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March 2025

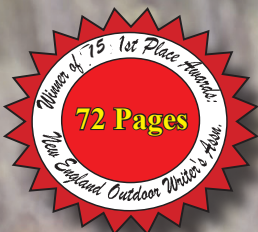
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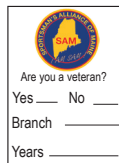
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Smarter Turkey Hunting

Editor's note: For many years, veteran turkey hunter and well-known call maker, Stu Bristol shared his turkey-hunting know

how with our sporting journal readers. We dusted off this Bristol column from our archives. With turkey hunting just around the

corner, you will find this a worthy reminder of how pre-hunt scouting for turkeys can pay big dividends.

If you have not nailed down at least half a dozen prime turkey hunting locations by now, you'll need to get a bit smarter in your preseason scouting techniques. Finding a longbeard

giant bucks every year. The answer is that they work hard at their sport and they work even smarter than the average hunter. Same goes for me.

Let me run you through my average preseason turkey scouting routine. Believe it

South Of the Kennebec



by Stu Bristol,
Lyman, ME

One of my early mentors back in the 1970s drilled it into my head that the best time to begin learning turkey movements and vocalizations is in mid-June, right after the spring mating season.

The hens will tend the

My goal is simply to hear a dominant gobbler. I don't need to see him. I can tell by the sound of his gobbles that he is worthy of my time. Jakes gobble three or four times and, if you are close enough you will hear a cluck or yelp or two before and after the gobbles.

in the spring can be as easy as watching the back fields, power lines and railroad tracks, but finding one that other hunters don't know about is another matter.

There is one common question turkey hunters ask me. "How do you keep coming up with giant longbeards, year after year?" That's like asking Larry Benoit or Hal Blood how they track down

or not, I have no starting nor stopping point in scouting wild turkeys, especially big ones. My scouting is nearly every day of the year. I keep my eyes open and risk the scorn of my wife who constantly reminds me to keep my eyes on the road.

By now, all but the novice wild turkey hunter is versed in the lifestyle and seasonal movements of turkey flocks.

nest and throughout the summer they will tend the broods. The older gobblers will head off on their own, no longer interested in breeding, sometimes joined by the more mature jakes. They will not rejoin and interact with the flocks until late summer or early fall, at which time the pushing and shoving and fighting will begin in earnest, (Hunting cont. pg 15)



The more pre-season scouting you do the bigger the dividends.



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Cover Photo:

Rachael Rounds with a nice turkey!
(Photo by Nathaniel Rounds)

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The Northwoods Sporting Journal is the Northeast's most comprehensive and readable monthly outdoor publication. Published at the trailhead of Maine's sprawling North Woods, the Sporting Journal prides itself on being an independent voice for the region's outdoor community for more than 28 years. Some of our writers are seasoned and specialized outdoors people who will share their know-how and insights; some of our contributors are simply lifelong outdoor people with interesting stories to tell.

Our aim every month is to capture the essence of Northern New England's remarkable outdoor heritage by stirring memories, portraying outdoor humor, and sharing experiences and outdoor knowledge. We also keep our readers up to date with late-breaking outdoor news and hard-hitting editorials about fish and wildlife issues.

Anyone who loves to hunt and fish, or simply finds the Great Outdoors a treasured place, is more than likely to find some special connections amid the pages of the Northwoods Sporting Journal.



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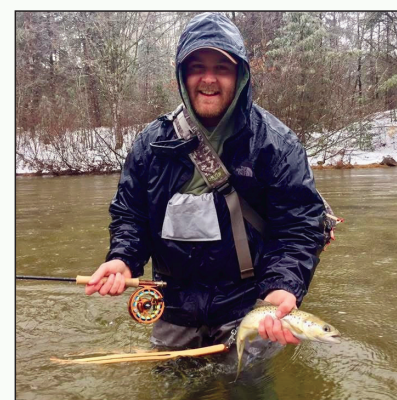
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Basics Of Survival

by Joe Frazier,
Bangor, ME

People sometimes use several terms interchangeably, when the terms mean vastly different things. In my opinion, this is the meaning of some terms often used.

“Camping” is basically having fun and doing activities in the woods or a campground. You may have a tent, a cabin, or a camper. You have the gear

“Primitive skills” is making things without modern tools or materials. Knapping a knife from flint. Using natural fibers to make cordage or rope. Gathering wild food (be sure to get proper training). Making a fire using friction.

“Survival” is when your life is on the line. Things have gone wrong

Friction fire is difficult in the best of situations. A friend reminded me that a friction fire, like most skills, is actually a combination of several skills used together. A jet flame type butane lighter works instantly, in any position, and will light almost anything on fire.

you need, plenty of food, and safety is not a concern beyond common sense.

“Bushcraft” is using modern tools and materials to make useful items. Using a saw, knife, draw knife, and nylon string to make a bow. Or a saw, knife, and nylon rope to make a tripod for cooking. Bushcraft is usually considered a hobby and can be done while camping or in your backyard.

for whatever reason and death is a real possibility. All you have for supplies is what you are carrying and what is around you, and your skills.

A lot of Survival books, both older and modern, show skills and techniques that are POSSIBLE, but not PRACTICAL in an actual survival situation.

Let’s start with shelter. Every book and manual I have read shows how to

make a debris hut. They make it sound like it is a two or three hour project, then you will be warm and dry no matter what the weather. I have built a few exactly as the book says and with tools, supplies, and perfect weather it is a twelve to sixteen hour project. They are not comfortable, and making them fully waterproof is impractical at best. With

says to use a shoe or boot lace. Footwear is critical in a survival situation and you can’t risk breaking a lace. Friction fire is difficult in the best of situations. A friend reminded me that a friction fire, like most skills, is actually a combination of several skills used together. A jet flame type butane lighter works instantly, in any position, and will light almost any-

or two cups. Some books say you can use a sheet of tin foil made into a bowl for this. If you ever get that to work please let me know. It is also possible to boil water in a paper bag, but I would not recommend it. You also need a fire to boil the water. Then it needs to cool enough for you to drink it. And you need one or two gallons a day. Boiling also doesn’t get rid of heavy metals or chemicals in the water.

If you have a container, you can make a filter from gravel, sand, grass, and charcoal. These take a long time to make and only filter out silt/mud. They don’t work for chemicals or biological contaminants. You will still need to boil the water.

In an actual survival situation, water will be critical. A good straw type filter will treat over 1,000 gallons and takes a few seconds to use. They also cost about \$20. I have used one on some very nasty water. It tasted like drinking tap water through a paper towel.

Water is critical, and if there are no other options you should drink it unfiltered. Clear and fast moving water is your best bet.

Cordage/rope is another critical item. It takes time and lots of skill to identify what fibers will work, how to process them, and braid them into a cord that is strong enough to be useful. 550 cord, bankline, or even nylon twine is cheap and can be bought everywhere. What would take hours to make takes seconds to unspool.

Bushcraft is fun and
(Practical cont. pg 19)



a tarp and some rope I can have a fully waterproof shelter up in ten minutes in pouring rain. Another advantage of a simple blue tarp is the color is almost as good as hunter orange to be seen in the woods.

Most books show you how to make a friction fire using a bow and drill. Making the set takes a couple hours when you can find the right wood. It has to be fully dry also. If you don’t have cordage, the book

thing on fire.

Books give you lots of ways to make water drinkable, let’s look at a few. Assume all water that does not come from a well or city water supply needs to be purified to keep you from getting potentially violently sick.

First is boiling. Even if you can find clear water you will need a container. Any good survival kit will have a metal container to boil water in, most hold one

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Moosehead Smelt: Good News

Winter still rules March at Moosehead. Where other places are loosening up, we've usually got another good month of ice fishing. The ice was slow to form this year, with some snowmobilers falling into the lake in late

30-February 2, brought in some nice lake trout. Top weights and lengths were: First place, 12.43 lbs, 36.5 inches; Second, 11.07 lbs., 31 inches; and Third, 5.13 lbs., 28.5 inches.

Another bit that is a big deal here are the smelt,

trout while conducting winter creel surveys on the lake. It's messy work but the data are invaluable. We can count and measure the forage items in the stomachs which are 80-100 percent smelt. We can also age the smelt in the stomachs to monitor age class strength.

More recently, we've been monitoring smelt fry hatching in one of the



Kineo Currents



by Suzanne AuClair,
Rockwood, ME

that spring.

Moosehead Lake is fortunate to have what is essentially a 9,000-acre smelt hatchery just upstream of the Brassua Dam. Smelt of all ages drift downstream from Brassua Lake into the Moose River throughout the year. Some of these smelt are still alive when they come down through

head Lake smelt population. We monitor smelt drift by placing bag nets on rebar set in the river. The nets are set overnight once per week throughout the entire year. A typical catch includes smelt and a few yellow perch or bass coming downstream from Brassua Lake. We only sample a small section of the river

Moosehead Lake is fortunate to have what is essentially a 9,000-acre smelt hatchery just upstream of the Brassua Dam. Smelt of all ages drift downstream from Brassua Lake into the Moose River throughout the year.

lake's tributaries. This is very intensive work, requiring staff to place a small net in the stream in the dead of night to catch a sample of newly hatched fry drifting downstream to the lake. It lasts about three weeks, but it gives us very good insight into the spawning success for smelt

the turbines, so anything that is not immediately gobbled up by awaiting salmon in the river, can contribute to the forage base at a later time. It is also likely that surviving smelt run back up the river in the spring during their spawning season, providing a boost to the Mooseh-

and for 24 hours per week, so our catch is expanded to estimate the total catch for each week.

We completed this work in 2021, and again in 2024. In 2021, we estimated just shy of 200,000 individual smelt made their way downstream to the (Smelt cont. pg 19)



Bill Maynard with the 29.67 lb., 41 inch long lake trout he caught March 14, 2009. It was just shy of the state record.

January/early February. But Mother Nature often makes up for the late start on the other end, with the ice holding onto the lake until somewhere around the end of April or first two weeks of May. Check your favorite local on-line reports before coming up for some of the best ice-fishing still of this season.

Last year, ice-out was officially called on April 20. The last time it went out in May was May 4, 2020. By then, everyone who lives here is watching for it. Ice-out is a big deal because it's a signal that we're really free of winter, and can safely navigate a boat from Greenville up to Northeast Carry. Old-timers say the best open water fishing is 10 days after ice-out.

This winter's annual Moosehead Lake Togue Derby, held January

since it's pretty well known that it's what's for dinner for Moosehead Lake togue and landlocked salmon.

Here's what Tim Obrey, Moosehead Lake Region Fisheries Supervisor, reported about their findings on the all-important smelt:

"Smelt make the world go around...at least on Moosehead Lake. When smelt are in low abundance, our lake trout [togue] and salmon growth suffer, even though there are other baitfish for them to feed on. Our years of stomach analysis data confirm this. The situation can linger for years, as we've seen. That is why it is so important to keep the smelt population as robust as possible.

We monitor smelt using several techniques. For years, we have collected stomachs from our lake trout, salmon, and brook



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Editorial

SAM's Proud Legacy

This year – 2025- marks the 50th anniversary of SAM, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine. During its half century of existence, SAM has been a steady, reliable and potent voice for Maine sportsmen. As pointed out in the SAM News, the organization was started by a group of concerned state sportsmen who saw the need for a political voice for Maine gun owners, hunters and sportsmen. An anti-hunting hit piece by CBS news, titled "The Guns of Autumn," reportedly was the spark for the birth of SAM.

