

FREE

On Wisconsin Outdoors

with the Dick Ellis Experts

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WISCONSIN ICE FISHING SEASON



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Jigs have always caught fish. But today the basic ball head jig has been flattened, stretched, tear-dropped, angled, footballled, triangulated and horse-headed into a wide variety of styles to catch more fish.

The good news for your wallet is all you need are the ones that fit your style.

Choices may vary by species. For instance, bass and crappie jigs are key for me. But they catch other species, too.

The round head is a staple, from one-thirty-second ounce panfish jigs to half-ounce deep water walleye styles.

The new football-shaped swing jig allows bait to sway on the mobile hook. Heavier versions, like a three-eighth or a half-ounce are great for slowly reeling across river bottoms for smallmouth. Weights are based on water level and current force conditions.

Also in the mobile hook camp, the newer DanLures swivel jig allows the hook to move and its round, aspirin shape is

stable in current with live bait or artificials. It worked well for both lake largemouth and river smallmouth. As they come in five-packs, they're also economical. They do have some different sized hooks.

Keeper heads look stretched out in shape with the eye closer to the front to combat weeds. It features a keeper wire that can be pushed into the head of a plastic bait. The hook point is then buried into the body ala a Texas rig to make the package weedless.

Swim baits of all sizes have risen in popularity. Leadhead shapes vary, from round to triangular. For instance, a triangular head with the eye angled up helps when fishing weeds. Use heavier heads to get deep, and lighter ones to fish swim baits shallow.

Slider heads aren't new, but the inline hook in the flattened head allows it to sink slower. It is normally used with a plastic trailer worm. But try other plastics as well. One-eighth to one-quarter ounce sizes work weeds from shallow to deeper cover.



Author's most effective jigs, from left: Basic ball head, DanLure aspirin swivel jig (top), swing jig, keeper jig, swim bait jig head, Slider jig, tube jig head, inline bass jig (top). Bass/Grass jig, horse-head spinner jig.

You can find these heads in crappie size, too.

Tube heads are more elongated and teardrop shaped to fit inside the tube. Simply pop the hook eye through the tube body top to and connect line. There are a variety of sizes, and also short shanked hooks for the two-and-one half size finesse tubes.

Inline heads, like those on Strike King's Denny Brauer Structure Jig have the eye come right out the front. These are the ones that slide easily through Wisconsin's abundant weedgrowth. Plus, they work well in virtually any other cover. A lot of companies make silicone skirted bass jigs, so have a discerning eye to match your style.

Most inline jigs I have seen are complete jigs with skirts. The closest I have seen to just the inline jig head is called the bass or grass jig. Check out catalogs like Lure Parts Online and Barlow's Tackle for samples.

Companies like Blakemore have been making a version of their Roadrunner jig, aka the horsehead, with a spinner housed on the bait's underside to add flash. The added appeal works for all species, so match size with species.

Finding the jigs that fit you may take a little looking as there are many more types and sizes than the ones mentioned here. Also, as we all find out, the more we fish the more we learn. As we do, the more productive our jig offerings will be. 🐟

Tom Luba enjoys fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass, mostly. In a pinch, anything with fins makes time on the water exciting.

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OWO WATCHDOG REPORTS

Read OWO watchdog reports in each issue posted online on our homepage at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com.



DAVE DUWE

Flag Up, Fish On

Tip-up fishing is fun, effective

A group of friends can catch a lot of fish using tip-ups, and in our state, each angler is allowed up to three lines. In other words, the bigger the group of friends, the more lines on the ice covering a large area over different depths and structure. The end result is often more fish caught.

Every version of a tip-up operates the same way: a fish snatches the bait and pulls the line, the flag goes up, and the chase is on! My preferred tip-up is the age-old Beaver Dam. It's made of wood and has a tall flag which makes it easy to see in deep snow. When using some tip-ups, a cover made of foam or carpet, for instance, can prevent holes from freezing over. Another option is to use the increasingly popular round, plastic tip-ups which are made to cover holes and prevent them from icing over.

Every tip-up, of course, needs fishing line on its spool. You can use a coated line or a thick Dacron line, but the coated line is less apt to freeze in really cold weather. My favorite is a 25-pound test line. At the end of the braided line, I usually tie on a two-foot leader of 10 to 17-pound monofilament or fluorocarbon. I seldom use steel leaders because I believe they spook non-aggressive fish. By using the mono, you will get more bites with only a slight risk of a bite-off.



Byran Mazer with a nice tip-up northern pike

Whether fishing for crappies, panfish or northern pike, I use treble hooks and match hook size to bait size. Like fish hooks, the bigger the bait, the bigger the fish. I'll use a size 14 hook for panfish and a size ten for northern pike.

For bait I use live minnows or dead bait like smelt. I hook minnows behind the dorsal fin, which makes them swim downward. When using minnows make sure you temper the water. Minnows fresh from warm bait shop water will go into shock or die when put into cold lake water. I use a split shot that is just heavy enough to keep

Author's son Nathan about to start another tip-up fight.



the bait at the desired depth without hindering the baits action.

When a fish takes the bait, the tip-up's flag goes up and the spindle moves like mad. Upon arriving at the tip-up, I usually wait until the spinning stops before I gently lift to set the hook. When pulling a larger fish in, be careful when you get to the hole; the fish will make several more runs and too much pressure on the line can cause a break.

Whether fishing for anything from northern pike to crappie, tip-up fishing is one of the most effective ways to fish because you can cover many different depths and structure. Tip-up fishing will allow you to catch dinner, while providing you some exercise. 🎣

Dave Duwe owns and operates Dave Duwe's Guide Service, he fishes the waters of Walworth County, he can be reached at 262-728-8063.

ATTENTION!

Safety Warning and Recall Notice for Henry Single Shot Rifles and Shotguns



Henry Repeating Arms Company has recently discovered a potential safety issue wherein, under certain conditions, it is possible that some of these models may discharge without the trigger being pulled if the hammer is partially cocked and released.

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Catching Fun

Fishing not just about the fish

I have been a fishing guide for over 20 years, but I often think back to my earlier days as a kid learning how to fish. My family and friends didn't have any electronics or power augers, no portable ice shacks or fancy gear, just a spud, some old tackle, and a pail of minnows. It may not have been much and sometimes we may not have caught much. But there was one guarantee. We would catch a lot of fun.

Memories take me back to the days of sitting on the ice with friends and family gathered around an open fire roasting hotdogs and marshmallows while watching our tip-ups and jigging for panfish. The fire was warm and the food was always great!

The old guys told jokes that we youngsters may have been too young to hear, but we were on the ice and the rules were different. When a tip-up flag would suddenly go up, hot dogs and hot chocolate were tossed to the ground and it was off to the races! As the old guys rooted us on, we kids would battle our way to the flag to get the fish from the tip-up. The winner was now under the gun and certainly didn't want to screw up in front of everyone by losing the fish.

The prize fish would be brought to the main camp and proudly displayed by the winner before it was measured and compared to others caught that day.



Fire on the ice.

After the fish was added to the pile and the ruckus settled down, we picked up our dropped hotdogs and hot chocolate containers and returned to what we were doing before the tip-up race.

Some of us would go back to hanging around the main camp area and others would go look for fire wood. Of course finding just the right stick for roasting was nearly always on the top of the list. The



Kids with fish.

older guys would continue telling jokes and discussing how they were going to change the world, while us kids had fun with our friends as we waited for the next tip-up flag to fly.

So many great memories - with or without the fish. 🐟

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SPOTLIGHT | FERRYVILLE

A Place for All Seasons

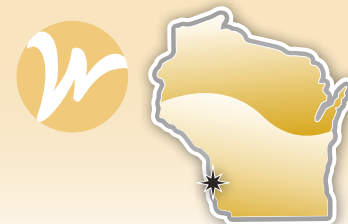
Ferryville, Wisconsin, is known as "A Place for All Seasons" and that has never been truer than now. Times are crazy and the shoreline of the Mississippi River sparkles with ice crystals and snow. Enjoying the outdoors during these bonus months of winter is a good time if you keep a smile on your face and joy in your heart.

Ice fishing, cross country skiing, hiking at Sugar Creek Bluff at the crest of North Buck Creek Road are a pleasure when it is a sunny, crisp day. Watch the eagle's soar!

Snowmobile at the Rush Creek Nature area. Cart your gear across Highway 35 to the backwaters of the Mississippi from the Rush Creek Parking lot for ice fishing to get your limit of panfish that will sizzle in your skillet for a feast of your fresh catch of the day. You can also park at the Ferryville Boat Launch to set out on the river for ice fishing there too. Cheapo Depot has your live bait if you need to add to your tote. Options unlimited.

Sugar Creek Bluff hiking and birding this time of year is a bonus place and

Explore Wisconsin



the cross-country skiing along the trail is a super experience, especially if snowmobiles have used it and made a good trail. Your treat is the panoramic view of the Mississippi River Valley at the point overlooking this magnificent valley of the "Driftless".

Outdoor recreation is abundant and so are the eateries where you can settle in after a day in the wild. Try The Wooden Nickel Saloon for the Wisconsin Burger, Jerry's Sportsman's for the chicken wings and Swede's Swing Inn for home made soups. They are all winners. 🍷

Ice fishing



Sherry Quamme plays on the Ferryville Nature Preserve.

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SUBMITTED BY CHRIS OLIG, LIUNA 113

Duke Long's Humble Beginnings and Road to Success

Dropping out of school in the 9th grade is rarely the beginning of a rags to riches story. There are exceptions, one of whom is Duke Long, founder of Interstate Sawing & Demolition. Joining a labor union only 15 years ago was the start of his upward trajectory to success. Today, Interstate Sawing uses state-of-the-art demolition robots to tackle a wide variety of jobs and employs more than 50 people working across the country,



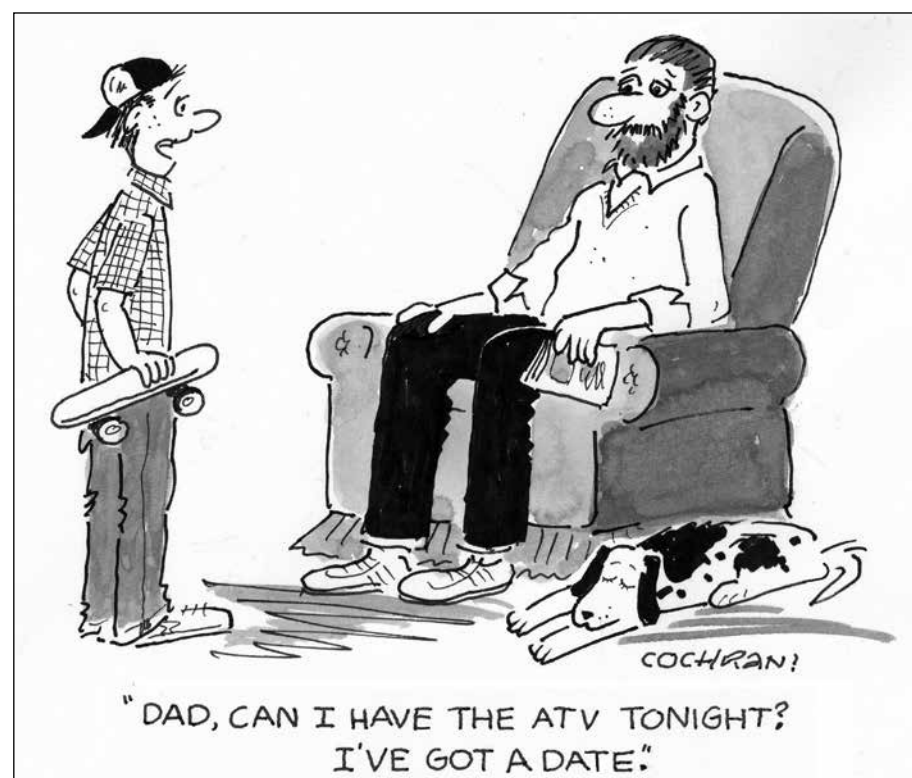
After leaving school, Duke worked non-union, private construction jobs, living paycheck to paycheck. Finally enough was enough and he looked into joining a local labor union. When he discovered the many benefits of union membership, he joined. The results were immediate. Duke found himself with more hours, better pay, and more comprehensive benefits. According to Duke, the labor union also taught him a variety of skills, such as the fundamentals of construction work and demolition and the business skills necessary for him to start his own company.

