them and locate active fish. I like to have one person throwing a bucktail and another person throwing

one of these prop baits. Another reason why I like prop baits is their hook-up percentage. I find that we convert many more strikes on prop baits than walk the dog lures, for instance.

Walk the dog baits, such as Poe's Jackpot or the Weagle made by Suick Lures, are usually my second choice when throwing topwater. I like to throw walk the dog baits primarily as a throw-back lure to a fish that maybe chased a bucktail or prop bait but wouldn't eat, or when returning to an area that I know is holding fish. These baits can be worked fairly slowly and will hang in the strike zone a little longer and give that fish something to zero in on and, hopefully, crush. The one drawback to walk the dog

*This musky was fooled by a Musky Buster Lowrider*



baits is their hook-up percentage. I have found that if you "T" the hooks on these baits, you can up your odds.

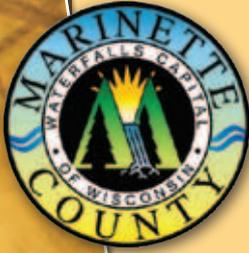
Creeper style baits can also be very effective when working an area that you know is holding fish. These style baits don't really match my fishing personality as they have to be worked quite slowly and I am more of a "run and gun" type of guy. I did pick up a Crawler made by Best American Tackle this year at one of the musky shows and I am very excited

*continued on page 14*

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ENBERG, from page 4

shots to get the rigs to the proper depth. Sometimes Joe will use as many as five or six shots (the micro split shots) to reach different depths. Using a different number of split shots on each rod, with the exception of the bottom bouncer rods, allows your bait (either worms or panfish leeches) to reach different depths where the panfish may be suspending. When you catch a few fish on the same rod, try to repeat the process for more success. This is similar to trolling for walleyes on a lake's main basin.

Another important factor to remember is that the fish are scattered and the wind can blow the zooplankton around the lake. If the weather is windy, try using a drift sock to slow down your boat and control your drift. If the day is calm, use your bow-mount trolling motor to work you across the water. You are "raking" the lake for fish, according to Puccio. Start your drift shallow and work

to the deep water in the lake's middle. On Lake Monona, try working from the mouth of the Yahara River to Turville Bay on the south end of the lake. On Lake Waubesa, work from north of Hog Island to the south end of the lake. Here, you'll be drifting over 20 feet of water. On Lake Kegonsa, the drift pattern is the same but shallower. The water is darker, so the fish will be in shallow water. Work the weed edges and the rock bar in the lake's middle area. Try to find the deepest weed edge adjacent to deep water.

Try drifting for suspended panfish on any lake you fish. By covering the entire water column, you will find the panfish that suspend during the warmer summer months. This tactic works on most any lake with a good panfish population. *WO*

Contact Gary Engberg at 608.795.4208, or [gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com](mailto:gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com) or visit [www.garyengbergoutdoors.com](http://www.garyengbergoutdoors.com).

HELLER, from page 12

to give this bait a go. It seems to be very well put together, and I am told that you can run it a little faster than a standard creeper and it will still perform as desired.

Be sure that you have some topwater baits in your arsenal and try to get one of

those explosive, water flinging, memory-making strikes of your own. Whether you are a newbie or old pro, I bet it gets your heart pounding. *WO*

Clay Heller operates HP-Outdoors. He guides on the waters of southeastern Wisconsin from April through November. Contact Clay through his website at [hp-outdoors.com](http://hp-outdoors.com) or at 920.256.0648.



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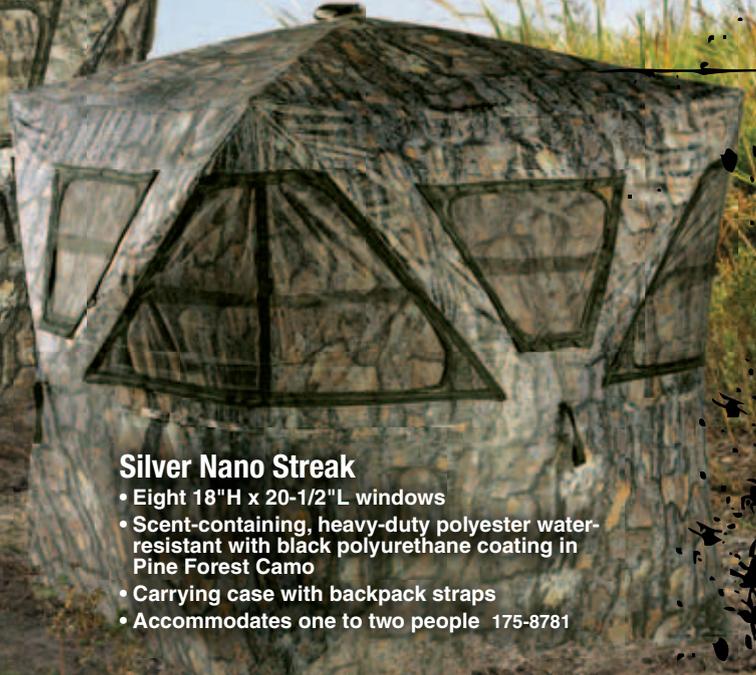


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TOM CARPENTER

## Bass In A Bowl

Summer largemouth fishing in the "glacial scoop"

When the last glaciers scoured most of Wisconsin and then receded northward 10,000 years ago, they left us a treasure chest of "glacial scoop" lakes that dominate the northern third of the state. These kinds of waters are in central Wisconsin also.

These lakes range in size from several acres (you might call them ponds) to hundreds of acres. Because there are so many of them, these small lakes represent an important largemouth bass fishery. Scooped out by glaciers, they are basically round or oblong-shaped, with sand or muck for bottom. There is little classic structure, they are usually rimmed with weeds, and they drop off into deeper water that may be clear, greenish or tannin-stained. In essence, these lakes are bowls.

The patient and painstaking approach necessary to catch bass here doesn't always jibe with today's kinetic fishing styles. But the simpler you keep things, the more fish you will catch. Here's how to do it successfully.

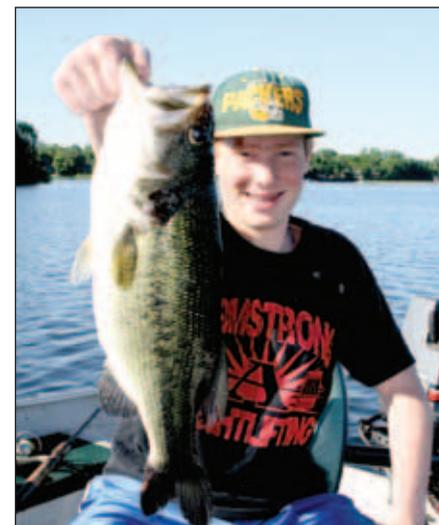
### Fish Early

In summer, your best chance to catch bass in a bowl comes during that magical hour or so before the sun comes up and then for an hour afterward. Now is when bass come out of deeper water and roam the shallows and shorelines in search of prey. Stay quiet and keep disturbance to a minimum. It doesn't take much to spook cruising bass. Row or drift, or hum along under electric power, fishing those 3- to 5-foot depths that will be lit up and boiling away under a hot sun later.

Choose baits that will work through or over the top of weeds. Weedless spinnerbaits are perfect, with floating Rapalas and other minnowbaits a close second, gliding them above the coontail or cabbage. Another favorite lure now is the trusted Johnson Silver Minnow, tipped with a double-legged piece of pork rind. Go with the ¼-ounce size to minimize splash and disturbance.

### Frog the Pads

Many bowl lakes offer lily pads. Pads usually grow at one end of a lake (often the shallower, marshier end), but some lakes feature lily pads all around the rim. Pads will hold some good-sized



The author's son, Noah, displays a nice bowl lake bucketmouth caught just off a deep weed edge early on a July morning.

fish through the second hour or so after sunrise.

Fishing frog imitations on the surface for lily pad bass is exciting. Your frog baits must be weedless (hooks facing up) so you can work them through and across the pads. Cast to openings and let the ripples fade. Skitter the bait across pads and weeds and rest it in the next opening as you work it back.