Among the founders of SAM were Dr. Alonzo Garcelon, Oscar Cronk, Maynard Connors, Ed Armstrong and a number of others.

This call to arms by SAM had its beginning at a gathering of sportsmen at the Augusta Armory in 1975. By December of 1976, Sam had a membership of 4,000 sportsmen! At that time the driving force, or the impetus, for supporting SAM was a concern from hunters that their gun rights were in jeopardy.

Over the years, there have been dozens of sportsmen causes that SAM has championed with skill and competency. Among the most high profile latter day issues in which SAM has spoken for the

sportsman have been the Yellow Flag Law, the Bear Referendum, and the acquisition and protection of deer wintering areas.

Throughout the years there have been many attempts at the legislative level to impose legal initiatives that were clear threats to our hunting traditions and longstanding rights as sportsmen. Last year's attempt by misguided urban legislators from southern Maine to impose an outright ban of coyote hunting is a case in point.

As sportsmen, SAM is our watchdog in Augusta, always there, always vigilante and always offering testimony that is not only compelling, but well researched and representative of the views of SAM's membership.

SAM is currently joining forces with the Gun Owners of Maine and the National Shooting Sports Association and filing a legal challenge to Maine's unconstitutional 72- Hour Waiting Period Law for gun purchases. Representing Sam in this litigation is highly respected Constitutional lawyer Paul Clemente from Alexandria, Virginia. According to the SAM News, this case, which has national implications, could be heard in Bangor Federal Court as early as February.

It is axiomatic that, when it comes to

heading off legislation in Augusta that is not friendly to Maine sportsmen, there is undeniable strength in numbers. SAM today boasts a membership of about 8,000 members who have been fortunate to have had skilled and savvy executive directors during this 50 year history. Current executive director David Trahan has shown himself to be a pragmatic and value-driven leader who knows how to identify with sportsmen and work effectively with state lawmakers as well. When all is said and done, though, any director of SAM is only as effective as the size of his organization. SAM's founder and first president, Dr. Alonzo Garcelon, said it well, back in 1975: "If you want SAM, and you need SAM, then you have got to do something. You have to participate in this effort to establish an outlet that will speak with authority...so I am asking each and every one of you to sign up at least three new people."

If you are a Maine sportsman and you don't belong to SAM, please reconsider. Joining is your way to help safeguard our hunting legacy and our gun rights.

VPR



Letters



Skulker Venison Stew

To the Editor:

I made that famous venison stew enjoyed at V. Paul Reynolds' annual deer camp that he wrote about once. Delicious! Our son got a doe with bow and arrow right on our property here in northwest NJ.

Good article in the Piscataquis Observer about his experience sitting at a table after a wedding in Ct.. We have the same issue here in NJ. You know what I plan to say when I get into

that situation? I'm going to ask if they eat meat or are they a vegetarian?

After all, what is the difference whether you eat meat from wild game or from domesticated ani-

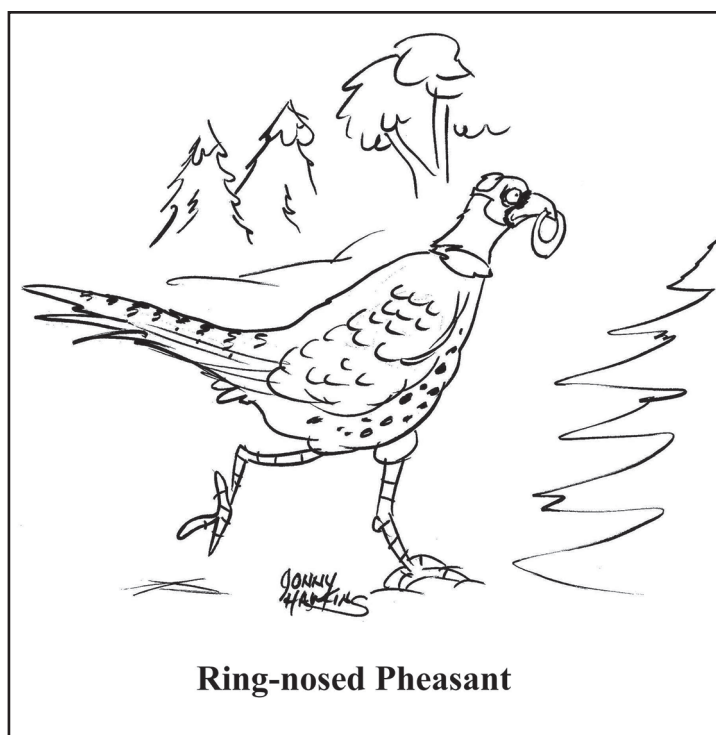
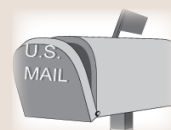
mals. See what they say then.

Keep up your good work writing.

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Ring-nosed Pheasant

The Joy of Sharing

The freezer above my childhood fridge was packed with bricks of white butcher paper stamped STEAKS and STEW

venison seared in oil, lightly seasoned with salt and pepper, dash of Worcestershire sauce just as it's taken off the heat.

If you've been in a grocery store lately you know about the price of meat. This thought crossed my mind: I wanted meat for the winter; I wanted to eat and share it.

When the spike reached the shooting lane, I stopped him with a loud bleat. He turned and stood, perfectly broadside, at 50 yards.

My shot hit low and the spike kicked its

hind legs like a bronco. I watched the deer run, low to the ground, in a wide semi-circle in the general

direction from which it had come.

I gave it a half hour. I found the spot where I'd hit the buck, then, a short distance beyond, the first spray of blood in the snow. I

lieve—have always believed—that it is not the skill of the hunter that brings game to the hunter—no human could ever be as wary or cunning as a wild animal—but rather,

So, when a spikehorn presented itself near the end of November, I had a choice to make. The spike appeared on a ridge 100 yards away, walking solo in the last half-hour of daylight.

followed the blood. I found the buck a short while later, bunched beneath a small cedar. The spike was easy to drag across the hard packed snow.

The great Montana writer, Rick Bass, once wrote: "Many hunters be-

lieve that the animal comes as a gift of the land: that it is an act of good luck, grace—a presentation." I would have to agree.

As a child, sharing something that's yours, some beloved toy, for example (Sharing cont. pg 15)



MEAT and BURGER. My father was never interested in trophy hunting. He wanted venison for himself and his family, though my sister was a picky eater and my mother didn't have a taste for game. I loved it and so did he. I never said thank you for the meals he provided, at least, not until I was older. When you're a kid you're not aware of your own privilege. I didn't have to worry about where my next meal came from. In fact, I often knew exactly where my food originated: from the wooded hills around our central Maine home.

My father, who turns 80 this spring, remains a better hunter than cook, though he's improved as he's aged. He liked—still likes—to marinate loin in sweet teriyaki sauce, or flash-sear thin-cut steaks in olive oil over a smoking-hot skillet. That's the preparation I think of often, the one I most look forward to each winter: medium-rare

So, when a spikehorn presented itself near the end of November, I had a choice to make. The spike appeared on a ridge 100 yards away, walking solo in the last half-hour of daylight. The thin blanket of snow glowed and the spike was easy to spot against the white. From my ladder stand I watched it through my scope. I saw spikes and the buck's spindly legs. He turned into a stand of firs and I liked the idea of letting him grow, of giving a free pass, even this late in the season. It felt like the right thing to do. I lowered my rifle and took a few breaths, realizing then how tense I'd become. I was content to watch, I told myself.

But then the spikehorn reappeared, walking directly toward me. He proceeded downhill, and, as he descended, turned broadside. A short distance ahead of the spike, a clear shooting lane; an opportunity, an offering.



Scenes From The Wild

by Ryan Brod

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By Carey Kish,
Mt. Desert Island, ME



The Continental Divide Trail follows the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to Canada for 3,000 miles through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. The CDT is one of three great trails that constitute the coveted "Triple Crown"

New Mexico for the first couple months while the snowpack melts in the high elevations of Colorado, the hike's crux.

The indispensable Far Out GPS navigation app, the CDT hiker's essential navigation tool, has the red line tally at 2,980 miles. A

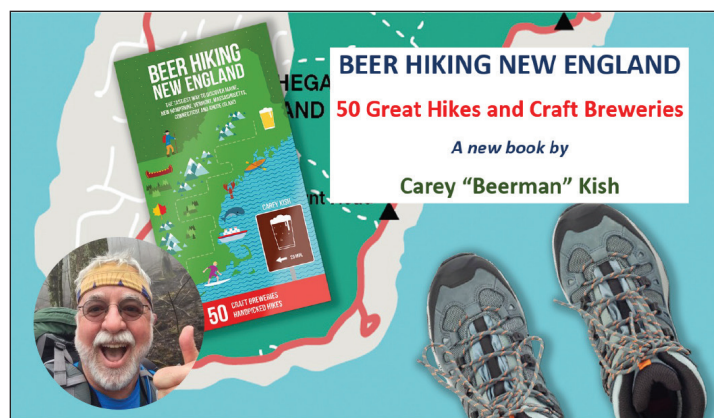
All a CDT hiker can do, really, is make the best plans possible, go and have fun, hope for the best, and remain flexible throughout. A steady pace is necessary.

of long-distance hiking, the others being the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail and the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail.

With thru-hikes on the AT and PCT in the can (in 2015 and 2019 respectively), this hiker is gearing up to tackle the entire CDT. I've reserved a shuttle to the Mexican border at the end of March, and from there I'll slow roll it northbound through

dozen or more accepted alternate route segments are possible, and by my figuring, I expect the hike to total around 2,800 miles.

CDT logistics are complex and variable. If there's big snowpack in early June in Colorado's San Juans, I may need to flip up to Montana, which is forecasted to have a below average winter, and then hike southbound to connect the dots. Of course,



Hiking the Continental Divide Trail

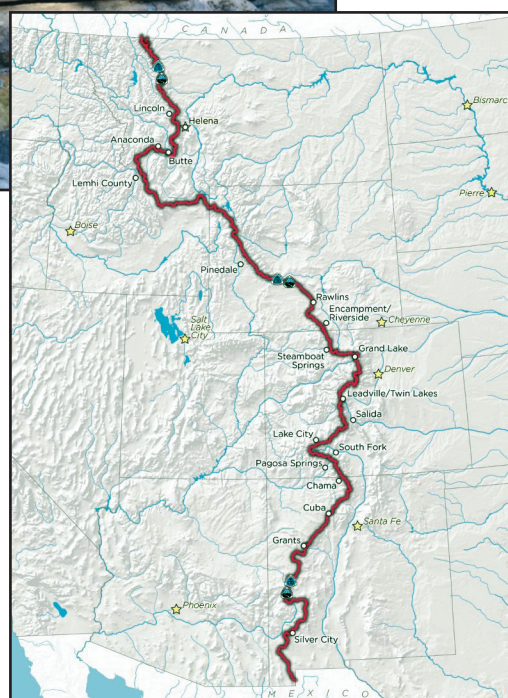
less snow means drier conditions and an increased risk of wildfires, another

in some stretches. There will be black bears, and in the northern sections, griz-

scotching along with our camper for a good chunk of the hike, enjoying a big adventure of her own and meeting me roughly every week with a resupply box.

The CDT was never high on my radar, but after completing the AT and PCT, it percolated to the top. And suddenly the journey is right here in

front me. My gear is tested and ready, food is purchased and organized, and details have been sorted through. There's not much left to do but walk. I'm looking forward to the solitude, the scenery, the simplicity and the challenge



trek-altering possibility. And so it goes.