Duke learned that collective bargaining is one of the main benefits of union membership. Union workers elect representatives who serve as their voice when it comes to negotiating with employers. Negotiations address wages, safety conditions, and other concerns such as contract drafting and scheduling. Importantly, union representatives fight for annual raises and protect employee wages.

Only 23% of all workers retire with pensions. Workers are sometimes forced into early retirement due to injuries. Without a union to protect them, they risk retiring without the financial protection of a good pension. By joining a union, you can collectively bargain for better benefits, both on-the-job and after retirement. Union workers generally make more money over their careers, on average, nearly 20% more annually than non-union employees within the same industry. If you want to increase your odds of making more money while you work—and have a sizable war chest for retirement—union membership is the way to go.

Most worker are at-will employees, which means that their employers can change the terms of employment whenever they want—without notice or consequence. Labor

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27





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The Best of Both Worlds

Working and playing in Northern Wisconsin

As a kid growing up in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, Phil Frasier was destined for two things in life. Plumbing and fishing. Both were in his blood. As a fourth-generation plumber Phil would spend his childhood days with Grandpa, Dad and uncles at the shop. He worked hard; they all did. They had to. And when the day was done they'd hit the lake.

"Grandpa would tell me to close my eyes," Phil recalled recently. "He would lay out a map on a big pine table and hand me a fillet knife. He'd tell me to drop the knife. Wherever it stuck, that's the lake we'd fish that day."

To the Frasier, growing up and living in the Northwoods is not just a place, it's a way of life. That way of life provided Phil with adventures that reach far beyond

his home near Rhinelander. When Phil and his wife Joanna were just starting a new life together in the mid-'80s, he was approached by a resort owner who asked if he was interested in guiding fishing trips around the Chippewa Flowage near Hayward. Phil jumped at the chance. This was the first of his many professional guiding adventures.



Hard work means great play in the north country; Phil Frasier ends another great day with another great catch...and release.

fifth generation Frasier plumber, was born and raised in the Atlanta, Georgia area. Ian decided it was time to join the family business and make his move to the Northwoods.

Emil Popko, a service technician at Frasier's, grew up in the Northwoods before moving to Charleston, South Carolina where he spent 25 years. "I decided one day that it was time to go back home," he said. "The best part of it is the absolute serenity and watching life appear before your eyes."

Emil is not unlike many of the employees of Frasier's. Sullivan Shimek, an HVAC technician, came to Rhinelander from Appleton. "I knew the Rhinelander area was the place that I wanted to call home," he said. "I visited the Northwoods on weekends. It has long been a dream of mine to live here. I can finally say that dream has come true."

Like Popko, Shawn Irwin, a Frasier's service technician, recalls how his family had been coming up to the area since he was a kid to go camping. "We've always loved the atmosphere, so we decided it was time to move to the Rhinelander area from Madison," he said. "My favorite part is being able to spend the day on the lake fishing with my family. Often, we are the only ones on the lake."

"We are always looking for talented plumbers and HVAC techs,"

– PHIL FRASIER

After returning to the family business in the '90s, Phil was asked by The Way Outfitters to guide for them. The Way Outfitters provides outdoor hunting, fishing and other adventures for disabled and terminally ill cancer patients and veterans. Phil and Joanna would host guests in their home and take them on three-day trips. It was this experience that led him to help start Fellowship Adventures, an invitation-only ministry that serves people who are looking for world class outdoor adventures in a faith-based environment. Through these adventures, Frasier led groups fishing and hunting all across the United States and Canada.

Phil Frasier is now the fourth generation owner of Frasier's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling in Rhinelander. "Today I just take people fishing," he said.

In fact, he recently introduced his nephew Ian to ice fishing. Ian, now a

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Over 60 Years of Service

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Dreaming of Life in the Northwoods?

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SPOTLIGHT | **ALGOMA** | CAPTAIN LEE HAASCH

The Perfect Winter Getaway

Algoma, lakeshore has it all for the outdoors person

Mother Nature can have a funny way of rearing her head on the lakeshore, and wintertime is no exception. Snow drifts, iced-over lakes and barren, leafless trees leave the countryside with a special kind of clean-looking beauty. To the outdoors enthusiast, this is what we wait for: snow covered trails for cross country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling, and frozen lakes and ponds for ice fishing.

There is something special about the quiet time spent ice fishing. Like sitting over an eight inch-hole, precision cut through two feet of solid ice and waiting patiently for a hungry fish to take your bait on the end of a three-foot ice rod and reel. It is a magical moment when that trout or walleye pokes its head into the hole and comes to the surface to present itself to the angler tugging at the other end of the line. Whether bucket-sitting outside in the elements or in a wood fire stoked-ice shack, ice fishing in the Algoma area is more than a past-time; it is something like an obsession for most avid anglers.

The Algoma area has all of that and then some. The Ahnapee Trail connects Algoma to Casco, Kewaunee and Sturgeon Bay and offers over 50 miles of perfectly groomed snowmobile trails, including hundreds of additional miles of trails that wind through Kewaunee and Southern Door Counties. Cross country skiers also enjoy the groomed snowmobile trails as well as the many local county and city parks available to them.

Experience for yourself the great fishery Lake Michigan has to offer. And if you want BIG fish, beautiful scenery and a fresh look at Mother Nature, check out Algoma! For charter information or fishing reports visit my website at: www.FishAlgoma.com or call 1-888-966-3474. From Capt. Lee and the crew aboard the Grand Illusion 2, good luck and good fishing! 🐟

Capt. Lee Haasch is a charter captain out of Algoma. He has over 40 years of Great Lakes angling experience and has been instructing anglers for over 30 years with educational seminars and timely freelance articles in outdoor publications

Explore Wisconsin



The Bay of Green Bay is full of tasty Whitefish and anglers come from miles around to jig for these silver treats.



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Across the peninsula the Bay of Green Bay is only a short 15 minute drive to trophy Walleye fishing.

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WINTERTIME IN ALGOMA
Winter time brings out the best in a small community. Algoma has much to offer the outdoor enthusiast. Snowmobiling, hiking, cross-country skiing, ice fishing are just a few of the many activities we offer outdoors. For the indoor person, try bowling, winery tours, dining and of course, shopping in many of our fine shops!



Hurley Wisconsin
www.hurleywi.com



SPOTLIGHT | HURLEY

More snow, and more places to play

Iron County is THE snowfall capital of Wisconsin with an average of 180 – 200 inches of snow per year. Iron County is designated a Snowmobile Friendly County by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs. The Hurley area offers miles of groomed trails to snowmobile which are maintained by the White Thunder Riders Club. For 50 years, the club has devoted hours of volunteer time all throughout the year to ensure that trails are safe and signed correctly, along with helping our local community. Call our office for a 2020 - 21 Iron County Snowmobile Map and plan your trip today!

Knowing what to pack is key for your North Iron County adventure. From snowshoeing to cross country skiing, we have trails to explore. Some of the area waterfalls are accessible in winter with a

little hike, but well worth the journey.

Along with significant snowfall, we have ice on the county's 214 inland lakes, which includes the Gile Flowage. Spanning over 3,380 acres with a maximum depth of 27 feet, the flowage is home to walleye, smallmouth bass, muskie, northern pike, crappie, bluegill and perch.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers a Free Fishing Weekend on January 16 - 17, which is a great time to come north and explore. Along with locally organized fishing tournaments, there are plenty of lakes to explore ice fishing.

Planning a family getaway in our area means that you can enjoy outdoor activities while practicing social distancing. Our area offers several cabin rentals or small home rentals that you can

take advantage of.

Whitecap Mountains Resort will be offering discounts on lessons, equipment and tickets during the Wisconsin Learn to Ski and Snowboard weekend, January 24-29. Take advantage of rates and bring your family to explore North Iron County.

After a day of adventure be sure to stop at any of the local establishments. A variety of cuisine is available from fresh homemade pastas and pizzas to prime rib or a fresh hand-packed burger. The locally owned bars/restaurants specialize in fantastic food and friendly service.

No matter what type of adventure you are searching for, we can help you plan. Our office is stocked with maps, brochures and information that will help you decide what North Iron County adventure you want.

Explore Wisconsin



Whitecap Mountain Ski Resort

Plan a getaway and enjoy these upcoming local events:

- Willy's Still Ice Fishing Challenge, January 16, 2021
- Bank Club Ice Fishing Jamboree, January 16, 2021
- Join us soon in Hurley! www.hurleywi.com



SPOTLIGHT | SPOONER

Magical Time of Year for Outdoor Enthusiasts

Once a railroad town, Spooner has grown to become a must-see destination in Wisconsin. Still rich in railroad history, Spooner boasts many restaurants, specialty retail, and seemingly endless amounts of outdoor activities year-round.

Winter is a magical time of year in Spooner and its surrounding areas, offering a wide range of opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. From well-groomed cross-country ski trails to back-country snowshoeing, you are sure to leave with some new favorite trails after your explorations. Just east of Spooner you will also find nearly 12 miles of expertly groomed winter fat bike trails where you are able to rent a bike for a day or bring your own. Don't forget to check out the hundreds of miles of immaculately groomed snowmobile trails and many snowmobile friendly businesses along the way, in and just outside of



James Netz Photo. Provided by Washburn County Tourism.

Spooner. With access to the river flowage and countless lakes, Spooner is home to some of the best ice fishing spots around as well.

If you are looking to stay warm and cozy while the temperatures outside are dropping, downtown Spooner is the place for you. Be sure to check out the Spooner Tin

Explore Wisconsin



Ceiling Tour of over a dozen historic downtown buildings that have exposed the incredible original tin ceilings. Along the way take a break to relax at one of our many dining options from family-owned restaurants serving must have comfort food and fish fry, cozy coffee shops, a specialty brew pub and more. You will also find a variety of retail shops offering art, antiques, jewelry, chocolate, and lots of Northwoods keepsakes and souvenirs.

Whether you are looking for a relaxing weekend cuddled up by a fire inside a Northwoods cabin or want to enjoy the hospitality of a cozy bed and breakfast and/or the amenities of a quality hotel or motel, Spooner has an abundant number of outstanding accommodations for visitors to choose from. So, come see for yourself why Spooner is the must-visit destination in the Northwoods!



DON'T WORRY. WE WILL STILL BE HERE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT.

We can't wait to make more memories with you!