When the hit comes, don't get excited about setting the hook immediately. Instead, keep a fairly tight line and wait until you feel the weight of the fish, then rear back. Because frogs are soft and pliable, bass will hold onto them longer than most artificial baits. You will get a good hook set more consistently if you're patient.

### Jig 'Em Up

Weedless jigs—featuring cone-shaped heads that slip through weeds easily, as well as wire or bristle weedguards to protect the hook point from hang-ups—are must-haves for every bass-bowl fisherman.

Best dressings include lively rubber skirts, but fat curlytails also do well. In clear bowl lakes, opt for dark colors such as black or red. In murky or stained waters, use bright colors such as chartreuse, yellow and neon green to start. A pork frog presents a fine third option for dressing a weedless jig.

continued on page 21

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MIKE FOSS

# Monster Bears Found, Targeted

## Guide's injury adds to challenge

The sound was not a good one for a Wisconsin bear guide to hear, especially one who relies on physical health to work bait stations for hunters over 30 square miles of Bayfield County.

I heard the snap and, rolling on the gym floor in agony, knew my ankle was broken. But there was also an immediate mental anguish almost worse than the pain. How would I scout, set stands, bait? Many hunters are counting on me for that one precious opportunity in September.

My basketball teammates tried to make light of the situation. Like vultures circling the dead, one asked if he could have my basketball, another wanted my shoes while another with more of a heart informed my wife, Lori, that I was down.

The look of terror on her face as she entered the gym touched me. Later she confessed she thought I had a heart attack and lay dead. Like a love story, Lori leaned in close so I could whisper in her ear my last words without anyone else hearing.



Mike Foss's broken ankle can't stop his work in preparation of the September bear season. This bear coming to a teaser bait in early June is already 400 pounds.

"How am I going to guide now with a broken ankle?"

Lori backed away with a frown on her face. She lightly cuffed me on the head. "You're lying here with a broken leg and all you can think about is bear hunting?"

Well ... yes, actually. It's who I am.

Every spring the snow disappears, bears reappear from their dens and the addiction begins again. All I think about is what must be done over the months ahead to properly prepare for the hunt. Some ask why I bait and set stands so early. With so much time invested in the forest from April on to ensure 100 percent shot opportunity for the tag holders, they question how it could possibly be worth it.

If the questions are answered from a money and profit perspective, it's not worth it. But that is not the standard, and that I hope is what sets Northern Wisconsin Outfitters apart. I am living my personal dream that has driven me from childhood. I also know it can end in a heartbeat, a thought reinforced by this injury, and that is a nightmare that also pushes me. I call it a good selfishness, a race against time. Because someday it will all end.

This winter I was excited to learn what new regulations Wisconsin has adopted

for the 2014 bear season. I was skeptical when the DNR allocated 1000 additional tags for Zone D. Crowds in northern Wisconsin are not conducive to quality hunts, patience or the solitude in the field required to bring bears to bait, especially big, older bears.

But the State's reasons for changes had me nodding in agreement by the end of my read. Most nuisance bear complaints came from the far north in agricultural land, and flashbacks of viewing cornfields destroyed by feasting bears set me in motion. I would take advantage of the new rules. At the Bayfield County Courthouse I purchased the newest plat book and land atlas. After research, I started calling and knocking on farmers' doors. Eventually I ended up with more than 2000 private acres to guide on. A handshake and three words from one property owner reflect the feelings of the northern Wisconsin farmer.

"Kill those bears."

You know that hunter's adrenaline rush? The feeling you get while you're on stand and you finally get a glimpse of the quarry? Or even the feeling of opening your mailbox and seeing a precious bear harvest permit that finally arrives after an eight-year wait?

While scouting these new properties I found the adrenaline rush often. As I



Foss placed his compass in the sand for size perspective next to a monster bear print on a well-worn trail that sent a shot of adrenalin through the guide.

looked at a monster bear's fresh tracks embedded in the forest floor from repetitious use on his home range, shivers of excitement swept over me. I pulled my compass to check wind directions and scanned the surrounding terrain for the perfect tree and a hunter's ambush. The compass was also placed in the sand next to the track to offer the reader an idea of just how big the bear is.

He is very big, but he is not the only one. I would find similar-sized bear tracks miles apart. The next day I ventured back and placed a well-hidden tree stand, but did not yet start a bait station. All human scent must dissipate around the tree stand area before I do. I also placed one of my favorite Cuddeback trail cameras on video mode over that well-worn bear trail. Now the real hunt begins.

My broken fibula? The swelling has gone down and the pain has subsided. I can walk and climb with caution. For-

continued on page 30

**Courtship, Mating of the Wisconsin Black Bear Captured on Foss Video**  
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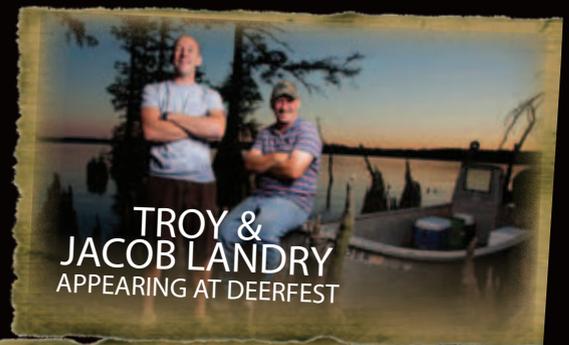
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CARPENTER, from page 16

Row, electric-troll or drift slowly along, working the weed edges as you go.

### Night Bite

Some bowl lakes feature water that is dark or even stained. A few Oneida County potholes that I have fished come to mind. Bass in these lakes stay active longer during the day and might not travel as deep.

On the other hand, clear bowl lakes—many of the sandy Burnett and Washburn County lakes that I love fit this category—can be tough to fish much after dawn or before dusk. In this situation, night fishing is often worth the effort.

Night is a great time to use surface lures that make some noise. The gurgling, churning lure action gives bass something to home in on. Favorite nighttime bass baits include propbaits such as a Smithwick Devil Horse or Bagley Tailspin. Good chuggers include the storm Rattlin' Chug, the Rebel Pop-R and the venerable Arbogast Hula Popper. Buzz baits work well too.

The last round of glaciers blessed Wisconsin with thousands of small glacial scoop lakes that support robust populations of largemouth bass. The realities of fishing these waters are simple. The best way to catch bass all summer long is a non-sense but flexible approach that focuses in on the fishes' key feeding times, their daily movements up and down the water column, and their relationship to weed cover.

OW

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

LEE GATZKE

## NextBuk Outdoors

### Tom's "no repeat, please" hunt

My brother Tom and I had just finished target shooting and were kicking back in the shade of the cabin. I was in the mood for a hunting story by a guy who experienced one of the more memorable hunts from our families' deer camp, so I asked him to retell it. Here it is in Tom's words:

November 1976 was unusually cold in Forest County, with hardly any snow cover on opening weekend of gun deer season. Those two factors shaped the events which became one of the most memorable hunts of my life.

Around 9:00 AM Sunday morning my brother Bill shot an eight-pointer. As our party converged on the start of the blood trail, it began to snow. This threatened to cover the sparse blood trail so Bill, our friend Bert, and I started tracking immediately.

The trail headed east, into a part of the Nicolet National Forest we had never been in before. This area was so remote that if you had "see bigfoot and Elvis on the same day" on your bucket list, this would be a great place to start looking.

By 3:00 PM we had lost and found the trail on several occasions and had negotiated a stream which ran between two lakes. I did so by walking out on the ice of one of the lakes, which was firm enough thanks to the cold weather.

The trail then led along the shoreline of one of the lakes to a line of blow-down balsams which were stacked like fallen dominoes. Soon we were able to see across the lake to the first road we saw since we started tracking. We knew this was going to be our way out once we caught up with the deer. Losing the



Tom Gatzke recounting a deer hunt that ended with fireworks from a crowd at a north woods bar.

trail again, a 20-minute search revealed where the deer had backtracked 60 yards and jumped over the blowdowns. From there it headed for open ice and made a beeline north to a hilly island of about 15 acres.

Approaching the island, I hatched a plot. Bill would continue tracking on the island while Bert would circle east of it, and I would circle west. The island was a rats' nest of boulders and blow-down trees. Then Bill yelled, "He's coming out!" The buck was jumping, crawling, climbing, everything but moving in a straight line. I took five quick shots, killed a few logs but no deer.