All a CDT hiker can do, really, is make the best plans possible, go and have fun, hope for the best, and remain flexible throughout. A steady pace is necessary. Six months should, or better, will have to, suffice. Factoring in rest days and the inevitable schedule blips, I'll need to average around 18 miles per day.

New Mexico's high desert will be a nice introduction. Colorado will be amazing, with the trail above 10,000 feet for hundreds of miles. The Wind River Range and Yellowstone National Park are highlights of wonderful Wyoming. And finally, there's remote, rugged Idaho and Montana, with a monumental finish through the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park.

The total elevation gain on the CDT is a mind-boggling 457,000 feet, roughly equivalent to climbing Katahdin every day and a half for six months. With a full backpack. Water will be an issue



zlies. Lightning, altitude, exposure and snakes are among the other potential dangers.

Unlike the thousands of hikers on the AT and the PCT, only about 400 people attempt the CDT each year. Most hike northbound, so I'm sure to find at least some company en route. My wife, Fran, will be hop-

of it all.

Carey Kish of Mount Desert Island, ME is the author of *Beer Hiking New England*, *AMC's Best Day Hikes Along the Maine Coast*, and the *AMC Maine Mountain Guide*. Catch up with him (maybe) at maine-outdoors@aol.com, and on Facebook and Instagram

Fine Line Gun Shop



Late Ice Fishing

Beware the Ides of March! Or is it “Beware the Ice of March?” Forgive me Mr. Shakespeare! As I walk the twelve-foot plank across the shallow water

dance. Unlike the rest of the ice fishing season, when the slab yellow perch begin to stage, most anglers will not share their location for fear of “burning them out.”



connecting the shoreline to the late winter ice, I am crossing with all the wariness of Julius Caesar marching into the Roman Senate. There are several dozen people already out on the solid surface that is still two feet thick just ten yards from shore. The last few years have been total non-starters for the Great White Perch Party. It's been three years since we've been able to get on the ice and celebrate the annual migration of the invasive species with no daily or possession limits.

When they arrive, they swarm under the ice in clouds like underwater locusts. And they bite hard, fight hard, and taste great! In a good year, the news travels fast and the crowds gather and share the abun-

Not so with the “Whities.” They are so bountiful that if 100 people were fishing them on the day they arrive, everyone fills their buckets and shares their holes with newcomers. The moniker “white perch” is a misnomer. Their scientific name is “Morone Ameri-

cana” and they are a fish of the temperate bass family, related to the striped bass family of Moronidae. In Vermont, they are considered an invasive species and the VT F&W will allow anyone with a current fishing license to harvest as many as you would like.

Now some folks say they are not good for anything but grinding them up for compost to put on

the garden. I vehemently disagree. A few years ago, we took home around 300 of them and after filleting them and putting them in the grinder, we found that with a few spices, they make incredible Thai fish cakes, and after cooking them, they can be frozen in a food saver bag and thawed for quick meals or appetizers. Now, the carcasses...yes! I will put those in the garden as soon as the snow melts and the bears aren't yet out of their dens.

Speaking of which, VT F&W mentions that

Green Mountain Report

by Bradley Carleton, Charlotte, VT



March is the month to remind everyone to take down those birdfeeders by the end of the month. With the healthy population of bruins in our state, and the demand for developable land, we have encroached on their habitat so badly that they are now learning to adapt to more populated

they start wandering into downtown Burlington and hanging out on Church Street panhandling in front of the bars and restaurants.

VT F&W has a new program that I feel is a terrific way to educate and recruit young outdoors people to learn about the honorable career of Game

The last few years have been total non-starters for the Great White Perch Party. It's been three years since we've been able to get on the ice and celebrate the annual migration of the invasive species with no daily or possession limits.

areas. As they emerge from their hibernation, they are quite adept at seeking and finding food in compost bins, bird feeders, and outdoor grills. These have become bear magnets. When they get habituated to our habits, they quickly adopt their own. Most of us have seen bears in our backyards and fields. The phrase “A fed bear is a dead bear” is an unfortunate truth. It's just a matter of time before

Wardens. When I was a young lad, the older guys would try to impress on us that “fish cops” were to be feared and whose sole purpose was to punish hunters and anglers. This was the completely wrong teaching. Wardens should be respected as guardians of our public resources. The new “Junior Warden” program is for teens ages 15-17 who are invited to (Ice Fishing cont. pg 19)





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Outdoor News - March 2025

Edited by V. Paul Reynolds

If memory serves, April in Maine last spring was the pits. So what's new? Let's face it, in Maine in April it always rains and spits snow, regardless of the famous Ground Hog's meteorological premonition. We're betting that there will be some late ice-fishing this year.

Be brave. Spring will come. We'll be smelting, picking fiddleheads, and scouting for turkey activity before you know it.. So....hang in there. Go to church. Tie some more flies. Check the fishing gear, again. Revisit the catalogs. Shoot a coyote. Take a vacation in the Florida Keys or get to as many state sportsmen shows as you can. To find a sportsman show in your area, check this month's ads in the Journal.

NH Moose Lottery Open

New Hampshire's 2025 moose hunt lottery is

now open. Enter today for your chance at the adventure of a lifetime—hunting moose in the rugged woods of the Granite State. The lottery entrance fee is \$15 for Granite State residents and \$25 for nonresidents.

Visit: www.wildlife.nh.gov/hunting-nh/moose-hunting-new-hampshire where you can enter the New Hampshire moose hunt lottery online or print out a mail-in application. You can also pick up an application at any Fish and Game license agent, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department headquarters, or at Fish and Game regional offices.

Moose hunt lottery applications for 2025 must be postmarked or submitted online by midnight Eastern Standard Time on Friday, May 30. Applications can also be dropped off at New Hampshire Fish and Game Department headquarters, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH, before 4:00 p.m. that day. Winners will be se-

lected through a computerized random drawing and announced on June 20.

Applicants can enter the moose hunt lottery once per year. A bonus-point system improves the chances for unsuccessful applicants who apply in each consecutive year or those who wish to accrue a point but not enter this year's lottery. One point is earned for each year, and each point translates to a chance in the drawing. As an example, last year the overall odds of a resident applicant being drawn were 1 in 116, and resident applicants with a total of 21 points had a 1 in 37 chance of being drawn. For nonresidents, the odds were 1 in 498 overall and 1 in 175 for applicants with 21 points.

In 2024, 6,105 people entered the lottery for the chance to win one of 33 permits. More than 1,221 people continued to accrue bonus points because they submitted an application for a point only to hold their already accrued points. Hunters from five other states won permits in the 2024 lottery.

While people travel from all over the country to take part in the New Hampshire moose hunt, the majority of permits, almost 85%, are awarded to Granite State residents. The number of permits available to nonresidents is capped, based on the prior year's sales of nonresident hunting licenses.

The number of moose hunt permits that will be offered for this fall's hunt has not yet been determined as harvest and survey data are currently under review.

Final numbers will be released later this spring.

"Moose lottery permit numbers for 2025 are currently being determined," said Moose Project Leader Henry Jones. "Your chance of being drawn and offered a permit in the lottery will be improved if you rank all wildlife management units on your application. You will then have the option to decline a permit if you are drawn for a unit you would prefer not to hunt in."

New Hampshire's 9-day moose hunt starts the

wildlife.nh.gov/hunting-nh/moose-hunting-new-hampshire.

Moosehead Lake Region Fishing Report

Here is a quick report on the 18th Annual Moosehead Lake Togue Derby that was held last weekend on Maine's largest lake. The weather was great on Friday and Sunday, but anglers had to contend with a strong NW wind on Saturday with very cold wind chills. But



This is first place winner of the 18th Annual Moosehead Lake Togue Derby, Spencer Valley of Brewer, Maine. 12.43 lbs., 36.5 inches long.

third Saturday in October. This year's hunt will run from October 18–26.

New Hampshire has had an annual moose hunt since 1988, when 75 permits were issued for a 3-day hunt in the North Country. The state's current moose population is estimated to be about 3,000 animals. The annual harvest of moose provides valuable information on the physical condition and productivity of moose and provides a unique recreational opportunity. Learn more about moose hunting in New Hampshire at www.wildlife.nh.gov/hunting-nh/moose-hunting-new-hampshire.

ice fishermen are a hardy lot. There were around 800 derby tickets sold and there were over 200 entries in this year's youth raffle. The fishing was a little slow overall, but there were some quality fish caught. On Friday, Michael Carpenito of Windham was in the number one spot with a 5.13 lb lake trout. There was a flurry of activity on Saturday with many 3 to 4 lb fish jockeying for the 2nd and 3rd positions until Spencer Valley of Brewer dropped a 12.4 lb bruiser on the leader board (News cont. pg 13)

FLY PATTERN OF THE MONTH

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Blue Smelt

Tied by: Dick Stewart

Body...Flat silver tinsel
Wing...White bucktail over which blue bucktail over which 4-5 strands of peacock herl.
Cheeks...Jungle cock

All patterns reprinted from "Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon" by Dick Stewart and Bob Leeman.

News

(Cont. from pg 12)

at Moosehead Bait and Tackle in Rockwood.

That was soon followed up by a nice 11.07 lb laker from Andrew Dalton of Windham, which left Michael still clinging to 3rd place. The weather warmed with a light wind on Sunday, but many anglers had enough and were headed home by noon, and the remaining hardcore anglers could not crack the leader board. These gentlemen held on to take the checkered flag at the close of the derby at 4pm. There were around 50 door prizes given out as well as several prizes in the youth raffle. Leif Fokine of Alfred took home one of the two lifetime fishing licenses sponsored by the Moosehead Lake Fisheries Coalition. If you're interested, you can see the list of prizes and winners along with photos from the derby on the Moosehead Lake Togue Derby Facebook page. Next year's derby is scheduled for Feb 6-8, 2026.

- Tim Obrey, Greenville Fisheries Biologist

Hunters Make a Difference

From the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

Looking back at the

2024 hunting seasons, we're thankful for deer hunters and their important role as wildlife conservationists. Since 2022, \$12 from each antlerless deer hunting permit is deposited into the Maine Deer Management Fund, with the \$2 agent fee covering administrative costs. These funds have helped acquire and manage over 10,000 acres of critical deer wintering habitat in Maine! Here's how.

The Maine Deer Management Fund, combined

year to avoid harsh winter winds and deep snow. By acquiring and managing deer wintering areas, the Department helps deer to survive the winter season with habitats that provide shelter and food.

Regional Biologists, Species Biologists, and Land Management teams collaborate with conservation partners and landowners. Together they work to purchase land to be owned and managed by the State for deer wintering habitat. Any acquired lands



with funds from the Lands for Maine's Future Program and Pittman-Robertson Funds (funds from a manufacturer federal excise tax on hunting equipment), is used to purchase and manage deer wintering areas (DWAs), primarily in northern, western and eastern Maine.

Deer wintering areas are a critical habitat for white-tailed deer living at the northern end of their range. A DWA is the habitat where deer go year after

are also managed as public Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and open to public recreation. That includes hunting, fishing, and trapping, which are important wildlife management tools. Recent acquisitions and land access projects include:

• *Rangeley WMA — 708 Acres, funded with Pittman Robertson (PR) and Deer Management Funds*

• *Caribou Stream WMA — 1,105 acres, funded with PR, Land for*

Maine's Future (LMF) and Deer Management Funds

• *Lexington Deer Wintering Area — 1,490 acres, funded with Pittman Robertson (PR), Land for Maine's Future (LMF) and Deer Management Funds*

• *Macwahoc Stream WMA — 6,326 acres, funded with PR, LMF, and Deer Management Funds*

In addition, along with providing critical deer wintering habitat, these lands provide habitat for a variety of species including a wide diversity of birds and waterfowl, wildlife including bobcat, fisher, marten and others; and several of these new WMAs also have waters that include brook trout, landlocked salmon and other species. These vital habitats and public access will now be protected for generations to come.