BILL THORNLEY

Watching Him Grow

Whitetail buck offers photographer rare opportunity

Like many Northern Wisconsin residents, I have often had whitetail deer as neighbors. One unforgettable year I was blessed to watch one of these neighbors grow from a fawn to a buck literally before my eyes.

A couple of seasons ago he appeared in the spring as a spotted fawn with his twin sister and mother. He disappeared around mid-August as deer habits changed with the season. I'm not sure, but I think he reappeared the next year running with the same small group of does.

This young buck presented a unique opportunity to observe the seasonal antler growth of a whitetail, and it wasn't long before he was growing round, velvet-covered knobs on the top of his head. Initially, he would dash off whenever he saw me on the deck. Eventually he calmed down, although I wasn't sure that was a good thing for a buck to do. I didn't encourage his friendly behavior, but I did take some pictures to record his antler development.

By the end of April his brow tines were a few inches long. In May, G2 tines were visible. His antler growth increased in June, but it was clear he wasn't going to be a Boone & Crockett trophy.

In the morning and just before dusk, he could be found munching grass and "hanging around." He and a couple of does would bed down under some shade trees on the occasions he appeared mid-day.

July rolled around and his head gear was pretty well formed - Junior would be a five-pointer.

By the middle of August his antlers appeared to have stopped growing. As the month progressed, his behavior



changed. He seemed less friendly, which made me happy because hunting season was just around the corner.

My Whitetail neighbor was a wild deer and there was nothing I could do to protect him. I was encouraged when he would bolt and explode into the woods whenever he saw anybody other than me. In time, he even bolted when I came out. Happily, Junior's natural instincts seemed to be kicking in.

At the end of August his antlers began to change and I could tell that they were starting to harden as blood flow lessened, as it does with all bucks at that time.

That knowledge didn't make it any less shocking when I saw him in early September walk out of the woods with one bloody, polished antler. The next day, the velvet was rubbed off of both of them. He looked like a real buck.

Not long after I was snapping photos of nearby does when I heard grunting sounds. The young buck came wandering in, scattering the does he had been hanging around with all year. The rut was starting.



Bow season began and I feared the worst, but he apparently didn't go too far. He would show up from time to time, although I saw him less and less. The does also came around less often. Eventually, they stopped coming. The last time I saw the buck with a few does was just before Halloween.

Did he simply wander off to new territory? Did he venture too close to a hunter? Was he a victim of a pack of coyotes I heard yipping and yapping from time to time in the swamp, or was he too slow crossing a road as a speeding truck neared?

I don't know. I'd like to think he is still out there, but reality tells me he probably is no longer with us. Again, he was a wild deer, not a pet, and I never treated him as a pet.

Still, I was happy for the rare opportunity to watch him grow and record his life with my camera. The little five-pointer gave me some wonderful, unique memories. I think of him fondly now as another fall progresses. 🍂

SPOTLIGHT | BAYFIELD

Lake Superior Fishing Just One of Many Highlights

Fishing for Lake Trout on frozen Lake Superior is pretty amazing. What makes it even better is that there is so much public land to explore and adventures to be had on land as well as on the ice.

There's nothing quite like the expanse of beautiful scenery in Bayfield County with nearly a half million acres of national and county forest to traverse and over 900 inland lakes to fish. But have you ever tried a dogsled adventure? This is such a cool experience – from harnessing the dogs to learning how to steer and taking a corner with the dogs pulling you silently along the snowy, forested trail. You even get to feed the team when you get back and pet the happy, tired dogs after the trip. This is truly a unique experience that will stay with you for a lifetime.

If you have your sled with you, you can experience some of the best riding in the Midwest on 600 miles of groomed snowmobile trails or hundreds of miles of ungroomed forest roads. Another bonus is that there are plenty of cabins, condos and hotels throughout the area. As a matter of fact, there are over 100 lodging choices in Bayfield County and only one of them is a chain hotel. Many of them have a restaurant on site or nearby so you can truly experience "up north" hospitality and relax at the end of a fun day spending time outdoors. 🍂

Go to www.travelbayfieldcounty.com and click on the online Story Map for details (including photos) of where to Play/Eat/Stay.

Explore Wisconsin



JACOB QUIGLEY

Kayaks for All

Choosing the right ride for 2021

One of the few positive outcomes of 2020 was the discovery of the great outdoors and related activities by people who otherwise spent a lot of time indoors. The impetus for this, of course, was the Covid 19 pandemic and the banning of many popular indoor activities. Luckily, there's plenty to do outside the home office.


One of them is kayaking, which has seen an explosion of interest and participation since the lockdowns began in spring. Kayaks come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and types, each of which is designed to fill a particular role and purpose. The intent of this article is to help you make the best choice possible when purchasing a kayak.

Recreational kayaks are the perfect choice for most beginners due to their versatility and ease of operation. They provide the best bang for the buck in terms of the variety of places they can be used to explore and enjoy. Ranging in length from eight to 10 feet, their only drawback is that they are not appropriate for use on the Great Lakes or anything above Class Two rapids if that type of more challenging water may be in your plans.

Whitewater kayaks are made for swift, rushing water and current. I recommended them only for highly experienced kayakers on fast pace-rivers. Helmets are an absolute necessity for this kind of kayaking because the chance of capsizing on rapids or boulders is higher. Whitewater kayaks range in length from four to six feet.

Fishing kayaks are in a separate category because they are designed to specifically meet the needs and preferences of anglers. They have wider bodies and can range from eight feet all the way to 16 feet in length. Fishing kayaks are becoming increasingly popular because they can travel to places not accessible by typical fishing boats.

Sea kayaks are designed specifically for use on large bodies of water and can



	Sit-on-top Rec	Sit-inside Rec	Whitewater Kayak	Sea Kayak	Canoe/Kayak Hybrid	SUP/Kayak Hybrid
Fishing	Best	Best	Limited	Good	Best	Good
Camping	Good	Good	Limited	Good	Best	Limited
Drift	Best	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Racing	Limited	Good	Good*	Best	Limited	Limited
Family	Best	Best	Limited	Limited	Best	Good
Trips	Best	Best	Limited	Good	Good	Best
Small Ponds	Best	Best	Good	Limited	Best	Best
Open Water	Limited	Good w/skirt	Best w/skirt	Limited	Limited	Limited
Open Water	Best	Best	Good	Good	Best	Best
Open Water	Best	Good w/skirt	Limited	Best w/skirt	Limited	Limited
Open	Best	Good	Limited	Best w/skirt	Best	Best
Speed	Limited*	Good	Limited	Best	Limited*	Good
Stability	Best	Good	Limited	Limited	Best	Good
Maneuverability	Good	Good	Best	Limited	Good	Good
Weight	Limited*	Good*	Best	Good*	Good*	Good*

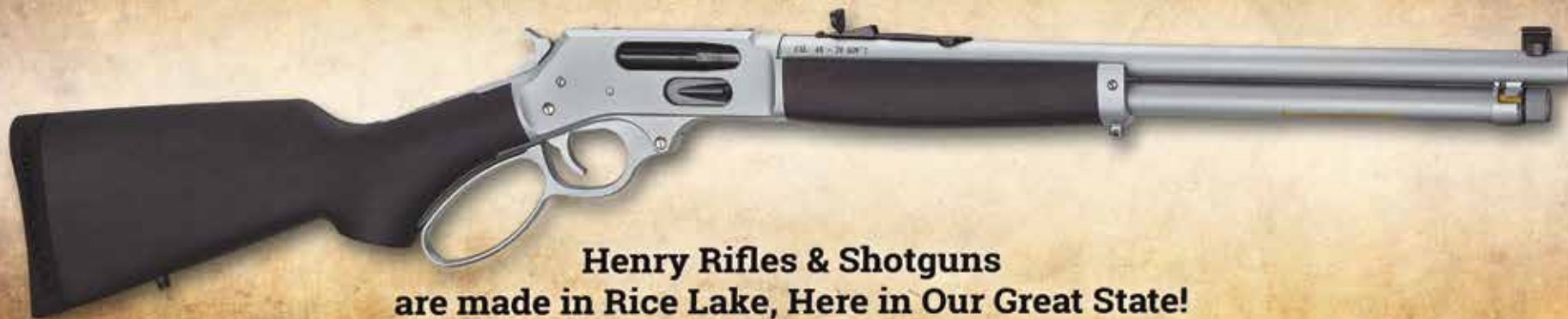
Kayak Width	Under 23 "	24"-28"	29"+
Paddler Height	Recommended Paddle Length		
Under 5'5"	210-220cm	230cm	230-240cm
5'5" - 5'11"	220cm	230cm	230-240cm
6' +	220-230cm	230 - 240cm	240cm

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | MANITOWISH WATERS

Snowmobile, Silent Sports...what's your winter pleasure?

The Manitowish Waters area is known for its vast miles of snowmobile trails that traverse the beautiful Northwoods landscape. You might be unaware, however, that the Manitowish Waters area also caters to the silent sports segment of winter enthusiasts. You can spend days quietly exploring beautiful forested lands on cross country skis, strapped into snowshoes, or riding a fat-tire bike.

The WinMan trail system is a perfect location to enjoy winter's silent sports. Located in the northwest section of the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest between Manitowish Waters and Winchester, the WinMan Trails are recognized as a premier year-round silent sport destination. The trails provide some of the most exciting fat tire bike, ski and snowshoe trails that are accessible to all levels of adventurers.

The WinMan Trails project began in 2011 as a small network of snowshoe trails built on private property. It has blossomed into 1,300 acres that span private and public land, and now offers year-round recreational opportunities of all types, such as mountain biking, trail running, hiking, cross-country skiing (classic and skate), snowshoeing and single-track fat tire biking.



There is no shortage of trails to choose from in Manitowish Waters. The North Lakeland Discovery Center, near downtown Manitowish Waters, offers cross-country ski and snowshoe trails on gentle terrain along Statehouse Lake and the Manitowish River. The North Lakeland School and the MECCA ski trails, located just outside of Manitowish Waters, provide beautiful cross-country ski and snowshoe trails as well. There are close to 20 miles of trails for you to explore around the area.


As if those aren't enough options for winter adventure, Manitowish Waters is only 40 minutes from Big Snow Resort (Indianhead and Blackjack Mountains) and Big



Photos taken on the WinMan Trails in Winchester/Manitowish Waters.

Powderhorn Mountain, and just a little more than an hour's drive from the Porcupine Mountains Ski Area.

We consistently hear from locals and visitors that the Northwoods is magical in the winter. The combination of untouched snow, the smell of pine trees, and the sun shining down on our beautiful ski, snowshoe, and bike trails makes for a relaxing, but fun weekend getaway.

Please visit ManitowishWaters.Org for lodging and restaurant recommendations, or give the Chamber of Commerce a call with any questions you might have. We encourage you to check out the trail systems' websites for updates on conditions, rental information and fees. 

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Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | PORT WASHINGTON

From Surf to Turf, this Great Town is on One Great Lake



The warmth and hospitality of the lakeside town of Port Washington can be experienced year-round, starting with the Polar Bear Dip to usher in the New Year. If you have been to Port Washington, you know that playing outside - including Lake Michigan fishing - never ends here. The marina may close, but thanks to our lakeside parks, people cast their lines from shore all year round with great success!

Our nearby state park and a nature center offer trails for cross-country skiing, winter hiking, birding and breathtaking views everywhere you turn. Bring the binoculars and your camera. The lakeshore melds with winter's touch to provide dramatic photo opportunities and breath-taking views.