By the time I reached the northwest end of the island he was 150 yards away on the ice. At that distance the front bead of my .30-30 covered a lot of territory on the deer. I didn't finish the job and the buck resumed running toward the northwest shoreline, walking off the

ice into the balsams.

Bill and Bert joined me and I led them to the spot where I last saw the deer. We picked up the trail again along the Shoreline and in close quarters Bill was able to end a long day with one shot. It was 4:00 PM, a hard seven hours after we had begun the track. We intended to drag the deer northeast and then turn north across the lake to the road. As the north shoreline came into view, we spotted the only structure on the lake: Jonny's Resort. For the next half mile, we were literally walking on thin ice, not a good decision anytime but we didn't know then just how thin.

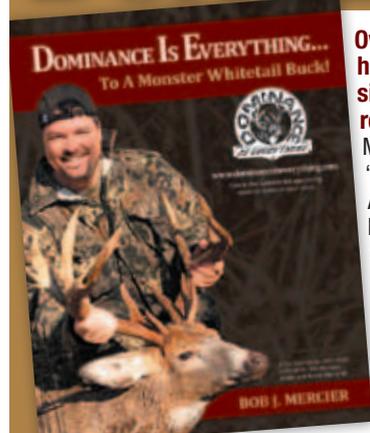
Within 250 feet of Jonny's we had an audience. By the time we reached shore, where we did finally break through the ice, everybody in the bar was there to greet us. We showed them an aerial photo hanging on the wall where we traveled that day. They were all amazed that we made it across the lake, saying that they didn't snowmobile on it until after New Year's because there were so many springs in the lake.

Maybe all's well that ends well. But hope it never happens again. And in hindsight, despite a hunter's responsibility to try to tag a wounded deer, no deer is worth placing your life in jeopardy. OW

Lee Gatzke is co-owner of NextBuk Outdoors, producers of tactical hunting videos. In grade school he chased rabbits with his homemade bow and arrows, which lead to a passion for hunting bigger game all over the Midwest and western states. In between hunting seasons Lee is usually scouting for his next buck.

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JIM SERVI

# Wisconsin's Inaugural Crossbow Season Coming This Fall

## Expanding hunting opportunities and building new traditions

This fall Wisconsin will join 21 other states and hold its first crossbow hunt open to all in modern history. Whether you are planning to go out and buy a license to participate or are one of the skeptics, it's important to understand the framework. After the Wisconsin Assembly passed Assembly Bill 194 with a 91-0 vote and Governor Scott Walker signed it into law, Act 61 was born. Unlike previously, when only individuals over 65 or those with disabilities could use crossbows, any legal hunter can now participate.

You can either buy an archery tag, a crossbow tag, or both. Buying a crossbow license alone is \$24 for residents and \$160 for nonresidents. For those under 18, it is \$20, and for those 10 or 11 years old, the license is only \$5. Buying both an archery and crossbow license costs an additional \$3 and is included in the Conservation Patron's license. The crossbow season for white-tails runs at the same time as the current archery season, but you can only harvest one whitetail buck between the two. Essentially, you can now use a crossbow for all game that you could previously hunt with a bow and the same hunter education requirements apply.

To get a firsthand feel for a crossbow, I borrowed my brother's crossbow and shot it alternatively with my compound bow. He's currently deployed to Afghanistan and said I could borrow it for the

fall to give it a try. There is no doubt it is easier to use than a traditional bow and more difficult than a firearm, but it still requires marksmanship skills to hit your target. As most hunters know, that's not as easy as it sounds when buck fever hits and the elements are at their worst. Last year, my brother successfully harvested a seven-point buck with the crossbow in Indiana after missing other deer. When I talked to him and others that have used crossbows in the past, they shared the same sentiment saying, "You still have to find the deer and be able to hit them."

I also spoke with several archery shops in the area to see how the crossbows are selling. The responses varied from, "They've been flying off the shelf since last year," to "Most of our regulars are still on the fence about buying them." There is definitely an uptick in the market, according to most.

Although there are many critics, as with any change, a majority of hunters surveyed in Wisconsin and across the United States support the use of crossbows. In fact, Wisconsin already has a Wisconsin Crossbow Federation that is excited to get in the field with its weapon of choice. A Minnesota survey from 2009 seems to confirm the sentiment of the majority of hunters saying they see crossbows as "an option to expand hunting opportunities, retain existing hunters, and recruit new hunters." The Wisconsin DNR recently hosted an on-



*The author's wife, Angie, tests out a crossbow and says it might be the key to getting her in the woods this fall. Advocates of the new law hope it will recruit new hunters.*

line chat on the upcoming archery season. As expected, many had questions on the crossbow season, but some were concerned with the tradition of bow hunting. Scott Loomans, WDNR Wildlife Regulations Specialist, summed it up nicely by saying, "There are many folks interested in crossbows and we may be developing some new traditions in the near future."

The Wisconsin DNR will collect crossbow deer harvest data through 2015-2016 to monitor the number of hunters and analyze impacts to the deer population. Although no one knows for certain the impact, statistics from other states give us a picture of what might occur. When Ohio, Arkansas and others implemented crossbow seasons, they saw a spike in deer killed during the bow hunting seasons. Much of this was due to the increased numbers of bow hunters. Even with that said, the deer

TOM CARPENTER

# Badger Birds Scarlet Tanager

There's red, and then there's *red!* Call it neon, electric or glowing ... there is no mistaking the bright and intense iridescence of a male scarlet tanager's breeding plumage. The word "scarlet" hardly even does the color justice. Accented with jet-black wings and tail, this songbird is a delight to behold in Wisconsin's spring and summer woodlands. Females are



olive-colored with a yellowish belly and dusky wings.

**Watch** for scarlet tanagers once the weather starts warming up, about the time the oak leaves are half to completely furred out. Tanagers are neotropical migrants, meaning they spend their winters in the rainforests of Central and South America. Tanagers don't like cold.

**Look** for scarlet tanagers in trees. These insect hunters seldom come to the ground, preferring to flutter out from a perch on a branch to snatch flying insects.

**Listen** for the male's slightly hoarse *cheery-cheery-cheery-chee* song. While feeding, scarlet tanagers give distinctive *kip-churrr* calls.

**Feed** scarlet tanagers an orange half impaled on a spike; cut-up grapes, raisins, bananas or apple chunks; or grape jelly.

**Did you know** that scarlet tanagers are creatures of the big woods? Whether it's rainforest wintering grounds or hardwood summer habitat (tracts of oak and hickory are favorites in Wisconsin, as are extended riverbottom forest corridors), research shows that woodland fragmentation hurts tanager populations. 

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

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continued on page 25

KATHY STRONG

# Giving Back: The Other Side Of The Coin

## *Sine Aqua Mortis, part 2*

**T**welve Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa students, sponsored by members of the Wild Sheep Foundation Midwest Chapter, and five chaperones arrived in the Picacho Mountains on the evening of February 20th to volunteer their labor on a waterhole project on Newman Peak. Base camp in the desert consisted of canvas tents, satellite toilets and an outside kitchen.

Early morning breakfast call brought out the group of shivering and hungry students. Everyone then piled into the vans with their lunches and daypacks for the harrowing drive across the desert and up the mountain to the project site. Hog hunting season was open concurrent with the water catchment project, so the group had opportunity to observe and greet some locals who were in the area and learned that wild hogs actually are part of the desert fauna.

Catchment 689 was both a redevelopment and a new development on the same site. Years ago a concrete apron had been installed, along with a concrete holding tank and drinker. Capacity of the unit was insufficient for drought conditions, the concrete apron was cracked, and the leaky drinker was full of sludge. The site also lacked a perimeter fence to prevent free-range cattle from contaminating and damaging the drinker. In addition to completing necessary repairs and erecting a perimeter fence, the waterhole workers were charged with installing a new, state-of-the-art fiberglass

drinker, with a huge underground fiberglass holding tank, topped with a metal apron that channeled water into a trough, then to the holding tank and eventually to the gravity-fed drinker. The drinker maintains a constant water level and is accessible to all wildlife in the area from honey bees to wild sheep.