The vast majority of the funding comes from Public Law 409, 'An Act to Preserve Deer Habitat', enacted by the 130th Legislature, which enhanced the ability of the Department to protect deer wintering areas. This is funded through the deer management fund which receives approximately \$1.2 million a year, primarily through the sale of Antlerless Deer permits, with additional funding through deer registrations and donations.

Thank you hunters for helping keep Maine's white-tailed deer population healthy and conserving critical habitat.

Three parcels at important locations in the Barton and Clyde River Watersheds are now permanently protected for fish habitat, flood resilience and public access thanks to a collaboration between the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and the Memphremagog Watershed Association.

"Protecting these parcels will make sure wild trout and salmon can continue to reach to miles of connected habitat," said Pete Emerson, a Fish Biologist with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. "The total protected acreage across these three projects is small, but that is a bit of a red herring. Much more important is the strategic placement of these new Brook, two major tributaries to Lake Seymour. The streams support wild brook and brown trout, as well as landlocked Atlantic salmon. A five-year partnership between the department and the Seymour Lake Association also restored rainbow smelt, an important food source for trout and salmon, to these waters."



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Women In The Woods

by Erin Merrill,
Portland, ME

Hunting property in this state can be hard to come by. I am aware of that. 94% of the land is privately owned. I have put posted signs on the land that Dad and I usually hunt on to inform trespassers that the land is actively being managed, watched and hunted on. I also have a tendency of posting trail camera photos of trespass-

right choice is.

I recently bought some land and the previous landowner showed me the deer stands that he had been hunting from. Two were your normal, metal stands that are secured to large trees. The third is a box blind complete with windows and a door. Those were the only deer stands that he pointed out to me.

There was no name or identification on the stand letting me know who it belonged to. I left it for two weeks, waiting until after the holidays in case the person came back to take it down.

ers on my 'And a Strong Cup of Coffee' Facebook page and my @woodsand-coffee IG page. I have no problem making these people internet famous. In almost every situation that I have encountered, simple communication would have taken care of any property line confusion or permission being (or not being) granted. With the number of hunters declining every year, we need to get creative in how we encourage more people to join our ranks. But, sometimes things happen that make me question what the

He talked about all of the deer he had seen and the sheds he had picked up in the spring. He also had deer feeders, but if you have read my column for a while, you know that I am completely against feeding deer and those feeders sit in my shed.

I did not hunt the land this past fall but knew there were a lot of deer on the property. The land was not posted beyond the yellow signs that run along the edge of the main road. I did hear gun shots a few times but there are other public hunting areas nearby and

the shots didn't sound too close.

A few weeks ago, it came as a surprise when we found a new tree stand attached to a tree, just off the main walking trail on the property. Muzzleloading season had just ended. There was no name or identification on the stand letting me know who it belonged to. I left it for two weeks, waiting until after the holidays in case the person came back to take

it down.

I posted a photo of the stand on my Facebook page, half hoping the person would see it and take it down. I asked the people of the interwebs that they thought I should do with it. Two people offered to buy it from me. Everyone said I needed to take it. One person commented that if they were using it to hunt with a kid, they were teaching them how to hunt without landowner permission and break the law from an early age. The Maine law states that for treestands on private property:

You must obtain verbal or written permission of the landowner (or representative) to erect or use a portable or permanent ladder or observation stand.

That didn't happen. And so, the stand came down. The very bottom

section of the ladder is frozen into the ground but everything else is down and out of the woods. When the ground thaws a bit, I will grab the last piece. As a result of all of this, I have 50 posted signs that I will be putting up now. No

permission to do so on.

What would you do? Take down the stand? Keep it? Or give it back if the owner comes asking about it? Allow them to continue hunting? Let me know or let me know if this has happened to you and how you



hunting. No trespassing.

There is public land available if the owner of the stand wanted to hunt there instead. If they came knocking on my door asking about the stand, I would probably give it back to them if they could tell me where I had found it. I don't want to prevent people from hunting and filling their freezer. I just wish someone had asked before putting a stand up on property that they did not have

handled it.

Erin is a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, Professional Outdoor Media Association and the New England Outdoor Writers Association. She writes a monthly column titled, "Hunt & Harvest" for the Maine Trust for Local News. You can read about Erin's adventures and contact her at www.andas-trongcupofcoffee.com

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Hunting

(Cont. from pg 3)

re-establishing flock dominance.

During the winter the flocks depend upon each other for safety and finding food. This is when hunter should be carrying strong binoculars and taking notes on where the exceptional longbeards are hanging out. Of course, the location will change when early spring comes around. By mid-March the serious dominance fights take place and the “boss” gobblers will give up plenty of breast feathers to proclaim dominance of their intended harem of hens.

If you haven’t narrowed your hunting strategies by this time, you are seriously behind the 8-ball so to speak. Instead of scanning fields looking for gobblers you’d like to kill, begin scouring the deeper woodlots where you will find the limb hangers of your dreams.

You will need a 7.5 minute top map of each area you are searching. I use My Top digital maps and OnX mapping on my cellphone. Over the years I have over a dozen early spring scouting “turkey woods” I visit, each within half an hour drive of each other.

My goal is simply to hear

a dominant gobbler. I don’t need to see him. I can tell by the sound of his gobbles that he is worthy of my time. Jakes gobble three or four times and, if you are close enough you will hear a cluck or yelp or two before and after the gobbles.

I will stop alongside the highway or gravel road, walk a few yards away from my vehicle at dawn and again at dusk and sound off with a barred owl series of calls. Jakes will usually answer first but what I am waiting for is the older gobbler to shut them up with a long-winded serious gobble. If that gobble sounds prehistoric, then that’s one bird to put near the top of the list.

In the woods, I seek out sandy spots or mud, looking for turkey tracks. I shouldn’t have to tell you when you’ve seen a boss gobbler track. It is deep in soft sand, snow or mud and 5-6 inches long. Once you find tracks, look for roosting trees, near water or possible feeding areas. Carry a flashlight or headlamp and stay in those woods for at least an hour after dark callin with owl hoots. You need to know where the big guy is roosting, the closer you come to hunting time.

Big gobblers will chase down hens that stick to open

meadows and fields but for me the biggest of the bogs never come close to an open field. That trait along gives me the upper hand. In the fields, hunters resort to decoys or ambush to get close for a kill. That’s the main reason for the newer tungsten long distance shot pellets and in some states, the use of rifles.

I rely on setups where the gobbler must come over a small hill or around a game funnel to get to where I am calling. I’ve killed a few in fields but that’s where you will encounter the most in-

terference from other hunters and live hens.

Final bit of advice you already know but is worth repeating. Select at least half a dozen locations you have scouted. On hunting days, get in early at least an hour before first light. Any later and you may find another hunter has your spot or worse, a group of hens has roosted between you and the gobbler. Move on to the next location and so on until you can find a hot gobbler.

Whenever you make a call and the gobbler, not jakes cut you off before your series

has completed, that bird is killable. If it takes all morning and half the afternoon, stick with him unless you are interfered with. Hard work and “hunting smarter” is a year round project.



Stu Bristol is Hall of Fame wild turkey hunter, Master Maine Guide and Outdoor writer. His books, newspaper and magazine articles have been published nationwide for more than 50 years. He operates a game call company in southern Maine. www.deadlyimposter-gamecalls.com

Sharing

(Cont. from pg 9)

ample, feels ludicrous, even scary. Why would I give this thing up, this thing that is mine, after all, this thing someone may take and never return? I’m not sure what shifts as you grow, what exactly changes, why sharing begins to feel not just tolerable but necessary. When you’re approaching middle-age, as I am, sharing becomes a vital form of connection, a presentation of care, a gift with a story behind it.

A few days later, I

picked up my venison from the butcher, all packed in white wax paper. I thought of the meals I would make with it. I thought of everyone I would share it with. And I knew I had made the right choice.



Ryan Brod is the author of Tributaries: Essays from Woods and Waters, which is available at your local bookstore or online. When he’s not teaching writing at University of New England, he’s a fishing guide and fly tier. You can connect with him at www.ryanbrod.com

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The Adventures of Me and Joe

by Bob Cram,
(Alias T.J. Coongate)
Medway, ME

"Oh, I saw! This is very nice!" Milton Geezer settled his ample bulk into a ladder-back chair at our table in the Five N/ Diner. It was late afternoon and me and Joe were having coffee after a busy morning of grouse huntin. We'd stopped into a café a few minutes before and Edna Corpulent had just slid a large basket of steaming biscuits fresh from the oven onto the table.

Milton eyed the hot biscuits with a happy sigh as Edna came over and refreshed our cups.

"Like some coffee, Milton?" she asked with a knowing grin.

The older man looked affronted. "At this hour? Do you take me for a barbarian? Tea, please... and do you have any of the..."

"Yes," Edna's grin widened. "I've still got some of that lapsang sooch-ong, or whatever you call it, tea left from the packet you gave me. It'll just take a few minutes."

Milton heaved a sigh of relief as she bustled off and he immediately snared a biscuit with one gnarled hand and a butter knife

with the other.

Milton Geezer was English and, although he had lived in Maine for years, he had never lost either the accent or the mannerisms of his homeland. He came over during the Korean War as part of a joint British/American planning group and when the war ended, Geezer remained in the land that so fascinated him, making his living as a defense systems advisor. On retirement, he moved to northern Maine where he had summered for many years. He lived on a pension in a tiny frame house on the banks of the East Branch of the Little Salt Pork River, devoting most of his time to a large and well-kept garden and the entire fall to grouse hunting.

"So, lads," he said as he spread a liberal coating of butter over the two halves of his biscuit. "How was the bird hunting on this fine morning?"

"Not bad, Milton," I replied. "We saw six. Joe got two and I got one. Did you go out this morning?"

"No, I finished turning over the garden for fall," he

said around a mouthful of biscuit. "I shall venture forth for the evening hunt. Perhaps the old road above Poulitice Brook."

The bell above the door jangled softly and I saw Harrington Gossip ease inside, his glance darting around the room. Spotting us, a satisfied look crossed his lined face and

he sidled in our direction. Harrington was the liveliest busybody in town, not counting old Agnes Probe, and little occurred in the Mooseleuk region that Harrington wasn't the first to know about.

"Have a seat an' some coffee, Harrington," Joe said, indicating a chair.

"Ain't got no time," Harrington whispered importantly. To Harrington, all his information was a dark secret, to be shared only in a hoarse whisper.

"Heard about Flat Bannum's latest land acquisition?" He murmured.

"Oh, what now?" Milton asked in disgust. "The man is a menace. All he does is buy up northern Maine land and keep the rest of us off it. Why, that tract over against Munsun-

gan Mountain is alive with birds, but nobody can hunt there."