Back in the heart of town, you can park your car and simply walk and enjoy. Visit our specialty shops, galleries, and fun boutiques. Looking for specialty foods? Check out an old-fashioned butcher shop and a smoked fish market, a gourmet popcorn store, our decadent chocolate and ice cream shop, a winery, tea room, or an artisan bakery.

Then stop in and warm up at any of our great restaurants, coffee shops, or pubs, including our new brewpub. Make sure you don't miss the Port Exploreum; a highly interactive museum that will appeal to the whole family. Learn about Lake Michigan, fishing, our local history - all delivered in an atmosphere of pure fun.

Our lodging establishments will provide you with that perfectly cozy place and accommodating place to spend the night after your outdoor activities. Spend winter how you like it! We're close enough to be convenient - but what a great getaway!

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ROUGH IT BEAR HUNTS

Bear hunting in Northern Wisconsin

The black bear is viewed as both a symbol of Wisconsin's wildness and as choice prey. Seeing a black bear in the wild is an exciting experience for many and an equal thrill for those who prize the black bear as a big game species. The Wisconsin black bear population is thriving and expanding its occupied range in the state. In 2010, 8,910 harvest permits were available and hunters responded by harvesting more than 5,000 bears, the highest bear harvest documented in Wisconsin history.

Wisconsin's occupied bear range is expanding, which means residents can expect to see black bears in areas outside of the bear's traditional range. According to the Wisconsin DNR website, Iron County is considered to have "abundant" bear population. 🐾

Rough It Bear Hunts is located in North Iron County, Zone A. In 2019, the harvest goal was 900 with 1590 authorizations available, 946 bear were harvested. Our service has over 20 spots which are camera monitored and baited from early May up to and through the hunting season. Guide packages vary depending on need and can include a stay in our rustic cabin located on a private lake with musky, northern and bass fishing.



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BOB'S BEAR BAIT, LLC

Bear Baiting 101

What to know before you go

As the days grow longer and thoughts of spring loom on the horizon, Bob's Bear Bait is planning for the 2021 season! We just acquired a new location just east of Wausau in Birnamwood, Wisconsin. This is a great location for Section C hunters.

Our other shops are located in Appleton, Wisconsin, Phelps, Wisconsin, and Ishpeming, Michigan. We continue to search for quality Bear Bait for each and every location to fit the needs of every hunter, from guides to small groups. This year we plan to do some 'Shovel Your Own Products' events at a reduced price a few times throughout the year.

As the laws are changing, we're slowly phasing out the use of chocolate in our baits but some will still be available at a small percentage. Fall quickly approaches, so remember to shop early as our natural baits sell out fast, such as berries, nuts, peanut butter, etc. With that in mind, spring is a great time to scout before the spring blooms start! Look for creeks, water, or low dark conifer areas adjacent to hardwoods.

Another important tip to remember is to steer clear of sites that hunters baited the year prior, as they may be returning with somebody from their group that has drawn a tag. We hear many disappointing stories about several bear baits within a quarter mile of each other, so it's important to plan early! 🐾

Enjoy the entire season. Baiting is one enjoyable and gratifying part of the hunt. Connect with Bob's Bear Bait at BobsBearBait.com or 920-419-1238.

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MIKE FOSS

A Ghost Not Seen Bear hunt for monster still ends in success

As the 2020 bear hunt license draw drew near, I became increasingly excited. My good friend Brian Bolssen and I were expecting tags and planned on hunting together in Bayfield County for an old bear I nicknamed the Ghost Bear. Brian's last bear hunt in Wisconsin resulted in a beautiful 472-pound boar. The next year his son Jarrod shot a monster 527-pound boar. Brian did draw a Zone D bear tag (Zone D is now Zone A). Unfortunately, I did not. Regardless, I would accompany Brian in our quest for Ghost.

In past seasons I learned that Ghost was a creature of habit. He would regularly appear at one of my bait stations within a specific time frame, but tended to vanish a few days before the start of the season. Adding to this season's concerns was the increase in activity on the land we have permission to hunt. This was due to the owner's decision to make his cabin on the property his home. We still had his okay to hunt, but we didn't know how Ghost would tolerate the extra activity that comes with people in the neighborhood.

At the end of July I planted a deer food plot of clover about three-quarters of a

mile away from the Ghost bait. Luckily Ghost - and many other respectable bears - preferred eating the fresh white and red clover over the classic bait stations. To further entice the bears, we placed a bear bait station just on the edge of the newly planted food plot.

Finally, after all the hard work Brian had invested in baiting the stations and traveling back and forth from Green Bay to Bayfield County, the day of the hunt arrived. Brian was joined by his boys Hunter and Jarrod, making the hunt even more special. Brian hunted hard - but unsuccessfully - for old Ghost throughout the week, but he finally gave in for a beautiful 255 pound boar. Retrieving the bear in the darkness, I couldn't help but hear the three interacting, the sons so proud of their father, the hand-shakes, and hugs. It was a special moment and week for Brian.

Brian may not have come home with Ghost, but he didn't return empty handed. I believe that it's not the size of the animal, it's the experience of the hunt. Brian and his sons definitely had a great experience.

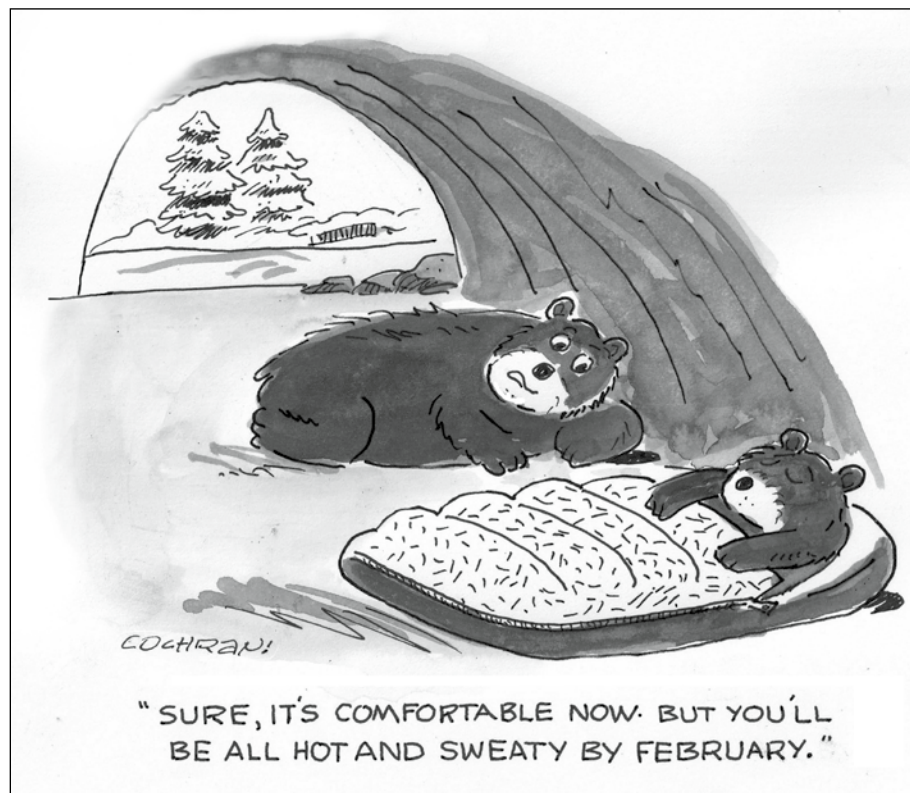
Good hunting everyone and strive to enjoy the experience. 🐾



After bear hunting hard throughout the week for the Ghost Bear, Brian Bolssen from Green Bay finally scores on a beautiful 255 lb boar. Brian Bolssen (Middle), Jarrod Bolssen (left), Hunter Bolssen (right)



The big old 400-plus pound Ghost Bear visits the deer food plot bait station.



QUIGLEY, FROM PAGE 13

accommodate one to three paddlers and range from 14 to 20 feet in length. Due to their very long length, sea kayaks provide more stability than a typical recreational kayak. Sea kayaks are usually equipped with a steering rudder because of the large turning radius. Obviously the longer the kayak the harder it is to turn, particularly when compared to a whitewater kayak that is made to turn on a dime.

All kayaks can be divided into one of two types: sit-on-top kayaks or sit-in. Everyone has their own preferences, and mine is the sit-in variety. Sit-in kayaks offer better stability because the paddler's center

of gravity is lower and they offer better protection from the sun.

There is a kayak for just about every purpose on water, from sight-seeing, fishing to riding the rapids. Before putting any money down, though, I suggest that you rent a kayak or two to see first, if you enjoy this activity (you will), and two, what is the right ride for you.

See you on the water! 🐾

Jacob Quigley and his fiancé Kace Wagner will be sharing their kayaking adventures and knowledge of the sport in future editions of On Wisconsin Outdoors.

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TOM CARPENTER

Wary Song Dogs

Hunting suburban and small-plot coyotes

Proof positive of the coyote's adaptability is its foothold in Wisconsin's suburban and exurban areas, as well as near towns across the countryside. It's hard to find a place anywhere in our state that doesn't have a few to a lot of coyotes prowling.

The good news is that these "towny" coyotes are under-hunted. The bad news is they're largely on private land. Sometimes the chief trick for predator hunting is just getting access, which can be easier than you think.

The answer involves a public relations (PR) play. Knock on doors in neat street clothes (not your hunting camo) and explain your interest in hunting coyotes and taking a few of them off the neighborhood's hands. Leave a card identifying yourself.

You'll be surprised at how many landowners are willing to let you on, especially if you talk a lot about gun safety. Promise to refrain from using a high-powered rifle, or any rifle for that matter. Instead, stick with shotguns, and

explain their range limitations and safety implications.

Once you're hunting, stay under the radar to keep other hunters off your trail, and to prevent encounters with folks who might be driving, biking, walking or jogging along roads or trails.

Hunting only at dawn and dusk solves some of these issues, and those are good times for coyote activity anyway. Another trick is to hunt populated suburban and exurban areas only on weekdays, when less people are about. These precautions don't matter as much out in the true countryside.

That's a lot about PR, but you won't be doing much hunting without it.

Once you're in the field, hunting towny coyotes takes on a few twists. These "Song Dogs" are opportunistic, and often quite competitive with each other, so they are usually going to come in fast to rabbit and other distress calls. If a coyote comes in and you shoot it, stay put and call again. Keep at it for another five to 10 minutes. There may be another 'dog on that one's heels.

Property lines can be tight, so hone your skills with squeaker calls in case you need to coax a coyote through a fence or across a road and onto land where you have permission to hunt and shoot.

Never underestimate the craftiness of coyotes. They may be used to vehicles driving around, but not yours; sneak in on foot instead. Farmland and suburban land parcels can be small, with only a limited area or two for setups. If the wind is wrong, hold off and hunt the area another day rather than educate the coyotes even more.

Set up across fields, pastures or meadows and use rabbit-in-distress calls toward grasslands, wetlands, fencelines, brushy thickets, forgotten orchards, fallow meadows, ditches and other spots where prey (rabbits and mice chiefly) would hide out and coyotes would be prowling. Keep the wind blowing from the cover to you, or flowing crosslots, and draw the coyotes out.