Members of our group pitched in to haul pipes for the pipe fence, dig post-holes by hand, mix cement, line up and level fence posts and perform other needed tasks. Volunteers, our Midwest group and Game and Fish Department staff pulled together as if the project were choreographed and rehearsed to perfection. Under the leadership of Mark Vaughan, Wildlife Habitat Construction Crew Leader, it was incredible how the project came together in such a short time.

On Saturday afternoon, our Midwest group of students were treated to a tour and explanation of the desert ecosystem by Diane Tilton, Wildlife Manager for the unit in which the project was located. The students learned the names of the cacti whose spines they had been removing from themselves for the past two days, were provided with information on the wildlife inhabiting the area, and were impressed with the fragility of the ecosystem.

As the workdays ended, our weary group made our way back to camp for supper. Chad Jones, past president of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society,

served as outfitter and chief cook for our group. The food was fabulous, enhanced by the special flavor of the outdoors and hard work.

After two days of arduous labor, the project was almost complete and the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society hosted a steak feed and bonfire, during which participants were recognized and honored. First-time volunteers were gifted with pins picturing a desert ram and the caption "Sine Aqua Mortis..." without water, death."

Although Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep are identified as the target species of the water hole project, these projects benefit all area wildlife and provide a vital role in wildlife preservation and maintenance of the desert ecosystem. A comment often heard by volunteers who try to describe their experience to others is, "you are just making the waterhole and attracting the sheep so you can shoot them." One of the "old-timers" working with us explained that, in Arizona, only one sheep permit in a lifetime is allowed. Numerous participants in the project, including himself, harvested their sheep up to 40 years earlier but are regulars on the waterhole developments. These individuals will never again hunt wild sheep in Arizona but recognize the need to maintain habitat to support the animals.

On February 23rd, we reluctantly said good-bye to our new friends and boarded our flights to return to the land of snow and ice. As ambassadors of the



*Leveling and setting posts for perimeter fence*

Midwest, our students left a great impression by their work habits and responsible behavior with our neighbors in the Southwest. Our group of young people viewed conservation and habitat preservation, along with their responsibilities in these areas, in a new light. All had the wonderful opportunity to learn the true meaning of "give back something for everything you take."

Happy hunting. 

*Kathy Strong is owner of Yellow River Game Farm and Piddle Creek Kennels in Barronett, Wisconsin, and is a dog trainer, breeder, guide, hunting dog competitor, and Life Member of the Wild Sheep Foundation-Midwest Chapter. For more information on hunting, dog training, pups and/or started dogs, contact Kathy at 715.822.8071.*

**LINDEMAN, from page 7**

correct drag.

When the jig makes contact with the bottom, fight the urge to reel or hop it along. Simply and slowly lift your rod tip from a three o'clock position to a one o'clock position. When you reach the top of the drag, reel up slack line as you reposition your rod back to three o'clock. Never does your jig lose contact with the bottom. The key: you must be able to feel the jig bump rocks and slide over sand as you s-l-o-w-l-y lift the rod.

The coolest thing is the bite. Walleyes, perch, bass, crappies and even drum can suck that jig off the bottom with ease. The bite feels like an electric shock, completely different than anything else you have been feeling. Mastering the technique takes a little practice, but after the first bite, you will be hooked.

Position your boat just off your chosen reef and cast as shallow as possible. Drag the jig toward

deeper water while maintaining contact with the bottom. I'm not sure how fish zero in on such a subtle presentation when the waves are crashing above, neither do I care. Our job is to set the hook and start the fun.

Snags are impossible to avoid, but the extremely light jigs slide over and around most everything down there. Some reefs are harder to fish than others, but finding your favorite spots is so much fun.

Give "drag'n" a shot and work on your own variations of the presentation. If you want to ease into the idea, toss out a couple slip bobbbers and do some drag'n with your third rod. For the record, this is my official apology to Jon ... drag'n is the perfect description. 

*Wisconsin native John Lindeman has turned his passion for fishing into a business that provides effective products with innovative twists. The owner of Kingdom Fishing Innovations enjoys all types of fishing from small creeks to the Great Lakes. He can be reached at [jlindeman@gokfin.com](mailto:jlindeman@gokfin.com).*

**ELLIS, from page 5**

and a lone Rainbow were brought to net. A Lake Trout and four or five other unseen fish were lost during the fights.

"We had a blast with Captain Ken," said David Jackson. "He was clearly very knowledgeable of Lake Michigan and the salmon we were targeting. There wasn't a single question we asked that he couldn't answer. While catching fish was obviously the highlight of the day, Captain Ken also made the few times in between catching fish very enjoyable with some good humor. Immediately after we finished for the day, we were already making plans for our next trip with Captain Ken."

In 2014, anglers booked with Jack's Charter Service during Salmon-A-Rama July 12 through 20 are automatically entered to win \$15,000 and many other cash prizes. Poludnanyk will coordinate whatever number of boats is necessary to take care of your party professionally, with crews that meet his own standards of excellence and service. Connect with Jack's Charter Service at [jackscharterservice.com](http://jackscharterservice.com) or 414.482.2336. 

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Ashland, Lake Superior's Hometown, is also the "Historic Mural Capital of Wisconsin." **July**— 4: Parade, band concert, fireworks. 16-17: Maxwell Street Days. 18-20: Bay Days Festival. 20: Sprint Triathlon and Little Minnow Kids' Triathlon. **August 28 to September**

# County Teasers

**1: Ashland County Fair.** Come to Chequamegon Bay, a world-class smallmouth bass fishery and four-season fishing destination! **Click on Ashland County.**

Take a tour of the World's Largest Musky Fish Hatchery in Spooner, paddle down the Namekagon River (part of the St. Croix National Park System), or catch some fish at one of nearly 1,000 lakes in Washburn County. **Click on Washburn County.**

The Minocqua area offers fantastic summer fishing. For those after Smallmouth Bass, Pat Wingo with Captain Hooks Guide Service offers a tip: find deep rock and sand humps in your lake that top out in 20 to 30 feet of water. Use a 1/4-ounce jig and tip it with a Jumbo Leech. Let the wind drift your boat over the spot while dragging the jig and leech across the hump. **Monster summer Smallmouth** can't resist this! To plan your next fishing trip, **click on Oneida County!**

Win big bucks (\$\$, \$\$\$) for your Monster Musky during the 22nd Annual Butternut Lake Musky Tournament on August 9 & 10, 2014, in Park Falls or at the 17th Annual Phillips Area Charity Classic Musky Tournament on August

23, 2014, in Phillips. **Click on Price County.**

The fireflies are everywhere! And what better place to enjoy them than on a lake, river, or in the woods of **beautiful central Wisconsin!** Hundreds of **great properties for sale!** A chance to win dinner and a night at Silvercryst Resort on Big Silver Lake. Drawing Labor Day. **Click on Waushara County for details!**

Did you know that Pool 9 of the Mississippi River is high on the list of Top 100 bass fishing lakes? "Some believe that this stretch of the Mississippi River proves God is a frog fisherman." Capt. Todd Lensing at the Grandview Motel in Ferryville can fill you in! **Click on Crawford County.**

The Waukesha Gun Club is **Wisconsin's largest shotgun only club.** It features 29 Trap houses, a Sporting Clays course, seven Skeet ranges, and three endorsed 5-Stand venues. The Waukesha Gun Club lies on 88-plus acres and has a spacious clubhouse. Banquet, shooting event, private party, or just a place to hold a meeting. **Click on Waukesha County.**

August is busy in Calumet County. Two car shows, a steam and gas engine show, a bike tour on the Niagara Escarpment, art-making in a prairie, a gospel music festival, a disc golf tournament and capping off the month: the county fair! Visit our "events" tab for more information. **Click on Calumet County.**

MOERICKE, from page 11

kids and I'm confident that someday they'll pass it on to theirs. Some kids aren't as fortunate, and it takes a little effort on the part of a stranger to introduce them to a great outdoor activity that can last a lifetime. Somebody introduced you to fishing. Pass it on. Just sayin'. 

*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.*

SCHWEIK, from page 10

and perhaps annoying presentation. The strike is similar to your own reaction to a relentless and buzzing mosquito near your head as you sleep on a sticky summer night. You want it gone, and you don't want to be bothered by it. Your reaction is to strike. The same concept triggers the lethargic musky to move on a very fast moving bait. The fish is not feeding; it's reacting.