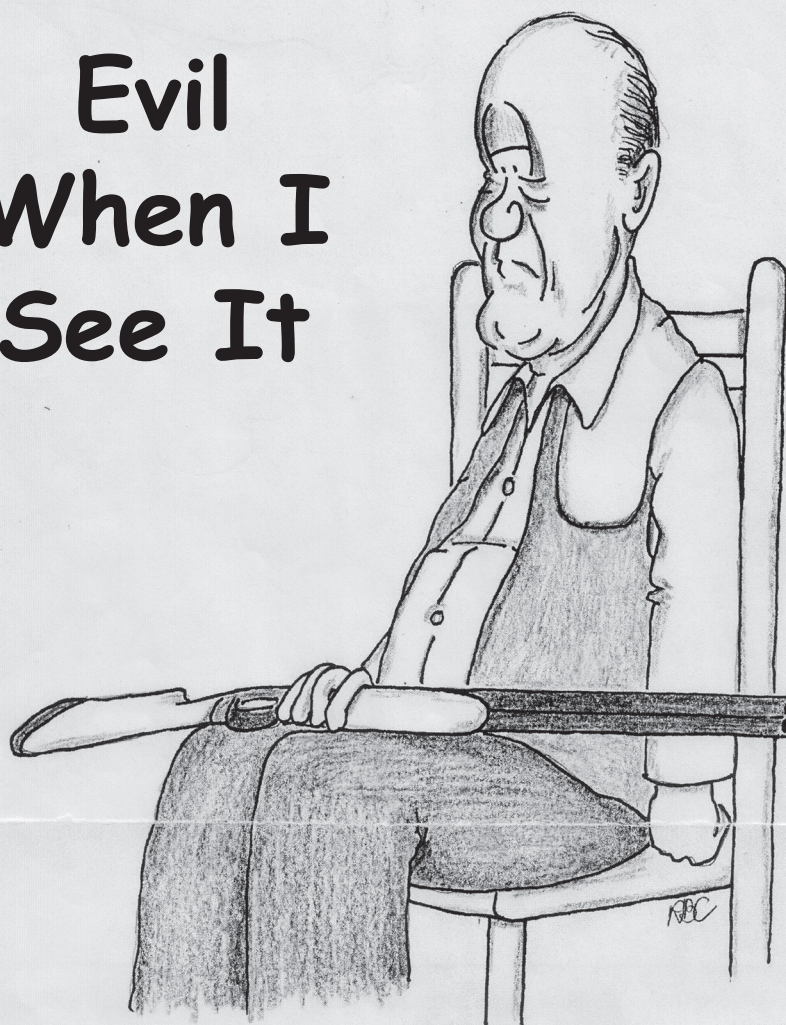
"Then, you really won't like his latest deal," Harrington whispered with mournful satisfaction. "He's just bought the Leander Tract."

I heard Joe's fork clatter on his plate and I know my own jaw dropped. Milton Geezer's face turned deathly pale and sweat popped out on his brow.

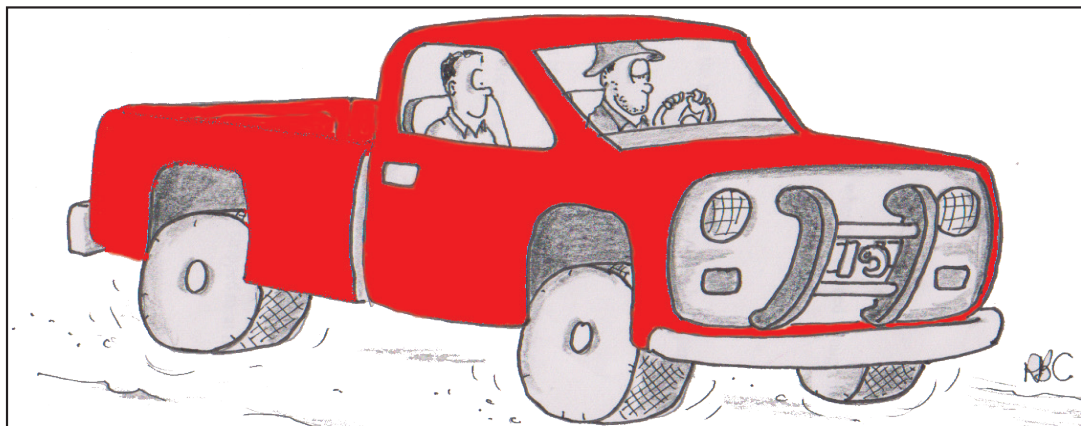
"But...but...but... that's where I live!" he sputtered.

The Leander Tract was a huge parcel of land just north of Mooseleuk and sprawling across both sides of the Little Salt Pork River's East Branch. Roscoe Leander had purchased the tract from one of the (Me & Joe cont. pg 17)

Evil When I See It



It hurt to look at him. The old man had aged 10 years in the two days since we'd seen him. Deep lines bracketed his mouth and wrinkled his brow. His hair seemed whiter and his hands shook as he laid the shotgun across his lap.



If you just can't get enough of reading our Me & Joe Adventures, check out the All Outdoor section of our new Northwoods Sporting Journal website: www.sportingjournal.com You'll find an ample supply of Me & Joe stories to keep you checking for a long time.

Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 16)

big land companies in the 1800s. His family owned the tract for generations, leasing the timber cutting rights and several camp and house lots to various people over the years.

Then, a few years ago, Wilton Leander had come back to town from his home in Framingham, Massachusetts; just long enough to sell the tract to Lute Pillage's logging company. The lease went with the deal and Milton Geezer's home was on one of the leases.

Having passed on his latest gossip, Harrington slid back across the room and out the door.

I was worried about Milton. His color remained chalky and his lips had a blue tinge.

"Maybe," Joe said slowly, "maybe Bannum will let you keep the lease, Milton."

Geezer looked at Joe as though he was a child. "For how long? You must be aware that Bannum doesn't let anyone stay on his land for long. And, as for hunting and fishing? You know as well as I that those pursuits are gone forever on that lovely parcel of forest land. Excuse me..." He got up from the table, biscuit and tea forgotten, nearly toppling his chair. "I must, that is, I should check on my place...I..."

"We'll go along with you, Milton." Joe dropped a few bills on the table and we all went outside to climb into Milton's ancient Land Rover.

The drive was about eight miles and as we pulled into the gravel drive leading to the little frame house, we noticed an expensive sedan parked to

one side. A man in a dark suit turned from the porch and watched us drive up, his hand clutching some papers. He came down off the steps and strode briskly over as we climbed out.

"Mr. Geezer? My name is Alfred Oily. I represent Mr. Flatlander Bannum in his contact with leaseholders," he smiled, "such as they are." He didn't offer to shake hands. Slicked-back black hair hung limply over his collar. A sharp nose overhung a lipless mouth and his dark eyes were set too close together. He held out the packet of papers.

"This is your new lease. It is good for one year. You will find many modifications that you will be held to rigidly. You'll find the terms more than fair, I trust." He gave a feral smirk. "Just don't get used to the low payment. I'm sure it will rise dramatically in the next year." Dismissing us with a glance, he climbed into the sedan and backed out swiftly with a spray of gravel.

Milton read the papers with growing concern. "Five times the cost of the old lease. Can't sell, can't pass on the lease, can't make any improvements. "He stared off, the papers clutched in one hand. "This is the end."

"You don't know that, Milton," Joe began. "Maybe they's somethin' that can be done..."

"You know better, Joe. You know the horror stories as well as I do. How Flat Bannum has kicked every leaseholder off land he has purchased. How he prevents traditional use and keeps the lands as occasional vacation spots for his wealthy non-resident and actor friends." He sighed deeply. "If you don't mind,

I'd like to be alone for a while. Take the Land Rover back to town. I'll get it later."

We watched in dismay as he tottered onto the porch and into the house.

News of the purchase spread quickly. Newspapers across the state trumpeted word of the new purchase. As usual, there were pros and cons in the papers about the acquisition. Environmental groups lauded Flat Bannum's protection of wild lands. Sportsmen's and outdoor recreation groups decried the loss of yet another huge parcel of land that would be restricted to the use of chosen few. In all the hubbub, no mention was made of the plight of those actually on the land itself.

Two days later me and Joe were again in the Five N' Diner having a late breakfast. I looked up as the door opened and Milton Geezer walked in. He stopped and looked around as though in a daze. Finally spotting us, he walked over, hesitantly. I noticed that he had his venerable double-barreled shotgun under one arm.

"I say, fellows, you don't mind if I sit down?"

"Course not, Milton," Joe slid out a chair with one foot. "You don't need to ask."

It hurt to look at him. The old man had aged 10 years in the two days since we'd seen him. Deep lines bracketed his mouth and wrinkled his brow. His hair seemed whiter and his hands shook as he laid the shotgun across his lap.

Edna came with an offer of coffee or tea, but he waved her away with a sad smile. He stared down at the table for a few moments then looked up at me and Joe, although I doubt if

he saw us.

"I have decided to go back to England," he said quietly.

"Milton!" I said quickly. "You haven't been to England in 30 years!"

"Forty-three, actually. But I find that I cannot stay here any longer." He looked out the window. "All my best memories of this country are tied up in my little house and my plot of land and the river running by in front. When all that is taken from me, as it surely will be, I'll have nothing left. Nothing I want to build on." He looked at us again.

"No, all my other good memories are in the old country. My wife is buried there. What few relatives I have left are there. It is better this way." It seemed like we were listening to someone who was going off to die.

He looked across at Joe. "I would like to have you take Barbara." He lifted the shotgun onto the table. Joe looked horrified.

"No, Milton, I couldn't. I mean, Barbara's like your right arm. I couldn't take 'er. You take her back to England

with you."

The old man looked at the 14-gauge Purdy shotgun affectionately. "Named her after my late wife. If it hadn't been for you, Joe, I'd never have been able to get ammunition for her in this country. I still don't know how you did it. She's been a great gun and a fine companion. But, after all, what could I do with her in England? With the home country's draconian firearms laws, she'd never see any use. And she must be used, Joe. Used by somebody who will appreciate her. Don't turn down my only request."

Joe swallowed. He slowly reached across and picked up the lightweight shotgun. Breaking it open to make sure it was unloaded: he laid it across his lap. I saw Milton nod in approval.

"I'll keep her safe, Milton," he said hoarsely. "I'll keep her right."

"I know you will," he said with a sad smile. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a few things to attend to." He got up and shuffled slowly out the door.

(Me & Joe cont. pg 23)

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Marty



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Daedric Hartigan
(Marty was found on pg 48)

Entries must be postmarked by 3/11/25 to be eligible for this issue.

Outdoor Sporting Library

by Jeremiah Wood,
Ashland, ME



Nearly two decades into an outdoor book collecting career, I increasingly find myself pulling some of those titles I discovered in the early years back off the shelves and reading them through again. With piles of unread books and more yet to discover, it may seem a bit crazy, but good books are meant to be read more than once.

Some of it is advancing age. Most of us don't remember as much as we once did, and time has a way of smoothing out those sharp details of the old hunting and fishing stories of the past. The more you forget about a story, the more seems new during the re-read.

But there's more to it than that. I've come to

learn that the things we feel, understand, and experience in reading a book are directly related to the person we are at the time. And over the years as we grow, learn and change as individuals, we get different things from the same read.

One of my favorite writers, Erik Munsterhjelm, wrote a book called "Fool's Gold" about his prospecting and mining adventures in the north of Canada in the early half of last century. Twenty years ago I marveled at the wild country, the adventure and excitement of what I thought amounted to a treasure hunt in the woods. After a few small cases of gold fever over the years and a slightly better understanding of

geology and mining techniques, this time around I understand the technical aspects behind the work enough to follow the story from a more practical perspective. Twenty years of dealing with people gave me a new set of eyes when reading about the personal interactions, partnerships, quarrels and everyday living around boom towns in the bush too.