When that sneaky coyote lurks in the wings, you need to give him a little bit of soft love. With a little finesse from your



Coyotes thrive near towns, villages and suburbs. Here's how to hunt them where the land parcels are small and the "Song Dogs" are wary. Suburban land owners often know that pet dogs and cats are in danger where coyotes are not hunted and will grant permission to your request to hunt.

fingers, a mouse squeaker call makes the irresistible little pleadings you need to lure that 'dog a few steps more.

The same shotgun used to hunt pheasants - or better yet turkeys - is fine for coyotes. It should be a 12-gauge for maximum payload. Stuff your blunderbuss with 3-inch loads of buckshot. Sizes 0 and 00 buckshot are solid performers. Hold your shots to 30 yards or less. 🐾

Native son Tom Carpenter writes about hunting, fishing and the outdoors for a variety of national and regional publications.

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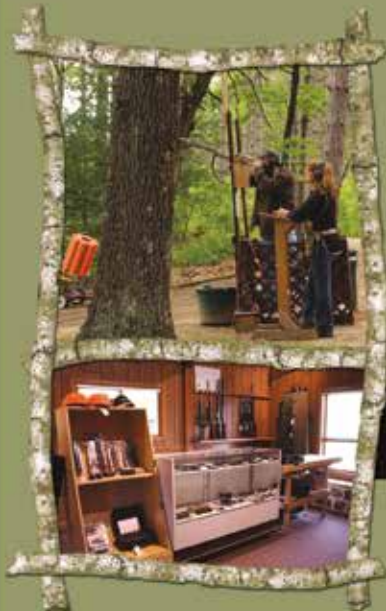
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TOM MUELLER

Persistence and Patience

Training your retriever pup

When judging AKC hunt tests years ago, I mostly judged the Junior stake. During those events I had the opportunity to see a lot of young retrievers run by novice owners. Most of the time they were reasonably good, but not always. At the Junior level a retriever can wear a collar and walked to the line using a lead, but must walk in the heel position without pulling ahead. Generally, the heeling was what you would expect from a young dog that was not thoroughly trained to properly heel. Adequate, but not the vision of what proper heeling should be. Often, these young dogs would be walking ahead while the handler would be constantly repeating “heel.”

There also were dogs that were not steady, meaning they wanted to “break” for the retrieve as soon as the duck hit the ground or water. At the Junior level the handler can hold onto the dog’s collar so it can’t break. Retrievers should be taught to sit and stay and not go until sent. For the most part these young retrievers sat well with their collars being held by their handlers, but occasionally there was a dog that wanted to blast off as soon as it could, would stand on its hind legs, or had to be restrained by its handler while straddling the dog with both hands on the collar. Not really a good picture of steadiness.

Another issue that many of these young retrievers had was not delivering the duck to hand. This is a big part of a retriever’s job. The rules state that the dog must deliver the bird to hand. It doesn’t have to come to heel and sit to deliver, nor does it even have to sit to deliver. It just has to deliver the bird to hand. Many of these dogs had the tendency to drop the bird especially when coming out of the water and shaking off after a water retrieve.

The handler would then repeatedly command “fetch” until the dog finally picked up the bird and the handler grabbed it. This would be what has become known as a “fast hands” type of delivery. The handler would reach down to take the duck, but the dog would drop it. The handler would then grab it before it hit the ground. They would then hand me the duck and say they didn’t know why their dog did that because it had been thoroughly trained to deliver to hand. Not exactly what is meant by delivering to hand or being thoroughly trained. Occasionally, dogs running at the Senior or Master level would walk to the line ahead of their handler, wouldn’t put their butts on the ground to sit, or crept ahead in anticipation of being sent for the retrieve. Not appropriate for retrievers trained to do the advanced work required at these levels.

These issues come about because not enough time was spent working on these concepts to correct and perfect them when these retrievers were young dogs. Retriever training can be boring, especially the initial training of a pup or young dog. Owners, who eagerly want to see their young dog do big long retrieves start teaching advanced work, don’t train enough on these concepts and often overlook the sloppiness. The sloppy retriever work becomes acceptable to the owner. Once learned and performed on a regular basis as part of its training, these faults become the default response by the dog.

A rule in retriever training states if you have a problem, stop the dog’s training and work exclusively on fixing the problem. Even better, you prevent problems by taking the time to focus on teaching and drilling on the basics so your dog performs them perfectly and consistently. Doing this tends to eliminate any sloppy retriever work down the road. 🐾

Tom Mueller has been avidly training retrievers since the early 1980s. His passion has evolved into helping others train their retrievers through the Fox Valley Retriever Club so they can achieve the satisfaction that he has had. For questions or information regarding retriever training or the Fox Valley Retriever Club, contact Tom at winddancer.rtrvrs@hotmail.com

BILL CUNNEA

Two Days, Two Dogs

Double the field paradise

I currently am dog-sitting Citori, a Deutsch Drathaar, a wire-haired pointer. I took her out to the state park where they randomly stock birds for hunting sometime during the week. We finally hit a day before all the raptors, foxes, and miscellaneous predators ate them up. These birds were pen-raised, which means they have run rather than flown most of their lives.

And run they did; three times Citori went into crouch, creeping up to point, or on point, and the birds just did their version of the road-runner and moved fast through the brush, into the woods, before finally taking off to disappear out of sight.

Finally, Citori locked up on one, I flushed it, and dropped it for her to find and bring back to me. It felt good, but a still better feeling was that I knew that there were birds on the property and I was not just taking a dog for a long walk.

We walked to the far end of the property and as she was tracking some scent, I stumbled upon another bird which flushed to my right and behind me. With the grace of one of the Keystone Cops,

I twisted, tracked, and fired. I hit the wing and the darned bird dropped . . . into the branches of a tree.

It wiggled and fell, and I called Citori over to find it, although I could see it clearly (have to make the dog think it is a mighty hunter). She found it, and with some pride, brought it over to me. I praised her mightily.

I had fulfilled my role as tutor.

Pre-dawn the following day, I took Mick, my field bred Springer Spaniel, out to the property, hoping that birds were still around, somewhere.

We worked the edges of the property, and after about 45 minutes of working some scent, Mick rounded up from under some trees, snapped his head to the left, and started bouncing (Springer Spaniels - like Bumbles, bounce!) to the edge of the grasses bordering the plowed crop field. A bird went up and I managed to hit it. Mick was on it fast and brought it back, making me wish



Citori, Deutsch Drathaar



Fox Valley Retriever Club

*Hunters Helping Hunters
To Train Their Retrievers*

Training for Hunting Hunt Tests Shed Hunts

FOXVALLEYRETRIEVERCLUB.COM

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | MARINETTE

Enjoy all the Seasons in The Real North

Whether your winter wonderland is sitting by the fire side in a cozy cabin, curled up with a good book and hot chocolate, or racing through the snow, outside until your snow pants are soaked and your cheeks are rosy red – The Real North offers the winter you want.

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Not your speed? Spend a day downtown, soaking up the local scene. From hand-crafted home décor, antique stores, craft shows, and sweet shops, you're sure to find something to enlighten your soul and wash the winter blues away.

After a day of fun, don't forget to warm up with a hot meal at a local dining establishment. Enjoy some tunes and good conversation before you hunker down for the night with the moon lighting the stunning view from your window.

Escape the city lights and enjoy the changing of the seasons. Your winter wonderland awaits in The Real North, Marinette County. 📍

Plan your adventure at therealnorth.com



On The Cover

Feature: James Netz photo taken on the Wildcat Mountain Bike Trail in Washburn County. Courtesy of Washburn County Tourism.

Inset: Dylan Rapp and the Heitman crew enjoy fast action tip-up fishing a snowless Moose Lake in Waukesha County. Dick Ellis Photo.

FRASIER, FROM PAGE 8

Phil Frasier sums it all up well.

"As skilled trades people, we are employable," he said. "We could go anywhere and get work, but we choose to be here and live this life. Where else can you grab a technician, tools, and a water heater and jump on pontoon boat to cruise out to a remote island in the middle of the lake to meet your customer and install his heater? That's a pretty cool day."

At the end of the day, you're likely to find Phil and Joanna relaxing with a glass of wine on their deck listening to the loons or beside the bonfire with their grandkids. They're living the Northwoods life.

And what about you?

"We are always looking for talented plumbers and HVAC techs," Phil said. "The area is growing and we can't keep up. So, if you're looking to live a Northwoods life, come on up. I'll take you out fishing and we'll talk." 📍


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LEE GATZKE

Deer Drives

Fading tradition remains effective tactic

Back when trains delivered downstate deer hunters to our remote northern deer camps, deer drives were relied upon as a primary tactic to harvest deer. We've all seen the pictures of the early 1900s Northern Wisconsin wilderness deer camps which sprang up in the wake of the lumbering era. Their meat poles sagged from the weight of many bucks as the successful hunters posed in front of them. It's impossible to say what percentage of those bucks were taken on deer drives, but I'd bet it was over 70 percent.

With a dozen or more men in camp and large expanses of prime deer ground to hunt, deer drives were made to order. In those days fewer than 70,000 hunters were spread across the northern third of the state so overcrowding was not an issue. Based on those pictures, the clothing worn by those men wouldn't allow for an all-day stay on a stand.

My father began deer hunting in the late 1940s after returning home from WWII. In those days he hunted with a small party who stood on stand all day. Each hunter stayed warm beside a fire they kept going to prevent them from freezing, and their clothing was much better than their predecessors. Deer drives were an ideal way to fend off frostbite and get deer moving. Driving deer accounted for many of the deer taken but it came at a cost. For example in 1914, 24 hunters were killed and another 26 wounded. Poorly conducted deer drives contributed to unsafe behavior and many accidents occurred during them.

Deer drives were still very popular when I began hunting the Northwoods as a middle schooler in the '60s. I participated in many drives during both bow and gun seasons. Since then things began to change. Declining deer numbers in the north and a rapidly expanding population in central and southern counties saw an exodus of hunters following the deer south. My family followed.

The southern two-thirds of Wisconsin was mostly farmland and wood lots and led to different hunting strategies. Driving deer became less popular on the smaller, mainly private properties that the growing hunting community was crowding on to. Why push "your" deer off your hundred acres to shoot one or two on that drive when you could wait them out on stand and do as well or better over the long run? That was a common thought. Let the neighbors drive them off their place onto yours, seemed the better way to go. Driving deer was now a liability and began falling out of favor. That is, until the last day of gun season when it was used as an all or bust tactic against a deer population that had gone nocturnal for most of the gun season.

In our camp young hunters gun hunt opening weekend and after Thanksgiving, leaving the weekdays to the "old guys" to hold down the fort. Things get pretty quiet on Monday as the deer get nocturnal, so the old guys resort to an old tactic to get deer moving: driving. One guy drives while one or two others post as we cover some of the farm we hunt.

Us old guys relish the chance to get out on a drive and get the deer moving. Driving will most likely continue to be an effective tactic, but it seems to be losing favor as more hunters opt for "waiting them out."

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.



Drivers work in tandem with standers to create shot opportunities at any time of the day.

JOHN CLER

A Family Affair

Bringing young hunters into the fold

Most young hunters are introduced to hunting by members of their immediate family. Many older hunters in Wisconsin remember waiting patiently to turn the age of 12. At that age they would be eligible to take a hunter education course and later join the adults of the family in the exciting pursuit of wild game. Things have changed since then and youngsters can now hunt with adults well before the age of 12.