The third rule is to choose the right bait and gear. You want a long rod of eight feet or better, a high speed reel, and lures that can cover water very fast and effectively for hot weather conditions. I like bucktails, big rubber baits, jerkbaits and crankbaits. These are baits that can be ripped or cranked hard and fast through different water columns, and they are proven lures in enticing that reaction strike from a musky.

One big musky that reflects this three-step plan helped win the contestants division for my partner and the guide's division for me in the 2010 World Musky Hunt on Lake Tomahawk on a sultry, bluebird August day in 2010. The 50-1/4 inch fish, the competition's largest musky, was caught on a bulldawg in 35 - 40 feet of water lying in sand grass, one of five fish we caught that day and one of three using the tactic. We would count to 20 before reeling to make sure the bait made it deep enough for the fish to strike.

Broaden your horizons. Look at different strategies and techniques when it comes to triggering a big fish strike. And despite what you've heard, especially when it's hot outside, expect hot fishing.

Wouldn't that be a cool change? 

*Phil is the owner of Hooksetters Guide Service in central Wisconsin and Hookset Adventures in Eagle River Wisconsin, which keeps him on the water over 200 days a year. Phil lives in Mosinee, Wisconsin, and can be reached at [pschweik@dwave.net](mailto:pschweik@dwave.net), on his website: [hooksetters.biz](http://hooksetters.biz) or [hooksetadventures.com](http://hooksetadventures.com), or on Facebook at Phil Schweik.*



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**SERVI, from page 22**

populations have continued to grow in those states and the guideline is that it generally comes down to deer management and not necessarily the weapons used.

More bows are already being sold, more revenue generated from licenses, and there will be more opportunity to pursue the game of your choice with the weapon of your choice. This all comes with research that shows no negative effects on the deer population. The critics may be out there, but in my eyes, the new crossbow season is a win-win situation and I can't wait to get out in the woods and give it a try. *W*

*Jim Servi is an outdoor writer, educator, consultant, and a Local Field Director for the US Sportsmen's Alliance. He is currently serving in the US Army Reserves and is a veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq. This lifestyle gives him maximum time to hunt, fish, and trap everything that is fair game in Wisconsin. Jim lives in the middle of the woods on the family farm outside Wausau with his wife and two boys. Contact Jim at Jimservi10@gmail.com.*

**LUTHENS, from page 8**

northern pike from a weed bed below the island. The pike was trespassing on our chub population and needed to be dealt with accordingly. I can still feel the monster thrashing his head in the stream, trying to grind out the spinner bait, which he managed in short order. If we had caught him, he would have been roasted over the island fire pit. We were getting tired of eating smoked chubs.

Days wore hotter and we spent hours in the creek with nothing but our heads showing. If you lie still enough in the reeds, you start to feel like an alligator and you learn more about the silent nature of a swamp ecosystem than anything school books can offer up. We walked home along the railroad tracks with the first mists rising from the water into the sultry nights. There was the smell of freshly cut hay, and fireflies danced across the pasture.

I have since fished and floated some of the finest waters Wisconsin has to offer, bass and trout and musky from Superior to Milwaukee. It's a good life. But I'd trade it all in a heartbeat for one more crack at Summer Creek. *W*

*John Luthens travels Wisconsin, visiting favorite trout waters and exploring back road country often from the family cabin, near the Bois Brule River in Douglas County. Fishing the Winnebago system is a favorite pastime. He chronicles his outdoor journeys from his home in Grafton, where he resides with his wife and two children. Connect at Luthens@hotmail.com.*

**SUZETTE CURTIS**

**Recipes by Suzette**

*Try it smoked*



I was having a conversation with a young man recently who told me about all of the fish that he discarded while on his last fishing trip. They were the incidentals, or the ones that happened to end up in the wrong place at the wrong time because there were other fish he was more interested in catching and keeping. While sharing this story with my husband, I was reminded of a wonderful booklet. "A Fine Kettle of Fish" by Vern Hacker of the DNR deals with what we consider "rough fish" in Wisconsin. According to the DNR website, Wisconsin is home to more than 160 fish species! However, that same website lists what are known as Wisconsin's game fish.

I counted and came up with a total of 15, which means only about 10% of the entire number of fish species in our state are game fish. (I don't claim my math skills to be necessarily proficient, but I can use a calculator.) Does that mean that 90% of the fish species in Wisconsin are less than desirable? Maybe we've overlooked too many of the "other" species of fish in our state waterways and we should do what Vern Hacker urges us to do, which is to give those fish a chance at the supper table. I dug out some old family recipes to share, but if you don't own a copy of "A Fine Kettle of Fish," I would suggest you hunt one down and give it a read as well.

**Fish Chowder**

- 1 ½ cups potatoes, diced and peeled
- 1 pound fish, cut into chunks
- 1/3 cup onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 cups water
- 1 can evaporated milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 T. unsalted butter
- Milk as needed

Place potatoes in large saucepan and cover with water. Heat to boiling; cover and simmer 10 minutes. Add fish, onion and salt to pan; cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes until fish and potatoes are tender.

Turn stove heat up to medium. Add evaporated milk, cream and butter to pan and continue to cook uncovered until chowder thickens; stirring frequently. Add milk for desired liquid level just one or two minutes before serving.

**Fish Cakes**

- 2 egg yolks
- 2 cups leftover cooked fish, flaked
- 2 cups mashed potatoes
- 2 T. minced onion
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- salt & pepper to taste
- dash of hot sauce (optional)
- 1/3 cup cornmeal or breadcrumbs
- 4 T. butter

In medium sized bowl, beat egg yolks until smooth. Fold in remaining ingredients except cornmeal and butter. Using your hands, mold fish mixture into "cakes" and roll in cornmeal or breadcrumbs.

Melt butter in large sauté pan over low-medium heat. Add fish cakes to pan and continue to cook over low-medium heat, turning once, until browned on both sides and heated through.

**Pickled Fish Appetizer**

- 3 cups fish fillets, cut into chunks
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 3 T. salt
- 2 tsp. pickling spices
- white wine vinegar to cover

Place all ingredients in large non-metal crock; cover and refrigerate at least one week before serving.

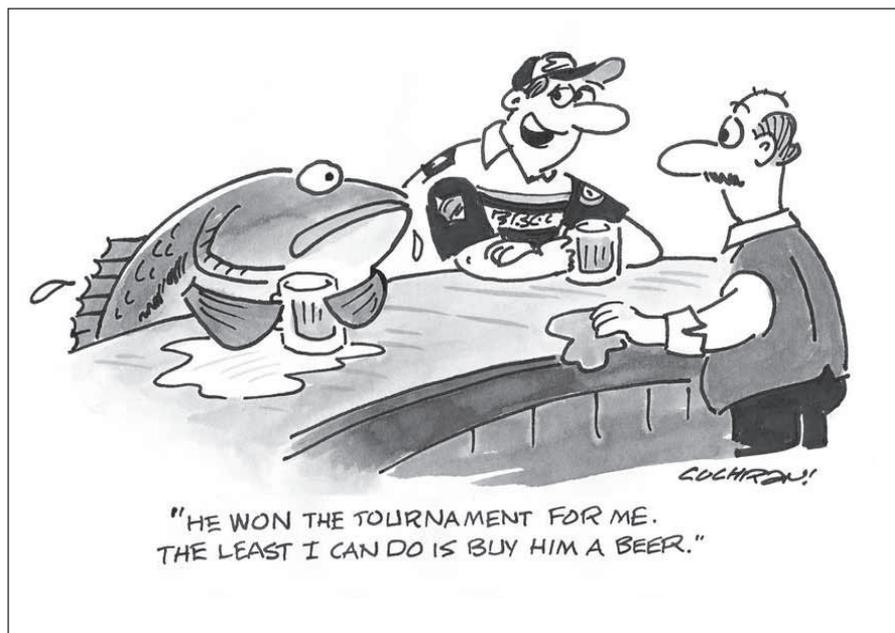
*Suzette Curtis of Oshkosh cooks for a family of hunters and fishermen and says she tries to fill their menu with recipes for meals made with venison, upland birds and fish. She does just that with great expertise. recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.*

**WALKER, from page 8**

my rod still and let my lure move naturally in the water.