When I first read Sidney Huntington's story "Shadows on the Koyukuk", I was a young man dreaming of making a living in the Alaska bush. In the second read, years later, I had experienced enough to marvel at the incredible toughness, persistence and work ethic Sidney had. Recently, the third time around, I read the book with a sobering knowledge that this amazing life story was a product of a tough environment, a

lack of other options, and a fortunate era where wild fur had enough value to support families. These circumstances no longer exist - something even the young dreamers reading "Shadows" for the first time today will eventually come to realize.

Context is important in framing our perspective in reading a story. I've balanced personal views on conservation, resource development, public access, motorized use and wilderness values that have evolved over the years and affected how I read books. Seth Kantner's views on conserving traditional lifeways in arctic Alaska and Ernest Patty's gold mining adventures both held appeal to me, at different points in time.

As a young man I questioned Robert Marshall's push to preserve vast swathes of wilder-

ness. My northern Maine upbringing had imprinted on me the importance of motorized access, and the idea of urban encroachment was barely comprehensible. In middle age,

Context is important in framing our perspective in reading a story. I've balanced personal views on conservation, resource development, public access, motorized use and wilderness values that have evolved over the years and affected how I read books.

I can better understand the need for preservation, and the value of thinking beyond one's own years. Likewise, I think about the need to exploit our natural resources as a practical reality that will drive regulatory and financial decisions that we all have a stake in. My kids will need jobs, too. I wish it were simpler..... like when we were young.

We humans may hate change, but we're pretty darn good at adapting to it. And as we change, so does the way we see the world, and read our books. So here's my challenge to you. Pick up one of your favorite outdoor books that you haven't read in years and give it a good re-read. View it in a different light, and see if you learn something new. I'd love to hear if you do.

Jeremiah can be reached at jrodwood@gmail.com

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Practical Ice Fishing

(Cont. from pg 6)

developing the skills to do it well can keep you busy for a lifetime. All survival books teach you useful skills. I am not trying to say there is anything wrong with any of them. I'm just saying consider your skill level and how much energy you will have to expend in an actual survival situation. Considering you can put together a realistic survival kit for \$15. Even a simple large trash bag in your pocket before you go on a hike can mean the difference between life and death.

Just because something is possible doesn't always mean it is practical.

Joe is a husband, father, author and Marine. Joeefrazier193@gmail.com

Smelt

(Cont. from pg 7)

Moose River. We saw peaks in drift in late April associated with post-spawning movements of adults in Brassua Lake. We also saw a peak in December. We saw similar patterns but on a much larger scale in 2024. The total estimate for smelt drift in 2024 was close to 1.3 million smelt. That's great news for lake trout and salmon in Moosehead Lake!"

Suzanne AuClair is an avid outdoorswoman. She lives near Rockwood and has been writing about the Moosehead Lake Region for the past 30 years. She produced Maine's reference anthology, "The Origin, Formation, and History of Maine's Inland Fisheries Division."

(Cont. from pg 11)

come learn up close how our Game Wardens contribute to conservation in Vermont. Participants will spend the weekend fishing, hiking, exploring mock crime scenes, and seeing K-9 units in action. The weekend will take place at the Kehoe Green Mountain Conservation Camp, where teens will stay in the cabins and enjoy campfires, s'mores, swimming, and other camp activities. All participants will be asked to keep electronic devices, including cell phones, turned off and put away for the duration of the weekend to enjoy time unplugged and connecting in-person with their peers. Please note: Junior Warden Weekend is a co-ed program for youth ages 15-17 years old. It will be held from July 19-20 at Buck Lake Green Mountain Conservation Camp, 1051 Buck Lake Road, in Woodbury. The cost is \$125.00 and scholarships are available by contacting Hannah.Phelps@vermont.gov or by calling Hannah directly at 802-522-2925. Registration will open in early March. Check the VT F&W website for the registration packet or reach out via email to be added to the notification list.

Bradley Carleton is Executive Director of Sacred Hunter.org, a privately owned Limited Liability Corporation that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature through hunting, fishing, and foraging. His writing may be followed on <https://sacredhunter.substack.com/>



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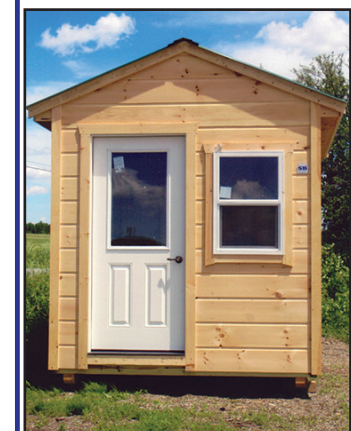
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Aroostook Woods & Water

by Mike Maynard,
Perham, ME

Somebody should have taken ol' Tolskie over to the Kamchatka peninsula and let him tie into one of those world-class, giant rainbows; he would have died a happier man for it. The only reason I bring up Tolstoy is because it was -10°F and I was reading Anna Karenina (seriously, I was!). But try as I did, I just didn't have it in me, and I threw Tolstoy behind the couch and went running for something less weighty. I settled on another Magnum Opus: Ray Bergman's *Trout*. So much to unpack in that book. So many things that we've forgotten, or laid aside due to changing technologies, materials, and simple expediencies. It may have been written in 1938 but *nothing* in its pages is dulled by the passage of time.

For instance, I have a gripe with Gink fly flotant

that *almost* rivals my inability to fall in love with Russian literature. Many fly-fishermen love Gink, and I won't take issue with their reasons, but here are mine for disliking it -and we can thank Ray Bergman for reminding me why. Firstly, Gink doesn't

"Koznyshev then expressed the desire to go to the river with his rod. He enjoyed angling and was apparently proud of being fond of such a stupid occupation."

-Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

work as well as you think it does. Oh, sure, you can slather up that ephemeral #16 Adams parachute with it; you'll get a couple of decent drifts, no doubt. But then your fly starts to sink. Maybe you caught a fish off that perfect first drift, and now it's all slimed up and goopy. What do you do? If you put more Gink on it,

it'll just sink like a stone; Gink can't float a wet fly. It's messy. You're going to get your fingers all greased up and if you don't have a hand towel in your vest, you'll end up wiping the excess off on those brand-new waders. No thank you.

Once the fly is waterlogged, there is a dance you must do, in 6 part harmony, involving the repeated application of an amadou

patch, blowing on the fly for 5 minutes, subjecting it to a dunking in the bottle of Dry-Shake, followed by a serious re-Ginking. All for another two lousy drifts. And there will come a point (right about now), when no amount of dry-shake, or amadou-ing, will fix things. You'll have to break off that compromised fly and tie on a fresh one. I hope you brought half a dozen with you today.

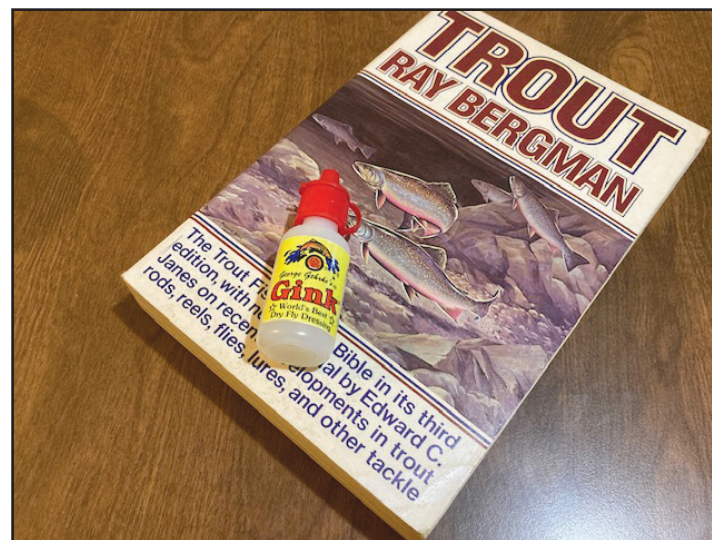
It doesn't have to be this way. All you have to do is read your Bergman. The solution (no pun intended) is to make your own fly flotant. That's what Bergman did, and the results are far and away superior to anything Gink, or any of the other commercially available flotant will give you. Did I mention that Gink is expensive? \$5.00 for one ounce. That's pricey. Consider that Gink is nothing more than diluted Albolene make-up remover. You can buy Albolene for \$9.00 for 12 ounces. You do the math.

Bergman's flotant is

Getting the Drift

simple; you can read his formulas and explanations starting on page 168 of his book. You simply dissolve 2 ounces of paraffin wax in one pint of white gas. White gas is the same thing as Coleman camping fuel. It's also the same thing as Naptha. We all have Cole-

into the fibers. Drop your fly into the bottle, give a shake, and then a few robust false casts, and your fly is ready to fish again. The solvent cuts through the fish-slime and basically 'dry-cleans' your fly. One downside to this flotant that I didn't mention; if



man fuel laying around, don't we? Bergman suggests using a glass jar and shaving two ounces of wax into the solvent, and then leaving the jar in a warm place until the wax dissolves. Decant the mixture into small, one ounce Nalgene bottles, and put one in your vest. Bergman says the one drawback to this mixture is that if it gets below 60 degrees the wax may start to solidify again. So simply keep the bottle in a shirt pocket next to your body. I don't remember ever having that problem when I was younger, but then I wasn't fishing Green Drake's through an Aroostook County winter either.

What this concoction will give you is a fly that will float like a cork, even after being chewed on by multiple trout. The solvent acts as a drying agent and disperses the water from the fibers while the wax adds a microscopic coating to stop water intrusion

you smoke, don't use the stuff. Or at least don't have a lit cigarette between your teeth when you open the bottle. That kind of excitement you probably don't need. Some people have voiced concerns about adding toxic VOC's into our watersheds, and I'm not going to try and talk you out of those concerns. But I also think that the solvent is evaporated by the false casting before it ever hits the water. Perhaps just be vigilant and mindful when using this flotant.

My grandfather made this for us when I was a kid, and I had forgotten about it after all these years, until a mad Russian sent me running for my copy of *Trout*. I'm going to make a batch this month; maybe I'll even enjoy dry-fly fishing again.



Mike Maynard can be reached at perhamtrout@gmail.com

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By Al Cowperthwaite

About 55 years ago, several young men from the class of 1972 who were into hunting made their first excursion to deer hunting camp on their own. It was 1969 and the men were

About a dozen years ago, that camp was overtaken by local rodents and other varmints, so we abandoned that facility...

now old enough to acquire driver's licenses and their own vehicles.

It was a different time when hunting was more popular. We frequently hunted before school and proudly displayed our fire-arms in the back windows of our pickup trucks and other vehicles in the school parking lot, only to be ready to hunt again after the school day ended.

The tradition of spending time at hunting camp has remained an important part of our relationship for over five decades. Some time ago, the actual

The Hobbs Deer Camp



Front Row, L to R: Rick Goodwin (guest), Dave Gordon, Ron Reardon, John Randall, Brian Stewart, Joe Skehan, Mac Dow, Dave Longstaff, Al Cowperthwaite, Dave Harbison
Back Row: John Skehan, Kent Good, Jodi Lowe (guest)

activity of hunting changed into just getting together and morphed into visiting the "Hobbs Center of Performing Arts."

The camp we visited in Mattawamkeag for over 50 years was built about 1905 by David Gordon's grandfather, Ellsworth Hobbs. About a dozen years ago, that camp was overtaken by local rodents and other varmints, so we abandoned that facility taking our performances to camps in Haynesville and at Rockabema Lake. We also have an annual fishing trip in the spring and visit other forest destinations, including a canoe trip down the Allagash in 2021.

Al Cowperthwaite is the former director of North Maine Woods. For many years, he wrote a monthly column for the Sporting Journal.