I admit that, as a hunter education instructor, I was originally not a fan of these changes. I am generally a proponent of the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" argument. I began to change my tune as I saw younger and younger students, often accompanied by a parent, treat firearms with respect and demonstrate an intense excitement at joining the hunting fraternity. I have acted as mentor for my two daughters, two granddaughters, two nephews and a good number of other youngsters and adults along the way. I was still not completely sold on the idea of younger children hunting until a seven-year-old changed my mind.

Grandson Reif lives in Madison and really enjoys any time he gets to spend at the family hunting cabin in Richland County. He turned seven this summer and requested a camping trip on the family land for his birthday. I built a survival shelter of sticks and leaves for Reif and his father to spend the night in, while I set up a tarp nearby. Dinner was elk steak cooked on a stick with fire blackened potatoes. A plan began to form as I watched Reif's excitement at just being in the woods and enjoying all the sights and sounds that were part of the experience.

Reif joined his dad and me at the cabin for bowhunting weekends beginning in September. His favorite activity was shooting at empty aluminum cans with his BB gun. He became a better shot as time went on. I introduced him to shooting a .22 caliber rifle, which he also mastered quickly. I was also impressed with his ability to handle firearms in a safe manner.

I asked Reif's dad, Shawn, if he believed his son was ready to try deer hunting during this fall's youth deer hunt. Shawn said he thought he was and began working with Reif to make sure this was the case. My problem was that I only had two "recoil friendly"



The author's grandson Reif with his first buck, taken during the youth hunt in Richland County.

rifles that Reif's sister and step-sister had spoken for. I did have a .223 rifle that might work. I did some research to find suitable ammunition to deer hunt and introduced Reif to the working parts of the firearm.

Reif had an opportunity as the opening day of the youth season was drawing to a close. A spike buck made its way into a food plot below the tower blind he watched from. His mentor assisted in getting Reif in position for a shot. The deer jumped at the shot and quickly disappeared into the adjoining woods. Confident that the shot was a good one, mentor and mentee headed to the cabin for a quick dinner and some help.

Reif's description of where the deer went told us help would be needed; the deer had headed down a steep wooded hillside. Three mentors and three young hunters took up the blood trail in a dark woods and quickly found the buck. A round of high fives and picture taking ensued. Gutting and dragging followed. Everyone took part in the uphill pull and made the chore a relatively easy one.

I am confident that Reif will be a hunter for his entire life. He has already set his sights on turkey hunting this spring. I have been elected mentor for that hunt, as I am the family "turkey guy." I look forward to the spring now more than ever.

John Cler is a retired high school principal and science teacher. He is active in local and state-wide conservation activities and hunts, fishes and traps from his home base in Richland County.



RON STRESING

Oconto River Kids *Making the wishes of Wisconsin kids come true!*

Mountain, Wisconsin, is home to a grass roots organization that makes the wishes of critically ill children come true. Founded in 2012 by Eric Bonatz, with Joe Paul, and local volunteers, its mission is simple: To provide outdoor adventures for critically ill children and their families. Along with bear, turkey and deer hunts, they also provide fishing trips here in Wisconsin. They are probably most well known for their annual bear hunt, where six to 10 children are taken on mentored hunts for bear. In 2020 Oconto River Kids beat the odds, harvesting 10 bears for 10 hunters.

Starting in 2019 they began sponsored mule deer, elk and antelope hunts in Wyoming. They also annually send a family on an Alaskan fishing trip. The amazing thing is, it's all done with donations of tags, preference points and money donated by sportsmen. Guides, landowners, and local support also help make the kid's dreams become a reality.

In a phone conversation with Oconto River Kids president and founder Eric Bonatz, he explained that he was inspired by "going into the hospital and seeing sick kids. We try to do good things for kids that are sick."

Any parent that has had a critically ill child knows the feeling of helplessness that comes along with the illness. My hat is off to them for providing the families with outdoor adventures and memories.

In 2014, Oconto River Kids was incorporated as a non-profit and recognized by the State of Wisconsin and the IRS as a registered and tax-exempt charity under section 501 (c) (3). This means that donors can be assured their donations are going to a good cause, and may also be tax deductible. This reporter is donating.

Special thanks to Eric Bonatz and Brandon Baudhuin for photos and the interview. For more information or to donate preference points, tags, etc. or contribute directly, contact them at Oconto River Kids P.O. Box 288 Mountain, WI 54149. For more information, see their web site www.ocontoriverkids.org.

Ron Stresing has been an outdoor writer since 1996 and has had articles published in Midwest Outdoors, Fur-Fish-Game and Badger Sportsman magazines. He lives in South Milwaukee with his wife Donna.

DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report *Hunting the deer desert 2020*

Deer camp was definitely a different deal this year. Just four veteran hunters (read that as 'old guys') filled out the camp roster. Due to the Covid concerns, there would be no socializing with other deer camps like we normally do. Understandably, the traditional Zingler camp pre-Thanksgiving feast was cancelled. What didn't change, though, was that we ate too much and drank just enough to embellish our deer stories and ward off any stray virus. Purely medicinal, of course.

Opening day of gun season dawned calm and cold. Perfect conditions to ambush one of several bucks we had seen in the area multiple times during the summer and fall. To say the day was disappointing would be an understatement. In 10 hours in the woods, I did not see one living thing. Not a deer, not a squirrel, not a bird, not even a mouse. To be fair, I did hear a raven in the morning and a pileated woodpecker in the afternoon; never laid eyes on them though.

Apparently, my experience wasn't unique in that I didn't hear the first shot until nearly 9 o'clock and then only a handful after that. None were remotely close to me. In five days of hunting I got a glimpse of two deer and a reasonable look at one doe. Thanks to an antlerless tag in my pocket, I was able to put some venison in the freezer the day after Thanksgiving using my new crossbow while hunting some private land in Oneida County.

On opening day, deer sightings by our group totaled one fawn. Contrast that with my wife's brother-in-law who single handedly saw 60 deer on opening day while hunting central Wisconsin farm country. The Northwoods is definitely not farm country. The heavens did open a crack on Sunday morning when one member of our group made a mile and a half trek into one of his old ground blinds and within 15 minutes shot a fork buck.

On Tuesday, two of us ventured out to an area in the Nicolet that we had hunted for nearly 30 years to see if we had made a mistake by moving. We hadn't. In walking a two mile loop along a swamp edge, down a river bank, and through the hardwoods I saw not one deer track in the day old snow. Now, that's a true deer desert.

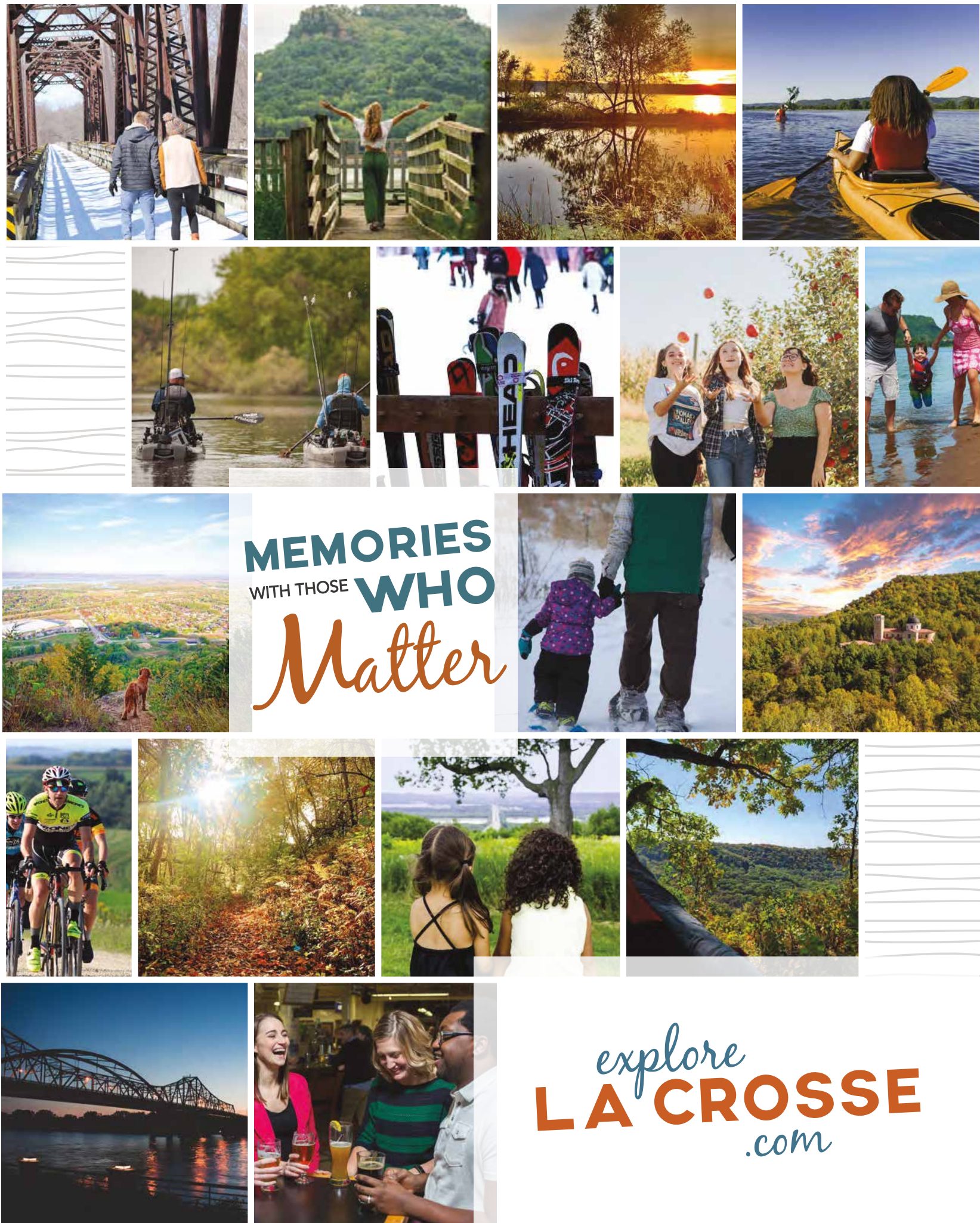
But, in the heart of a hunter, there is always that optimism that this year will be the year and today will be the day. Trail cam pictures don't lie. There actually are some deer living out in the national forest. Not very many, just enough to keep us coming back. Throw in the great scenery along with the ability to walk for miles in any direction without seeing another orange coat and I sure hope to be back next year.

So, once again my ammunition cost for the 2020 deer gun season was zero. As I've said before, a box of shells goes a long, long way when you're hunting in the deer desert. Just sayin' 🍷

Dan Moericke lives, fishes, and hunts in the Northwoods, occasionally actually catching a fish and tagging a buck. He is fortunate to have an understanding wife and a great group of buddies to share his days afield. On most days, he is able to remember where he parked his vehicle.



This buck in the Nicolet National Forest is adept at social distancing and taunting.





Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

RON STRESING

Myths & Misconceptions

A shotgun shell report with some bang

Truth is, some popular misconceptions about shotgun ammunition have been around a long time. Too long. Some go back to the days of volume measured black powder, paper hulls and felt wads.