Knowing where to use these five baits, you too can take advantage of some phenomenal smallmouth fishing as the summer months are ahead of you! *W*

*Glenn has been fishing tournaments for over ten years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos. He keeps busy fishing events across the Midwest, but the Mississippi River in southwest Wisconsin will always be home. Glenn's sponsors include: Buck Knives, Humminbird, LakeMaster, Mercury Marine, Minn Kota, ORCA Coolers, Plano, Rayjus, RC Tackle, Seaguar, Snag Proof, The Rod Glove, TroKar, Wright & McGill and Zoom Baits. For more information check out glennwalkerfishing.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing.*



S. WILKERSON

## Too Many Choices?

*When it comes to a first deer rifle, select one that best fits your hunting environment*

Generations of Wisconsin hunters depended on their lever action .30-30 carbines to bring home the venison. Many still do and for good reason. The little carbines are handy, reliable, powerful, and accurate enough for many deer hunting situations, especially thick brush. Where they begin losing their luster is at distances beyond 100 yards where accuracy and potency count. Lever action carbines as a rule don't exactly lend themselves to telescopic sights, and no one should ever expect varmint rifle accuracy from them.

Deer hunters today who want greater range, accuracy and versatility from their rifles have an unprecedented number of choices and calibers from which to choose: bolt, pump, single shot, and semi-automatic rifles. All have their advantages and disadvantages. This article is meant to help the first-time deer rifle buyer make the best choice possible for his or her unique circumstances.

Lever action carbines became popular because of their quick follow-up-shot ability, something that the muzzle loaders and Trapdoor Springfields of the era could not boast. Right about the same time lever actions were coming into vogue, so were pump, or slide action rifles. The lever action was personified by the Winchester Model 1873 and later 1894. The era's most popular slide action was the Colt Lightning. A number of companies still make lever action rifles, but I am aware of only one that produces a large caliber slide action rifle, the Remington Model 7600.

Quick second shots are what accounted for the popularity of slide and lever action rifles and carbines. What they somewhat lack is the ability to quickly get back on target. The slide action probably has the advantage in this regard. A lever action requires the trigger hand to leave the firearm unsupported as another round is being chambered. The hunter still has his rifle supported with his hand while racking the slide of a pump action, making more accurate shot placement possible. Slide action rifles can be quite accurate, but they have never caught on in a big way. This may be because some of



Bolt action Ruger Gunsite Scout

the first versions fired oddball calibers and/or were not especially reliable.

Right out of the gate, the levers were dependable and shot commonly available ammunition, such as .44-40 and .45 Colt. The .30-30 quickly became and remains an ammunition standard. Not so the .25 and .35 caliber Remington and others found in the early Remington slide actions. By the time slide actions were reliable and available in common calibers, World War I had come and gone and demonstrated the effectiveness of the bolt action design. Any chance slide action rifles had of gaining a semblance of popularity was probably lost after the Great War.

What bolt actions lack in speedy follow-up shots they make up in accuracy and dependability, which they

actions, a hunter with a semi-automatic only needs to contend with recoil when getting back on target. Those shooting levers and slides also have to deal with the physical movement of their hands and arms when chambering another round.

Semi-autos have made light years of progress in terms of reliability and durability compared to those fielded at the start of the 20th century. Early semi-autos were extremely complex designs and small amounts of dirt, debris, and less-than-fastidious cleaning and lubrication could soon leave them DOA at the most inopportune times. Bolt actions are far less complicated and easier to maintain than their semi-automatic counterparts, but the days of shunning semi-automatic deer hunting rifles due to complexity and fragility has not



Slide action Remington Model 7600

demonstrated in the trenches of World War I. Having proven themselves to veterans, it's no surprise that they felt comfortable shooting deer with the same rifle action that served them so well defeating the Huns. The beauty of the bolt action rifle is its ruggedness and accuracy. Clean kills can be made at distances with a bolt action rifle, an adequate caliber, and a good optical sight that never should be attempted with an iron-sighted lever action .30-30. Responsible hunters strive for one-shot, quick, clean kills, and there is probably no better way to ensure one than with a bolt action rifle, given enough practice and familiarity.

There are some semi-automatics that are fast approaching or are already close enough to bolt actions in terms of accuracy. The slight disadvantage they might have in the accuracy department is more than made up when a second shot is needed. Unlike lever and slide

been an issue for decades, especially those built on the AR-type platform.

When choosing a deer rifle, the type of hunting, terrain, and personal preference has to factor into the equation. Hunters at ground level don't have the panoramic views of those in tree stands, in which case lightness and the ability to quickly shoulder a gun are prime concerns. Lever and pump actions would serve those on the ground well, as would any number of semi-automatics. High quality optic sights aren't really necessary for those on terra firma shooting at distances of 50 yards or less, and a telescopic scope is probably more of a hindrance than a benefit at short distances.

Those in tree stands with an uninhibited view of large open areas should give serious consideration to a bolt action rifle with a quality optic or an AR15-type rifle in a larger caliber. Like the bolt action, the AR platform has proven to be dependable and very accurate.

When choosing a deer rifle, the ultimate goal is a one-shot, humane harvest. Please give careful consideration to the distances and territory you will be shooting and buy accordingly. 



Lever action Henry Big Boy

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

S. WILKERSON

# Midwest Industries' MI 300H Hunter

## Accurate, reliable, versatile

Sometimes it seems that every other week another rifle cartridge debuts to much acclaim only to fizzle out after one hunting season. The reason, more often than not, is that it performed only marginally better than older, established calibers. The main difference was that the new caliber was more expensive to purchase and harder to find.

Among the few truly new cartridges to enter the market, and stay there, is the .300 AAC Blackout. What makes the round so appealing are the same attributes shared with its role model, the 7.62 x 39 caliber cartridge commonly found in Eastern Bloc Kalashnikovs and SKS carbines. This round is considered by some to be a better cartridge than the extremely popular .223/5.56 x 45 found in most AR15s and many varmint rifles.

Granted, the .223/5.56 x 45 round is more accurate and boasts greater range, but the 7.62 x 39 is less susceptible to deflection in heavy brush and has the edge when it comes to foot-pounds of energy ("knock-down power") at typical deer hunting distances, that is, up to

100 yards. In fact, the 7.62 x 39 is similar in performance to the tried and true .30/.30 Winchester caliber. Both the 7.62 x 39 and .223/5.56 x 45 are realistically effective out to about 300 yards, but the lighter .223/5.56 x 45 is much more likely to burst into shrapnel upon impact than the heavier 7.62 x 39 at longer distances.

Considering the 7.62 x 39's many attributes, it is no surprise that more than a few attempts have been made to mate the cartridge to "America's Gun," the AR15. None of these attempts can be considered especially successful. The issue is that AK magazines cannot be made to work in standard AR15 lowers. In order to manufacture an AR15 to fire 7.62 x 39, expensive propriety magazines need to be produced.

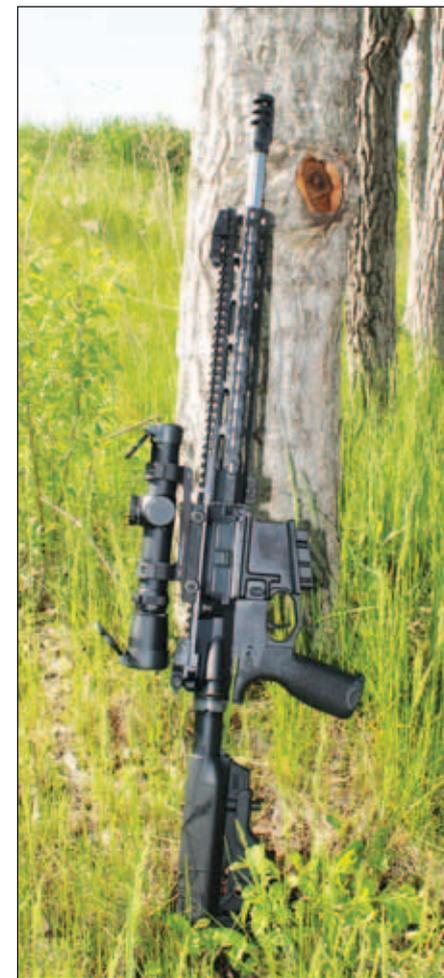
What to do? Improve the 7.62 x 39 cartridge and make it work in AR15 magazines. This is exactly what Advanced Armament Corporation did when it developed the .300 Blackout round in 7.62 x 35 caliber. A whole new world opened up with the advent of the

.300 AAC Blackout, which, unlike many new cartridges, is reasonably priced and increasingly available.