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“The Trail Rider”

by Dan Wilson,
Bowdoinham, ME

As winter begins to fade in favor of warmer and sunnier days, we're lulled into a feeling of anticipation and excitement that spring is on the way. The

bile and more sunlight to enjoy with the increasing daylight hours. Both more snow and more rain are ultimately a good thing in either case, helping bring

Trails are often groomed with a smooth finish or with a pattern called corduroy. The corduroy texture applies small parallel ridges to the snow, compacting the snow in the valleys and leaving the peaks slightly airy.

weather often has other plans for us, from rain, anxious for spring, to fresh snowfall by the foot, hanging onto winter's residency. More snow means a few weeks longer to snowmo-

us out of abnormally dry or drought conditions and better prepare us for the summer months ahead.

With fresh snow comes a need for a well groomed trail. Behaving



Groomed snowmobile trail.

almost like a paved road with just enough malleability to smooth over roots and bumps providing a clear path for easy riding without being too slick. Various equipment can be used, from a weighted plate or drag towed behind a snowmobile, small plow, or even a more industrial tool called a “snowcat” which could be seen as the equivalent of a “Zamboni” on an ice rink.

Trails are often

groomed with a smooth finish or with a pattern called corduroy. The corduroy texture applies small parallel ridges to the snow, compacting the snow in the valleys and leaving the peaks slightly airy. Snow grooming occurs on several types of outdoor recreation trails such as ski and snowboarding trails, cross-country skiing trails, and snowmobile trails.

After a significant fresh snowfall, it is tempt-

ing to want to hit the local trails as soon as you can, but in an area where trail grooming is typical, it's best to wait for the trail groomers to make it to the trail first. A few of the many benefits of trail grooming includes revealing a definitive trail, improving ride quality and safety, and laying a strong base that can last through heavy use and keep up with additional snowfall. Some snowmobiles are powerful and can tear right through fresh powder, carving down to the ground below. These deep ridges create moguls and make the trail uneven and hard to repair with grooming later on.

Grooming begins as early in the season as possible. Starting early sets the trail up for success, establishing a clear trail width, usually 1 and ½ to 2 times the drag width or about 48 inches wide. Here are some general principles from <https://www.snowmobileinfo.org> “to [keep] in mind when grooming snow:

(Groomed cont. pg 42)

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Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 17)

I didn't know what to say. Joe looked down at the shotgun in his lap for long minutes. When he raised his head, I saw a steely gleam in his eyes.

"This isn't right." He got up and snapped the gun closed. "I've got to do some checking. I'll catch up with you later." Gun in hand he strode outside, climbed into his Jeep, and drove off swiftly down the street.

It was nearly a week later when the meeting was called. It was the type of media circus that Flat Bannum always called to announce his latest acquisition and describe how all motorized vehicles, hunting, and trapping would be banned from his lands. He also allowed public comment and seemed to especially relish the tales of local people recounting how they and their families had enjoyed the forest and its bounty for generations and how sad they were to be excluded in the new order. The final signing of the papers for the sale would take place at the meeting, together with the handing over the deed.

I'd only seen Joe in passing during the week. He seemed always busy and in deep thought and I knew he had made at least one trip downstate.

On the evening of the meeting, we settled into seats near the front row in the Mooseleuk Meeting Hall. Chairs and a podium had been set up on the raised platform at the back of the room. Flat Bannum sat with a lawyer on either side of him. Two seats away, Lute Pillage sat with his arms folded, a bored look on his long face.

I had confronted Lute on Main Street a few days before and asked why he had sold the tract to a man like Flat Bannum. He looked surprised.

"Money." He said. "Bannum is paying me more for that tract than I paid for it, an' after I cut most of the good woods off it."

I scowled and shook my head. "Doesn't it bother you that he's going to keep everyone but his buddies off the land?"

"His land...he kin do what he wants."

"I swear, Lute, you'd probably sell Maine land to Osama Bin Laden."

"I hear he's got money. He interested in Maine timberland?"

I walked off down the street, muttering.

As the Hall filled to capacity and beyond, I studied Flat Bannum closely. Flatlander Bannum had made a pile of money from biodegradable toilet cleansers. That the products were environmentally friendly was all that mattered to many people and sales skyrocketed. I could still remember some of the advertising slogans. 'Give nature a clean flush with Bannum Bios!', and 'Bannum Bios are always flush with nature!' The ads went downhill from there.

Bannum was a tall, narrow-shouldered man with thinning buzz-cut hair and an Armani suit. He looked out over the crowd with an air of disdain and a thinly concealed look of pleased anticipation.

Mayor Thornton Bluster called the assemblage to order and quickly turned the podium over to one of Bannum's lawyers. As was his custom, Bannum himself refused to speak with those he was

most affecting.

The lawyer read through the process of acquisition and the details of land use in a bored manner. No hunting or trapping would be allowed. No motorized vehicles. Existing roads would be closed and culverts removed. Foot traffic would be allowed with a special permit. Camps could remain for the near future under special leases. Leases would be re-evaluated yearly.

As the lawyer droned on, I notice Joe fidgeting and looking at his watch from time to time.

"What's the matter?" I whispered.

"Nothin'." He said noncommittally, and looked at his watch again.

The meeting was thrown open to comment and person after person took the podium to decry the injustice of the deal and berate Bannum for his insensitivity and disregard for the future of the region and its people. The comments ranged from contempt to thinly veiled threats.

"Don't you know," Garth Hardwood fumed, "that yore virtually destroyin' a way of life up here?" For once, Flat Bannum chose to answer. Raising his head, he stared at Hardwood from under hooded lids.

"Frankly, I couldn't care less." He looked down at a fingernail.

Then, Milton Geezer asked to speak and the room grew deathly quiet as he hobbled up to the podium. Although he was from away, Geezer was highly respected in the community. He had always tried to participate in community affairs and events. Little League teams and scout troops were spon-

sored by him and many a town meeting was enlivened by his enthusiastic, English-accented commentary. Now, he looked like the ghost of the same man.

"Most of you know me," he began haltingly. "I'm the old fuddy-duddy who lived over on the sawmill road." Muted laughter circled the room.

"Best days of my life," he muttered, then raised his head and looked out over the crowd. "Many of you have heard that I will be moving back to England." A low moan lifted from scarred throats.

"I would like to thank you all for making me welcome here. I never felt like an outsider. Indeed, I thought I had found a little piece of Paradise, and for many delightful years it was so." He paused.

"But all dreams must end. Just as in the original, there was a serpent in the garden of Paradise." One of the lawyers started to rise in indignation. Milton waved him down with a big hand. "Sit, boy. You've had your say, now I will have mine. If you desire to sue me, the address is 10 Battersea Road, Ancton, Cornwall. A place where I can look out over the western ocean toward my old home." His gaze wandered over the assembly.

"You have a great country here, you know. I hope you appreciate that fact. Perhaps the greatest characteristic of America is its tolerance. Not so, you say? Of course it is. Although we see acts of intolerance in the news every day, for the most part, you tolerate those who are different and who have different ideas. I am living proof of that sentiment. The exceptions make the news. The everyday acts of kind-

ness and understanding aren't newsworthy. There are too many of them.

"But in recent years individuals and groups have arisen whose very existence is a plea for intolerance. So many so-called environmental groups thrive on the idea of 'my way or no way!' They claim to be concerned about nature, but their idea of conservation is a land without people. Or a land with only a select kind of people. In my early days, we had names for that kind of sentiment. WE called it Nazism, or fascism. The methods may be different, but the intolerance is identical. Well, I have what you Americans call a 'news flash' for them. People are a part of nature. Always were; always will be. And once you have denuded the landscape of people, and the elements of nature, you claim to love are in full sway, who will there be to appreciate the late afternoon sun shining through leaves the color of emeralds? Who will there be to thrill at the snort of a deer or the flush of a grouse? Who will shed a tear at a winter morning so beautiful, so fresh and sparkling, that the concept even now, makes it hard for me to breathe. Not you, I maintain." He glanced scornfully at the assemblage on the platform. "You'll be out looking for still more lands to claim as your sole domain.

"And what of those who have lived here for generations? Whose life is tied closely to the land? Whose idea of enjoying nature is different from yours, but every bit as valid? In a democracy, these different opinions would be aired and argued and a compromise reached, for (Me & Joe cont. pg 35)



Angling, Antlers & Artifacts

By Jake Scoville,
Machiasport, ME

The winter of 2016 was the exact opposite of 2015 here in Downeast, Maine. The winter of 2015 saw extreme cold and was one of the snowiest winters on record. On the contrary, the winter of 2016 saw almost no snow and very mild winter temperatures. Most of the lakes in Eastern Maine failed to freeze

on the 18th of March. A few years prior, I drove my dad's truck around that same lake comfortably on two feet of ice. On this day, the only way to get on the lake was with a boat. The weather was far from balmy; it was in the high 30s with plenty of wind. But what could we expect for a day in March?

By the afternoon, we had battled the elements and looked like a pair of drowned rats, so we didn't stay much longer, even though our luck had greatly improved.

completely. The lack of winter was so prominent that MDIFW opened the open-water season in mid-March. This early start date was just what the doctor ordered for my fishing buddy, Harry, and me.

If the season were to have opened on the traditional date of April 1st, I would have missed it. I had accepted a job out west and needed to be in Wyoming by April 3rd. Harry convinced me that I needed to spend time fishing for salmon with him instead of packing for my move. This early opening gave me the best going-away present I could have asked for. Our first quest to find salmon was at one of the local salmon waters.

It was a foreign concept to be trolling for salm-

I tied on my favorite tandem streamer flies, and we started fishing. We had been trolling for more than an hour without any action. "Harry, you think we are going too fast?" I suggested. "Could be. I'll slow it up as much as possible," He replied. Seconds later, my fly rod started bouncing. "There he is," I shouted as I set the hook. After a short fight, we landed the 17-inch salmon. That one fish had made our trip.

A couple of days later, I got another call from Harry. "Are the Salmon biting at Grand Lake Stream?" He questioned. "Worst case scenario is that we fish for a while, get skunked, and eat lunch at the Pine Tree Store." A typical response from me. Thinking about fish and then food. The next

day, we found ourselves waist-deep in the crystal-clear water of Grand Lake Stream. Wading through the water while battling snow and rain was not ideal, but we made it work. Per usual, we tried a few "exotic" flies. A mixture of streamers and nymphs were casted and retrieved without landing a fish. We finally bit the bullet and tied on some GLS classics.

Golden Retrievers, Barnes Specials, and Olive Wooly Buggers, to name a few.

In typical Harry and Jake fashion, the fishing was not what we had imagined. We shouldn't have been surprised that we didn't land salmon on every cast. We did eventually hook the occasional fish. Nearing the end of the day while fishing at the famed Dam Pool, we realized the fish were deep and wanted a painfully slow retrieve. We had been fishing floating line and letting our streamers sink as much as possible but could never get them down consistently where the salmon would be tempted to strike. "Man, I wish I had a spool of full sink right now; I know we would catch them on every cast," I sarcastically told

Harry. In a moment that now reminds me of a scene from the movie "Dumb and Dumber," Harry replied, "I think I got a reel in my truck loaded up with full sink" ... "You've had an extra spool with full sink this whole time?" I quickly

taking turns cast for cast, landing fish nearly every retrieve. By the afternoon, we had battled the elements and looked like a pair of drowned rats, so we didn't stay much longer, even though our luck had greatly improved. We ended our



An early fishing day at Grand Lake Stream.


replied... "Yeahhh, we are at Grand Lake Stream," Harry said with a chuckle. If you know the movie, you'll know the scene I'm referring too.