High brass, Low brass, No brass: The metal base on most popular priced shotgun shells is no longer brass. It's now brass or zinc plated steel. Only a few high quality hulls made for reloading, like the iconic Winchester AA or tactical-grade law enforcement rounds (where positive extraction is a must), still use real brass. Originally, shotgun shell hulls were all brass, and primed with pistol primers. About 1875, 12 gauge shells with larger

primers, paper hulls and brass bases hit the market, selling in wooden cases of 500 shells. The brass base prevented the black powder the shells were loaded with from burning through the paper, leaving the base stuck in the shotgun's chamber. The larger the volume of black powder, the higher the brass "base" had to be. Besides the listed drams of powder used to load the shell, the height of the brass indicated how powerful the shells were. "Low brass" were trap loads, and "high brass" were for hunting. The height of a shell's metal base today is meaningless and simply a selling feature.

I've safely loaded 2 3/4" magnum and high powered slug loads into low brass AA trap cases. In the mid 1960s a company

called "Wanda" introduced an all clear plastic shotgun hull. The famous Activ plastic hulls from the '80s also had no exposed metal, just a steel disc molded into the base of the all plastic hull.

Originally black powder shotgun charges were measured in drams, with a dram equaling 1/16 of an ounce. A few modern shot shell boxes still list the dram equivalent, often abbreviated simply as "dr eq." Most now give the muzzle velocity; that's a much more realistic way to judge how the shells are suited to the task. Black powder is classed as an explosive, while modern smokeless powder is classed as a propellant. Smokeless powder is much more stable, and besides being non-corrosive and



slow burning, gives better patterns. Today we accurately weigh charges of shotgun powder by the grain, with 7,000 grains equal to one pound.

You will sometimes hear claims that,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | HAYWARD

Snap A Sled Selfie

The Hayward Lakes area in Sawyer County is known for some of the best snowmobiling in the country with access to more than 600 miles of groomed trails. When you come to explore our winter playground you get to experience hundreds of miles of natural beauty through the Wisconsin wilderness.

As you explore you'll notice the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs sign along the trails and at local businesses declaring Sawyer County the Snowmobile Friendly County in Wisconsin. When you see one of those signs, don't just zoom past -- stop and snap a selfie with it. If you post your selfie on Facebook or Instagram with #sledsawyer2020 you will be entered into a drawing!

There will be three winners chosen on March 3, 2021.

- \$500 -- Goes to the best photo submitted (chosen by the contest administrators)
- \$250 -- Goes to a randomly selected entry
- \$250 -- Goes to another randomly selected entry

#sledsawyer2020 starts December 12 and runs through Sunday, February 28, 2021. You can enter as many times as you want as long as each photo is posted with #sledsawyer2020. So snap those selfies and post often! Visit www.haywardlakes.com for more information and the contest rules.

Check us out on social!

OLIG, FROM PAGE 6

unions can protect workers from unjust termination. Depending on the severity of the offense, union representatives follow specific guidelines with the employer to ensure that a worker's case is investigated fully and properly.

For nearly 100 years, unions have served workers and provided them with countless new safety initiatives. In non-union workplaces, workers have little to no control over their circumstances, especially when it comes to regulations. For construction workers, union membership increases the likelihood that a worker will finish their career without sustaining a life-changing, terminal injury. Construction worker union members can be confident that they won't be placed into dangerous or hazardous situations.

No matter what industry you're in, there's a union for you. As you can see, there are a variety of reasons why union work is more worker-friendly than non-union work. If you want to learn more about the benefits of joining a union, consider looking through the Milwaukee chapter of the LiUNA web site and see how you can become involved at www.liuna113.org.

Whether you're at the beginning or end of your career, joining a labor union can change your life. It certainly changed Duke's! Check out the Laborer's International Union of North America to see if you're eligible for membership today—a better career in construction is waiting for you. 🎯

STRESING, FROM PAGE 26

old paper shotgun shells from grandpa's day shot further and hit harder. Wrong. The one piece plastic wads used from the early 1960s on produced a far superior gas seal, protected over 10% more of the pellets from deformation, and give better patterns. Odds are, they also were loaded with soft dropped shot, not harder, high antimony chilled shot. Try a few old vintage shells on a pattern board and see the results for yourself. I can guarantee you will be underwhelmed. Seeing as old shells sell for about \$1 apiece, my advice is to sell to collectors or save them as keepsakes.

Truth is, the shot shell ammunition on the market today is probably some of the best ever produced. 🎯

Ron Stresing has been an outdoor writer since 1996 and has had articles published in Midwest Outdoors, Fur-Fish-Game and Badger Sportsman magazines. He lives in South Milwaukee with his wife Donna.

SKB
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RS300

LEFT HAND RIGHT HAND

For a current catalog go to www.skbshotguns.com

The advertisement features three SKB shotgun models: 90TSS, CENTURY III, and RS300. Each model is shown in two views: a full-length side profile and a shorter, more compact view. The 90TSS and CENTURY III are pump-action shotguns with wood stocks and silver receivers. The RS300 is a semi-automatic shotgun with a black receiver and wood stock. The background is a light green gradient.

GREGG NIEMI

Mike Trapp

Celebrating a snowmobile racing legend

Wisconsin's Northwoods and the snowmobile industry will be celebrating local snowmobile racing legend Mike Trapp this winter with a variety of activities.

Many of us grew up hearing about the great race that Mike won in 1971. A duel like no other, it was the equivalent of gladiators going at it in a colosseum - except the arena floor was on ice at the high-banked ovals of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby Track in Eagle River.

Mike was a local boy from Arbor Vitae, near Minocqua. He had qualified for the world's championship and won it on a sled with about half the horsepower of his opponents. The next year he won it again on a lesser powered machine. Had there even been one more lap the year after that he might have won it a third time.

Mike rose from obscurity to becoming one of the most talented and feared drivers in all of professional racing. He was first a factory driver for Yamaha and then Ski-Doo. Having a factory racing career was a dream come true. Yet, if you talked to Mike, you would find him to be very humble and grateful for what the sport has done for him. The truth is, he has done as much for sport of snowmobiling as the sport has done for him.

The era when Mike competed was really the birth and then boom of recreational snowmobiling. Before snowmobiles, many Northwoods communities virtually shut down for the winter. There really was no tourist season in the winter. And then Boom! The snowmobile created an entirely new Northwoods economy. And snowmobiling and everything that goes with it remains a huge part of the

Northwoods economy today.

Mike, with his fame, helped popularize the sport. Many a person bought a sled on Monday after Mike won a race on Sunday. There were races almost every weekend in the small towns across the northern part of our state, and Mike won many of them, plus he went on to win many more across North America.

Two celebrations have been planned for Mike Trapp on the 50th anniversary of what is still touted as the "greatest world championship snowmobile race in history."

The first event will feature Mike's career with Yamaha at the World Championship Derby in January. Rumor has it that Mike will make a few parade laps around the track on the 433 Yamaha he had won on. For more info on the derby go to www.derbyscomplex.com.



The second event will feature Mike's career with Ski-Doo in February at the Snowmobile Hall of Fame. People will be able to take part in a special ride with Mike on some of the Northwoods trails and tracks where his professional career began. For more info on the Ride with Mike Trapp go to www.snowmobilehalloffame.com.

We all might live vicariously through the past triumphs on the snow of riders like Mike Trapp. But remember, there is plenty of room on the Wisconsin trails today for all of us! See you out there. 🌲

TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

Take a winter bird walk

Now that winter has settled in, you may be looking for extra ways to get some young badger cubs outside for fresh air and exercise. One of my favorite winter activities to pursue with kids is going on a winter bird walk. This pastime combines equal parts hiking, hunting, avian identification and biology lesson.

In Wisconsin's winter countryside, the name of the winter birding game is the "mixed flock." Here's how to hike in and "hunt down" one of these loose but entertaining little bird groupings, spot and identify its members, and help a young birder understand the behaviors being observed.

Select a nice sunny day, preferably one with little or no wind. The birds are most likely to be out working the countryside too; windy and cloudy days keep them holed up out of the breeze and in thick cover.

Don't worry about getting out at the crack of dawn. The midday hours between 10 a.m. and 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. are best for

winter bird activity anyway: that's when temperatures are at their "peak" for the day and birds burn the least net energy while foraging.

Conduct your bird hike in a winter woodland. Mature hardwoods are great (especially brushy oak, aspen or other hardwoods), but really, most any mixed forest will do. Maybe it is some hunting grounds you know, or a state or county park.

Walk slowly along, binoculars in hand. Stop and look often. Use the glass and your ears: You'll often hear a winter mixed flock approaching before you see it. Listen for the buzzing *chickadee-dee-dee* calls of black-capped chickadees, the nasal yank-yank-yank calls of white-breasted nuthatches, and the excited *pik-pik-pik* calls and spirited tree-drumming of downy woodpeckers.

If you spot a flock, approach slowly. Better yet, get a "line" on their path of travel and slowly work in front of their route. Admire the birds close-up from behind binoculars.



Brown creepers (left) work a tree trunk upwards while nuthatches (right) feed downwards. This way all angles are covered, and these winter flock-mates aren't competing with each other for forage. Photos courtesy wikimedia commons.



Here are the kinds of birds you can expect to see in a mixed winter flock in the Wisconsin woods.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES. These energetic, black-capped and black-bibbed little fellows are familiar to most folks. Watch chickadees work the bark of tree branches for bug eggs, larvae, and other forage. Chickadees eat buds and seeds.

WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCHES. These handsome blue-capped, white-bellied birds cling to tree trunks and probe bark crevices for forage while circling tree trunks *from the top down*.

BROWN CREEPERS. These nondescript, brown-and-buff little birds with curved bills complement nuthatches perfectly. How? Creepers work a tree trunk *from the*

bottom up, covering territory and angles that nuthatches miss on their trip down.

DOWNY AND HAIRY

WOODPECKERS. You will see more downies than the larger hairy woodpeckers, but the birds look similar: black-and-white checkered backs, white bellies, long-and-stout beaks with handsome red patches on the back of the males' heads. Woodpeckers drum and pound into bark to dig for forage that other flock members can't access.

TUFTED TITMICE. Bonus bird! You might occasionally see these silver-gray, crested cousins of the chickadee in winter flocks, especially in eastern Wisconsin. Watch for the big, beady black eye, listen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes with Suzette

Foil packet recipe ideas

A warm, hearty sandwich on a cool fall day is always a treat. Served with a bowl of one of my husband's favorite soups and a few pickles makes for one happy man at my house. Enjoy!

Venison Meatball Marinara Sandwiches

2 Pounds ground venison (with tallow) ½ Cup grated Parmesan cheese
 2 Eggs, beaten ¼ Cup chopped fresh parsley
 1 Cup onion, chopped 2 T chopped fresh basil
 ¾ Cup dried bread crumbs 2 T minced garlic

Preheat oven to 400°. Spray a large cookie sheet or jelly-roll pan with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients (I take my rings off and mix everything together with my hands). Shape mixture into 1" meatballs and place on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes; turn the meatballs and bake for another 10 minutes.

While meatballs are cooking, heat a jar of your favorite marinara sauce in a saucepan over medium heat. After meatballs have finished cooking, remove them from the baking pan and add to the warmed marinara sauce.

Cut loaf of French bread or French baguette into sandwich sized pieces; slice sideways through pieces to open up. Spread one side with butter and add sliced or shredded mozzarella to the other side; place under the broiler until the butter and cheese have melted.

Add meatballs and sauce to the sandwich slices and serve warm.