Probably no company has realized the potential of the .300 Blackout as Waukesha's own Midwest Industries. In fact, the firm built an entire rifle around it, the MI 300H Hunter, and it may be the ultimate deer hunting rifle. Made from a billet aluminum upper and lower receiver, the Hunter boasts a Wisconsin-made Criterion Match Grade stainless steel barrel, free floated handguard, a B5 Systems BRAVO model adjustable stock, a muzzle brake, and a lot more. Since virtually every part, with the exception of the barrel, is an AR15 part, including the magazine, the Hunter can take practically every AR15 part and accessory known to man, many of which can be found in Midwest Industries' catalog, website and retail location at W292S4498 Hillside Road in Waukesha.

There are a few deer hunting rifles that fire the 7.62 x 39 round, but former

*continued on page 29*



*Based on the proven AR15 platform, the MI 300H Hunter in .300 AAC Blackout is a natural fit for Wisconsin deer hunters.*



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- ◆ MI SSK-Key Mod 12 Inch One Piece Free Float Handguard, Super Slim 1.5 inch OD, one Key Mod Rail
- ◆ BCM GUNFIGHTER Mod 4 Charging Handle, BCM GUNFIGHTER Pistol Grip, B5 Systems BRAVO Stock
- ◆ Includes one 10 Round Magazine with Hi-Viz Follower, 20 and 30 Round Magazines are also available

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ROBB MANNING

# Everyday Carry

## Tucker Gun Leather HF2 Holster

Opening the plastic bag of a new leather holster and strapping it on for the first time is like getting into a new car. It has all the excitement, anticipation and the new smell. Kydex holsters are wonderful. They serve a purpose and they serve it well. I own several. However, leather holsters have all the same utility but with style and good looks. Tucker Gun Leather does everything right and makes one of the best-looking holsters around. In addition, it's well made, functions outstandingly and is very comfortable.

The HF2 looks striking. Mine is a black cherry, full grain leather contrasted with white heavy duty stitching. The border has been stamped with an Egyptian key pattern, and I had a concho added. The style of the holster itself is a throwback to the Old West, with the overflap for the front belt loop. But the Old West isn't overdone. It looks great in modern garb such as cargo pants or jeans and a polo shirt. More western flare is added by the optional concho, which comes in silver and/or gold star, Marine Corps emblem,

or state of Texas with star. I was torn between the Marine Corps Eagle, Globe and Anchor or the state of Texas. I grew up in Wisconsin and have lived here almost all of my non-Marine Corps years, but I was at one time a resident of Texas. I decided to commemorate my years in Texas by going with the Texas Concho.

Materials and construction are superb. Tucker has been working with leather as a saddle maker for over 30 years, and he brings that experience to his holster business. He uses only premium Hermann Oak leather, which has been vegetable tanned. Louis Charles Hermann started tanning leather in 1881, making accessories for the wagon trains heading west on the Lewis and Clarke Trail. The company continues this tradition, through four generations, with Shep Hermann at the helm today. This is the leather that Tucker uses exclusively.

There are few things worse when carrying than having your holster cut into your side. The HF2 takes care of that with burnished edges for all-day comfort.

When I put on a new pair of jeans in the morning, I strap my holster on the belt and there it stays until those jeans go in the washer. You'll forget the HF2 is there. Add the sweat shield to the holster and it is even more comfortable.

The benefit to an outside-the-waist-band (OWB) holster is the little that you sacrifice in concealment, which isn't much, you add tenfold in comfort. Other gun writers claim you can never properly conceal an OWB holster, and that's absolutely not true. It just takes a properly made holster that holds the handgun close to your side and a suitable shirt. The overflap of the HF2 does more than look good; it pulls the holster in close for excellent concealment. Another feature is the reinforced mouth, which holds open for easy re-holstering.

Tucker makes a holster very similar to the HF2: the HF1. The difference is in the muzzle. The HF1 uses a closed-muzzle design while the HF2 is open. I decided to go open-muzzle because of the added benefit I get when I have it fitted for my Glock. I can use the same holster for my G26, G17 or G22. That's big-time flexibility and money savings.

Tucker stands behind its holsters with a 100 percent satisfaction Double Guarantee: a 90-day return period if you decide the holster is just not for you and a lifetime guarantee against defects in workmanship and materials. I've owned



HF2 with sub-compact Glock 26



HF2 with full size Glock 22

mine for over two months now and have used it every day. I am completely satisfied with it.

The HF2 starts at \$95 (\$100 for the HF1) and goes up with added features. These features include:

- Full stamp (Cross cut, Diamond cut, Spiral cut, Swirl or Basketweave): \$90
- Border stamp (Fleur de Lis or Egyptian Key): \$45
- Full cowhide lining: \$35
- Sweat Shield: \$15
- Concho: \$10
- One-inch initial: \$25

It comes in Black, Black Cherry, Medium Brown, Dark Brown, Natural or Saddle Tan. Thread options are black or white. Other options include: with rail, front sight height and belt width. There are hundreds of pistol and revolver models it can be made in and various barrel lengths. See more at [tuckergunleather.com](http://tuckergunleather.com). 

Robb Manning served in the US Marine Corps for nearly 11 years where he developed a passion and knowledge for firearms of all types. Since 2010 Robb has been a gun/hunting writer and also films gun and gear videos for his Youtube channel, 762x51n8o.



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Midwest Industries' owner Troy Storch with his company's new MI 300H Hunter.

**WILKERSON, from page 27**

Eastern Bloc made ammunition tolerances vary widely and certainly do not enjoy a reputation for accuracy. Plus, it is usually filthy ammunition. U.S.-made ammunition, while cleaner and much more consistent in size and quantity, often doesn't match Eastern Bloc bore dimensions very well. Blackout ammunition quality can be counted on to be far more consistent, cleaner, and accurate than 7.62 x 39 ammunition made in the former Soviet sphere of influence.

Yes, it is legal to hunt deer with a .223/5.56 x 45 caliber AR15 in Wisconsin, but the Hunter in the .300 AAC

Blackout round is probably a better choice. The Hunter packs more of a wallop at virtually any distance, is more stable through brush, and is made by one of the nation's premier manufacturers of AR15 parts and accessories here in Wisconsin. The Hunter is superbly accurate, dependable, and can take all manner of parts and accessories.

Check one out in person at Midwest Industries' retail store or online at [midwestindustriesinc.com](http://midwestindustriesinc.com).

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

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### NORMA-USA TAC-22 AMMUNITION

It's been several years since plentiful .22 Long Rifle ammunition could be found on shelves. Hopefully, it will soon be that way again. One step in the right direction is a .22 offering from Norma. The long-time, high-quality ammo maker from Sweden has stepped in to help fill a void on American ammo shelves. There's a lot to be said for their new rimfire ammo: it's accurate and it's manufactured for reliable feeding in semi-auto rifles. The 40 grain Lead Round Nose bullet leaves the muzzle at 1066 feet per second. It's more on line with match ammo than it is plinking ammo. \$59.99 for 500 rounds.

[norma-usa.com](http://norma-usa.com)



### SHIMANO CURADO BAITCAST REELS

The new 2014 update to the popular Curado includes better brake performance and casting distance. The X-Ship improves gear durability with the added benefit of eliminating friction between the gear and spool shaft. This improves casting performance with lighter lures and makes for longer casts. The new SVS Infinity brake system provides consistent spool control and braking, drastically improving performance with lighter lures. An external knob allows for easy, precise adjustments for when you change lures. The Shimano Stable Spool Design (S3D) greatly reduces spool vibration for ultra-smooth casting and retrieving. It features five S-A-RB ball bearings and an easy access spool. Offset handle design. Gear Ratios: 6.3:1, 5.5:1, 7.2:1. \$179.99.