Slow Cooker Shredded Venison Sandwiches

3 Pounds Venison roast
 2 T olive oil
 2 Medium onions, chopped
 3 Ribs celery, chopped
 2 Beef bouillon cubes, dissolved in 2 cups water
 1 Teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 T minced garlic

Heat oil over medium high heat in a large pan. Brown both sides of roast to seal; then place roast in bottom of slow cooker. Cover with onions, celery and beef bouillon/water. Cover and cook on high for 4 hours.

Remove roast from slow cooker and reserve 1 ½ cups cooking liquid. After the roast cools slightly, shred with forks and return to the slow cooker.

In a large bowl, mix reserved cooking liquid with remaining ingredients. Add to the shredded meat in the slow cooker; stirring and mixing well. Cover and heat on low for about 1 hour.

Serve on sandwich buns while still hot.

Venison Roast Sandwiches*

3 Pound Venison Roast
 1- 7 Ounce packet Good Seasons Italian Dressing (undrained)

1 Cup Water
 1- 16 Ounce bottle Pepperoncini

Place roast in bottom of slow cooker. Combine the dressing packet with water and pour over roast along with pepperoncini and liquid. Cook on low setting 5 to 7 hours until meat is fully cooked and easily shredded.

Serve on Kaiser rolls with your choice of any or all: provolone, onions, green peppers, mushrooms, and horseradish.

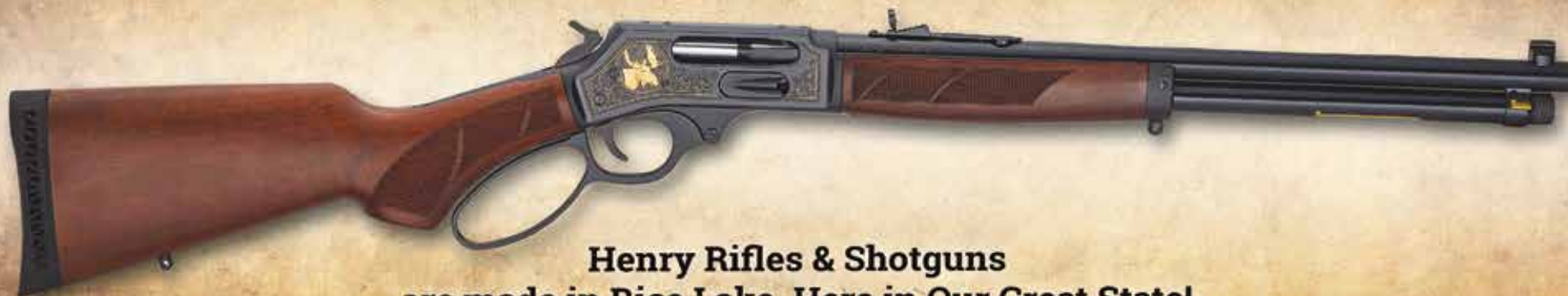
*This recipe is from our son in Kentucky who prepares the sandwiches for his neighborhood get-togethers.

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

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STUART WILKE

Shorty's Shooting Sports

The versatile, practical, cost-effective AR15

You don't need to be a Navy Seal to appreciate the many attributes of an AR15. According to Mike "Shorty" Govas, owner/operator of Shorty's Shooting Sports in West Allis, anyone with even a passing interest in firearms should consider purchasing one. Realistically, if you only own one rifle, a semi-automatic, AR-15-type would be the one.

There are several reasons for this. No rifle platform on the planet is as versatile, practical, and cost-effective, which no doubt accounts for its popularity. There is somewhere between five and 15 million AR15s in use by American citizens. In standard 5.56/.223 caliber, a run-of-the mill AR15 with just an inexpensive telescopic sight makes a perfectly adequate varmint or target rifle. Add a precision target barrel, decent trigger, and a higher end 'scope and you'll have an excellent varmint and competition grade target rifle. Even the least expensive AR will generally shoot at least three-inch groups at 100 yards. Upgrade a basic model or purchase a varmint or target grade version, and now we're talking phenomenal accuracy.

The AR15 platform has passed the test of time. It is perhaps the most thoroughly tested, scrutinized and revised-as-necessary firearm in history. Over 50 years since its adaptation, an AR15-type rifle remains the primary service weapon of United States armed forces. Those who purchase an AR15 for emergency use can rest assured it's up

to the task based on decades of use with American and other armies around the world.

While you can legally hunt deer in Wisconsin with a rifle chambered in .223/5.56 x 45, there are better calibers for those hunting with AR15s. One of those, and the most popular, is the .300 Blackout. Similar in size and power to the venerable .30/30 cartridge, the Blackout is (or was, before the recent gun and buying panic) readily available, affordable and plenty powerful enough for deer-size game. The beauty of the AR15 platform is that you don't have to purchase an entirely new rifle or magazines to shoot .300 Blackout. You just need an easily available new upper receiver at about half the cost of say, a used Winchester Model 94 in .30/30.

Firearm proficiency comes with practice. Unfortunately, attaining shooting proficiency with a centerfire weapon can be pricey. Once again, the AR15 comes to the rescue. You can shoot .22 rimfire with an AR15, provided you have a conversion kit. Cost of a kit is about the same as a good quality .22 rifle and, because you can shoot more, you'll benefit by becoming highly adept with your AR15 in any caliber.

AR15s make great first rifles that can grow with the shooter. Recoil is nominal, accuracy is commendable, and maintenance is fairly simple. A new shooter can learn firearm fundamentals with an AR15 in .22



The versatile, accurate and reliable AR15 is the most popular rifle in America

rimfire, move on to and master the more potent .223/5.56 x 45 and go deer hunting with a .300 Blackout.

All of this can be accomplished with just one gun, one that will last a lifetime and one you can have the satisfaction of building yourself with a few simple tools. Give some thought to the primary purpose of your AR15. Target shooting? Hunting? Self-defense? Remember, you can always change your mind and modify your gun accordingly. Start with a lower receiver made by a reputable manufacturer. Then add the buttstock, forearm, fire control group, barrel, optics, etc., of your choice. Few AR15-type rifles require proprietary parts, so when making your selection, you're not tied to just one parts manufacturer. A decent AR15 can be built for as little as \$800. If you don't have the time or inclination, quality ARs can be had for not much more money.

As of this writing, Shorty's still had a selection of AR15s in stock along with a variety of parts, accessories and optics. But act quick. The guns are more popular than ever and supplies are limited.

CUNNEA, FROM PAGE 21

I'd had the camera ready. He gripped the body and the pheasant's wing completely covered his eyes. I called to give him some idea where I was. It was a perfect, funny, and absolutely right image to save for winter memories.

We covered the rest of the left side of the property and should have had a second bird. There is no reason why I didn't drop the second bird, unless it was wearing Kevlar. I know, I know it is unlikely, but it flew away with casual indifference.

But Mick was a joy. Oddly, I'd come to think of him as "all right" for a bird dog. In this instance, however, with the juxtaposition of running a pointer one day and Mick, a flushing breed, the second, Mick just shone!

Two days, two dogs and I could recommend either breed for some great pheasant hunts. I think I shoot better over the Springer, but that may be because I have too much time to think over the pointer's locked point.

Your mileage may vary.

Bill Cunnea has been a writer, teacher, consultant and outdoorsman for 40 years. He continues to be taught lessons by his dogs in southwest Wisconsin, where he's lived for over 30 years. He's never caught a lunker nor shot a 12 point buck and has the lack of trophies to prove it.



Mick, field-bred Springer Spaniel

CARPENTER, FROM PAGE 28

for a buzzy whistle-call.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES. Sometimes goldfinches in their olive-and-washed-yellow winter feathers join in, eating seeds from standing plants and from tree catkins.

A mixed flock of songbirds works perfectly together to make sure no food

source goes untapped in the winter forest. It's a wonderful biology lesson for birdwatchers of every age. And the color, sound and activity witnessed is a real day-brightener in the middle of a long winter.

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

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JERRY KIESOW

Fly-fishing in Wisconsin

Filling a box

A small tackle box with a few different flies will catch a variety of fish. Such a tackle box could start with

four types of flies: top water, wet, streamers, and nymphs - four naturals and four attractors. Each can be tied in a variety of sizes and colors.

We'll begin with top water flies and work our way down the water column from there. Start with a yellow popper for smallmouth bass, good-sized crappies, and/or bluegills on a size #6, or maybe a tad larger, like a #4. This will be an all-yellow popper - body, hackle, and tail. Add a dry fly, such as Royal Coachman, in a size #8 or all the way down to #16 or smaller. These will mainly be used for trout. The size of a fly like this can be very important as a searcher and an attractor. It mainly depends on what is hatching at the time.

Our box should include a Woolly Worm and a McGinty Wet Fly. These can be fished both shallow and deep. The Woolly Worm can be tied in many colors, but for our purposes, we will place a natural looking fly with a green body and brown hackle. The McGinty, with its colorful wing, hackle, body and tail, will serve as the attractor part of these two patterns.

Next on our list of fly necessities are streamers, which can also be fished either deep or shallow. I consider the Woolly Bugger a streamer. The Bugger is a pattern that can be tied in many colors, just like the Woolly Worm, as well as several sizes. I have tied them in #4s all the way down to #12 (I use the #12 for trout). For the attractor portion of this combo, add the Mickey Finn, which has a set recipe of yellow and red hair with a silver, tinsel, body.

For the bottom feeders, particularly trout, add the Pheasant Tail, which imitates mayflies. Along



Of course, you will fill many boxes with flies.

with it, include the Pink Squirrel for the attractor.

Originally the Pheasant Tail was tied with only two materials: thin copper wire for the thread and - no surprise - pheasant tail feathers for the tail, body, thorax, and wing cover. I like to tie it this way because it gets down quickly and is simple to tie.

The Pink Squirrel can be tied with or without a bead. The pink chenille, pearl Krystal flash and heavy wet fly hook are standard, the dubbing varies but has Fox Squirrel mixed in with another fiber.

Of course, there are many more fly patterns, but those high-lighted in this article are a great start.

See you in the river and keep a good thought!



Jerry Kiesow enjoys all aspects of the outdoors and shares them through photos, words, and workshops. He is the author of "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer" and "Photos, Poems, and a Little Bit of Prose," available at Orange Hat Publishing, Amazon, and his website, www.jerrykiesowoc.com, where you can follow his endeavors.



Here are a group of flies to get you started.



TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds Red Crossbill

At first glance you might pity the poor red crossbill. Its offset beak looks unnatural, perhaps injured, and painful. But it is none of those things. Rather, nature has armed the crossbill with an effective and unique tool for wrestling the cone from a pine tree, prying off the scales, and slipping a tongue in to pull out a seed. Try that with a straight beak sometime! Crossbills often come from the Canadian boreal forest to visit Wisconsin in wintertime.


FIND crossbills in their favorite habitat: coniferous forests. Most any conifers will do, but spruce, hemlock, fir and white pines are favorites. This makes northern Wisconsin, and some areas of central Wisconsin, the best habitat.

LOOK for washed-red male birds, a little smaller than cardinals. Females are olive-green with yellow rumps. Both males and females have dark gray to black wings.

LISTEN for the crossbill's *chip-chip-chip chee-chee-chee* song.

ATTRACT crossbills with black oil sunflower seed. Crossbills are adept at plucking seed from hanging feeders, but the birds will also readily visit tray feeders.

ENJOY crossbills while you have them, for they are ever nomadic in winter in their search for seeds to eat.

Did you know that there is a white-winged crossbill? To make the distinction from a red crossbill, simply look for two broad, white wing bars to identify a whitewing. 

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