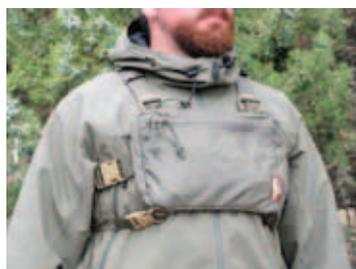
[fish.shimano.com](http://fish.shimano.com)



### CALDWELL AR-15 MAG CHARGER

This winter my kids loved "The Lego Movie" and were running around the house for months singing the annoying, yet catchy theme song, "Everything is Awesome." That's exactly how I felt as I used this loader to load three AR magazines in about half a minute. "Everything is awesome!" It doesn't get much easier and faster than this. It loads five rounds per pump, so in six pumps you have a full mag. It's at its best when the ammo is standing upright in the container—like the type used for reloading—or in Black Hills ammunition-type boxes. Just turn the Mag Charger upside down and align the holes with the point of the cartridge, turn it all upside down and the cartridges will fall into the slots. From there, insert a mag—it locks in securely; you have to press a button to get the mag back out—pump the handle six times and it's loaded. Also comes with a tray, so if you have loose ammo, you can load it into the tray, then load the loader. \$89.99. **OWO tested and recommended.**

[battentfeldtechnologies.com](http://battentfeldtechnologies.com)



### HILL PEOPLE GEAR RUNNER'S KIT BAG

In tactical circles it's called a Chest Rig, but think of it as a fanny-pack for your chest. Whereas fanny-packs can often impede with the use of a backpack (and a backpack alone is not quick-access friendly), the Kit Bags put your essentials right where you want them. Plus, while most of us have a lot of our gear carried around our waist (wallets, pocket knife, cell phones), the Kit Bag utilizes the chest space that rarely ever gets used to carry gear. It is designed for concealed carry, so that you can carry your handgun and your essential

gear such as sunscreen, bug repellent and first aid. A fast access main compartment houses the firearm, while the front zippered pocket carries your other gear. Even if you don't carry a firearm, the bag is just great for holding anything that will fit in it. The main compartment has a two-inch Velcro strip for attaching a holster and is otherwise bare for smooth, unimpeded draw. Inside the front pocket are two smaller pockets and two dummy cord loops. It also has a bungee cord to go around your torso to prevent bounce while running. Comes in a "Recon" model, which is essentially the same but with Molle straps on the front, a larger "The Original" model and a smaller "Snubby" model. 11.5 by 7 by 1 inch. Made in America of 500d Cordura. Comes in Grey, Ranger Green, Coyote, and Foliage. \$85. **OWO tested and recommended.**

[hillpeoplegear.com](http://hillpeoplegear.com)



### PLANO SPORTSMAN'S TRUNK, BONE COLLECTOR EDITION

Plano has been making boxes like this for years, but this is new because it now has an O-ring gasket to keep out water and scent. I can attest that it works great. It was in a smoky cabin all weekend, unopened, and upon returning home Sunday night the box was opened. Not a hint of smoke was on the clothes contained within. It would work excellent for storing scent control clothing. It has built-in handles and wheels for easy transport. Molded grooves allow for solid stacking. Internal dimensions are 29.75 inches by 13.5 inches by 12.875 inches, and it holds 108 quarts. Made in the USA (\$39.99 black, \$49.99 camo). **OWO tested and recommended.**

### PSE RAZORBACK YOUTH BOW PACKAGE

I started getting my kids into archery at an early age, and it's worked; they love it. Some kids' bows aren't built great and won't last long. This one here from PSE is a quality bow set made just for kids. It is built with a maple riser and wood/fiberglass laminated limbs and delivers solid performance. Intended for archers up to 5'7" it has a 28-inch draw length and 30-pound draw

weight. Bushings allow you to install a sight and stabilizer. Available in left and right hand models. It comes with everything a young archer needs to get started: quiver, three arrows, arm-guard and finger tab. 62 inches in length. \$144.99.

[pse-archery.com](http://pse-archery.com)



*If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it at [ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).*

### FOSS, from page 19

unately, the injury is not to one of the weight-bearing bones. More bad news came with additional x-rays. The bone did not heal properly and I will need surgery. The surgeon asked me when I would like to schedule it.

"After September, please," I said.

Good hunting. Break a leg. 

*Mike Foss was born and raised in Washburn, Wisconsin. As a guide and owner of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters, he has harvested bear and many deer, including several record book bucks. Off season, Mike is constantly scouting for new hunting areas and adventures. Go to [northernwisconsinoutfitters.com](http://northernwisconsinoutfitters.com) or call them at 715.373.0344.*

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TOM CARPENTER

## Cubs' Corner

### Camping with Mom

**K**nee-high corn standing in the fields. Slate-blue chicory adorning the roadsides. Canary-yellow goldfinches clinging to purple thistle flowers. Deep-green timber spreading across the hillsides. Fireflies flashing around yards and meadows at dusk.

These peak-of-summer visions spur memories of childhood camping trips back when I was just a Badger cub. Throw the smell of a canvas tent into that memory-making mix, and woodsmoke too.

Dad made sure his boys hunted deer, pheasants, squirrels, rabbits and the occasional duck in our native hill county of southwestern Wisconsin. We fished ... from the Mississippi backwaters and the Wisconsin River to trout streams across coulee country, with occasional trips north to Burnett County.

But there was a void in getting the entire family outdoors, so Dad decided on camping. How he talked Mom into it, I'll never know.

Doris Carpenter was quite the meticulous person. She liked her house a certain

way: immaculately clean, organized, with everything under control—the exact opposite conditions of what a family camping trip produces.

I don't know how they negotiated it out, but Mom's participation must have hinged on having a kitchen pantry. So Dad built one with cabinet doors and removable legs. It was so big we had to haul it in the boat, along with everything else needed to keep a family going for a few days: coolers with food, sleeping tent, camp cots, air mattresses, pillows, sleeping bags, screened cook tent, cook stove, mess kits, lawn chairs ... it was an expedition.

It must have been tough on Mom. She would put a rug in front of the tent, make us take our shoes off before entering, and sweep it out with a whisk broom a couple times a day. She didn't much enjoy cooking outside, so she attempted to stuff us full with a late breakfast so we wouldn't be hungry again until dinner. Her specialty was a thick, full-pan-sized flapjack coated in cinnamon and sugar and then rolled up around a trio of sausages. And we got to

drink Tang!

She was never quite happy while we camped, but that didn't really color our trips. As kids, we didn't care. And I think she knew that, so she suffered through. Maybe she had the foresight to know even her misery might create some memories that would last a lifetime.

We always seemed to hit bad weather. Wisconsin could be in the midst of the worst midsummer drought in decades and a Carpenter camping trip would send torrential monsoons to the state. I remember a trip to Governor Dodge State Park when I was eight or nine years old. After a beautiful first afternoon, the rain found us and stayed for two days straight. We sat in a soggy tent, occasionally ran outside to play or shore-fish between downpours, played cards, and looked at each other.

Knowing what I know now about marriage, I can imagine the exchange between Mom and Dad. We took the tent down in an absolute downpour a couple days before our scheduled departure, heaving the wholes mess into our still-trailerred boat.

Mom had to stop in the restroom before we left, and she must have been wearing wool pants that shrunk when wet, because she couldn't pull them back on. I remember her poking her head out of the pit toilet door and yelling for my sister to bring her some new pants.

Once our state park campsite reservation got lost, and we had to drive around the countryside until we found a private campground, Hideaway Acres, that probably based its business plan on lost state park camping reservations. But an old pasture with a few fine old bur oak trees was just fine with us kids.

A thunderstorm brewed up and blew through, taking down our tent. By the time we got it back up, a fresh northwest breeze was coming in with clear skies and bright stars behind it, making for a brisk Fourth of July night in the 40s.

But a local dog befriended us, and Mom even let it stay in the tent with us. A dog in the tent! Maybe she was worn down from the whole ordeal. Or maybe she knew a little more than I give her credit for about letting kids have a good time.

Looking back, I have to laugh at the things Mom did outside her very nature to go camping. She trudged on through. Maybe not with a smile on her face at every moment, but her kids still smile at the memories almost five decades later. Especially her hollering through a rainstorm for a new pair of pants! *WC*

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



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