Okay, maybe it didn't exactly play out word for word like the movie, but looking back, it was awfully similar. We set up Harry's Sage fly rod with the full sink line and started

day by each ordering the famous 'Wooly Burger' from the Pine Tree Store—not only a perfect way to finish the trip but also our March open-water salmon fishing adventures in 2016.



Jake Scoville can be reached at jacobysco@gmail.com or on Instagram at [@jacobysco](https://www.instagram.com/jacobysco)



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For Self-Defense?

Marketing is a strange business. My father-in-law Mike Dunphy is a frugal man, but is also a good sport on shopping trips, strolling along and acting interested while everyone else combs the racks for bargains. He's remarked a few times that if retailers were only allowed to sell things that people need, there would be very few

of fifty isn't much bigger than a box of matches. The cartridges are small enough that even though it's been a while since I used them, I can still occasionally find one in a jar of loose change from some long-ago round of target practice. At one time, most .22 rimfire firearms were chambered for .22 Short, Long, or Long Rifle. These days, though,

famous Schofield revolver break open like a shotgun. But the Model 1 broke open and tipped up for these tasks.

Most remarkable about the first revolver marketed by Horace Smith and Daniel Wesson, though, was how it was promoted on the market—as a self-defense weapon. Really? The .22 Short for self-defense? To be fair, the ballistics of black powder are a bit different than with smokeless powder

Civil War soldiers as a personal defense weapon, and its design was considered state-of-the-art in its day. Of course, ballistically it's no comparison with a bullet weight of 27 grains and average velocity of less than 900 feet per second with, say, the .357 Magnum solid at 140 grains and 1,400 feet per second

Marsh Island Chronicles

by Matthew Dunlap,
Old Town, ME



When was the last time you bought a box of .22 Short cartridges? A box of fifty isn't much bigger than a box of matches. The cartridges are small enough that even though it's been a while since I used them, I can still occasionally find one in a jar of loose change from some long-ago round of target practice.

stores indeed.

When you want to sell something, you want to market it; pump it up a little bit. It's deluxe, trending, new and improved. Sportsmen are not spared such siren calls; our attention is drawn to rifles that are high-powered and handguns that are magnums. I mean, who wants a low-powered deer rifle or some anemic pistol? In fact, one of the newest straight-walled deer cartridges is Remington's .360 Buckhammer. It's a buckhammer, friends, not to be confused with some limp, under-powered cartridge that's only a little more effective than a blank. Bigger and stronger, right?

Dear reader, I present to you the case of the unheralded .22 Short.

When was the last time you bought a box of .22 Short cartridges? A box

I'm not sure it would be very easy to even find Shorts or Longs. In fact, we've gone the other way with the .22 Magnum.

I decided to do a little reading on the .22 Short to see what it was meant for. There are, by the way, lots of .22 Short variants, including one design that carries a load of 'dust shot' that was originally meant for shooting mice in household drawers, which you have to admit is a bit more sporting than glue traps.

As it happens, the first firearm designed for the .22 Short was the Smith & Wesson Model 1, and it was the first handgun designed, in 1857, to handle pre-loaded brass cartridges. It was nothing like a modern revolver. Wheelguns today swing the cylinder out to the side for ejecting spent casings and reloading; older designs like the

(often referred to in the day as 'white powder'); but still—I have a hard time wrapping my head around using the smallest cartridge in production for self-defense.

However, it's worth remembering that any gun or ammunition can inflict grave harm, including the 'lowly' .22 Short cartridge. Now promoted for small game and target shooting, I don't think a red squirrel in a feed bin on a farm would regard the round as laughable, or as Henry David Thoreau once quipped, "the squirrel you kill in jest, dies in earnest." The Model 1 was a hot item among early

and comparative energy of 52-foot pounds versus 700-foot pounds. But would you dare shoot one into your hand to see if it was as anemic as it sounds? Speaking of the .357 Magnum, the reason why you can shoot .38 Special ammunition through a .357 revolver is that the bullet, despite the different designation, is the same caliber. The .38-inch measurement isn't the bullet size—it's the width of the headstamp. A .38 sounds fiercer than a .36 caliber—thanks to the marketing guys.

When soliciting bids for a new rifle cartridge and infantry rifle to shoot

it, the United States Army specified, among other attributes, that the projectile should be able to penetrate an engine block. Springfield's .30 Caliber Model of 1906 won the bid, and now I use a .30-'06, designed to take out vehicle engines, to hunt deer. I wouldn't think of hunting deer with a .22 Short, but I don't think the



Matt Dunlap is a sportsman from Old Town and is a periodic co-host on Maine Outdoors, heard statewide every Sunday night at 7:00 pm on WVOM 103.9 FM, WVQM 101.3 FM, and WRKD 95.1 FM in Rockland.



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Leavitt's Legacy

By Ralph (Bud) Leavitt

Editor's note: Maine's late, well-known outdoor writer Bud Leavitt left us his legacy between the pages of his only book, *Twelve Months in Maine*. In this monthly feature, we reprint selected excerpts from his book courtesy of Bangor Publishing Company.

In most Maine waters you'll learn, if you're pa-

tient, landlocked salmon, squaretails (Eastern brook trout), and togue (lake trout) will rise readily to minnows, streamer flies, wobblers, or to spinner and spoons ahead of worms.

Don't let anyone dissuade you into thinking these fish cannot be caught on flies. They can and are, day after day, year after year.

To be occasionally successful with flies, tie on large bucktails or streamers, single and tandem streamers. They're excellent choices, either trolled or cast in depths from two to forty feet from shore.

Among the best streamer and bucktail flies are the Yellow Perch, Golden Darter, Nimrod Special, Brook Trout, Golden Smelt, Nine Three, Black Beauty, Green Ghost, Black Ghost, Royal Coachman, Colonel



Bates, Mickey Finn, Spencer Bay Special, Light Ed-

son Tiger, Wardens' Worry, Barnes Special, Squirrel Tail, Sportsmen Say, Dark Edson Tiger, and the other dressing of equal beauty

Don't let anyone dissuade you into thinking these fish cannot be caught on flies. They can and are, day after day, year after year.

and fish-taking qualities.

Any one of the mentioned patterns are known to account for sizeable salmon and trout all over Maine and are also magnetic to togue early in the spring. The smaller wet flies and dry flies work better later in the season.

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The Tower Blind Craze

When I was a young man I chased ducks and geese all over the states of Massachusetts and Vermont, hunting from a blind built by gathering whatever branches, brush, sticks, and

time ever, I will be deer hunting in a "Tower Blind" when the worst weather of the season finds me. I am simply done with long hours on a stand enduring ice storm, snowstorms,

Illinois to visit my son Ben, his wife Lauren, and my little, "skipper grandkids," Lillian and JJ!

At first, all I ever saw was shanty type box blinds on elevated stands, and they were sprinkled all along the 80-90 corridor heading through the Midwest, and at first, the placement of these blinds

And today, I've convinced myself that these midwestern hunters have figured out the puzzle of where to go and what to do by placing their blinds in these locations. And finally, I began to really start to get it!

seemed unusual to me. But after nearly a decade of traveling through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and finally Illinois, I began to realize that these hunting blinds were starting to pop up everywhere. And today, I've convinced myself that these midwestern hunters have figured out the puzzle of where to go and what to do by placing their blinds in these locations. And finally, I began to really start to get it!

So now, I look forward to this drive for more reasons than just visiting the first born and his clan! Today, when we travel to the west, not only are new Tower Blinds showing up in places where those shanties and shacks used to occupy, we see more tower blinds than ever before, when traveling this route to Illinois. Today, these blinds have grabbed the attention of hunters everywhere, while offering the same advantages for all forms of hunting that I'd mentioned earlier! And for bowhunters, the specific benefits of using Tower Blinds like these clearly stand out! First, it provides



other materials I could find, then hunkering down and trying my best to stay warm and dry. All while trying to keep a steady vigil for flights of migratory birds moving through. Now, there were some beautiful fall days to enjoy back then for sure. But it was also lessons of enduring the weather, especially as the season(s) wore on.

But since that time, hunting blinds have come a long way! Especially when it comes to enhancing concealment and increasing space and comfort which any permanent type "Box Blind", either on the ground or elevated on a tower, will do. They also offer a great way to share a hunt with others or conceal fidgety kids who are getting their first experiences in the hunting woods. And yes, this year for the first

rain squalls, and worse! Because these are times I want to be in the woods. And for the rest of my hunting career, if possible, when these days come, I'll be sitting dry, staying warm, and hunting deer! However, I didn't come to this conclusion easily.

In 50 years of hunting, I've hunted in every type of set-up, including on the ground or elevated blind, imaginable, from homemade ground blinds to putting a large piece of pressure treated wood between a fork in a tree. Elevated ladder stands with seats, climbers, or carpenter built elevated deer blinds; I believe I did it all! But an enclosed Tower Blind is something I've never seriously thought about. Until that is, I began noticing tower type hunting blinds in my travels out to

On The Ridge

by Joe Judd
Shelburn, MA



a bowhunter with real concealment that helps with any amount of movement, especially when drawing back your bow. You can see farther and clearer when you are elevated, and in many cases, you have a 360-degree view. Your

when you're seated for extended periods of time on the ground or in a tree. And despite what we all grew up hearing about how, "you have to suffer to be a hunter," the truth is, you really don't have to suffer anymore! So, after months

scent isn't nearly as detectable from above as when you are at the same level as a whitetail deer, black bear, coyote, etc. And, over time, almost any elevated deer blind will eventually blend into the landscape, which is always a "good thing"!

Finally, elevated Tower Blinds offer more room and comfort than

of pondering the subject, this idea is now something I'm looking forward to with great anticipation!

That said, there are also disadvantages to any type of elevated and stationary blinds, including Tower Blinds. Elevated stands always pose an increased risk of taking a (Craze cont. pg 30)

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Outdoors In Maine

by V. Paul Reynolds,
Ellsworth, ME

At deer camps, or fishing camps that I have frequented over the years, many of the men I share meals with are into the hot sauce big time. We are talking hot sauces with names like Ultra Death, Kick

contaminate a perfectly good dish or meal with a condiment that inflicts pain?

Must be a man thing, right? In many cultures, I have read, enduring pain or discomfort can be seen as a

ingest the hottest sauce going. He survived the infamous One Chip Challenge, among others. He takes on all comers.

With patience, he explained to me that there is hot and then there is hot! The degree of hotness is actually measurable by what is called "Scoville

What makes these hot sauce addicts tick? Why would someone want to contaminate a perfectly good dish or meal with a condiment that inflicts pain?

Ass Hot Sauce or Rooster Reaper. My own sons are into the hot seasonings, often dosing their scrambled eggs or whatever they happen to be eating at the time.

Not being into hot and spicy at all personally, I find this addiction to culinary fire perplexing, but also kind of intriguing. What makes these hot sauce addicts tick? Why would someone want to

demonstration of strength and toughness, qualities often valorized in traditional concepts of masculinity.

My neighbor and outdoorsman, Rick Maltz, would be the ideal subject if you were a sociology major doing a Master's thesis on what we can call "hot addicts." Rick clearly takes pride in his tolerance for hot and, pardon the pun, relishes any opportunity to

Heat Units. Seriously. The Scoville scale measures the heat or spiciness of peppers and hot sauces, expressed in Scoville Heat Units (SHU). This scale quantifies the concentration of capsaicin, the chemical compound that gives peppers their characteristic heat. The Scoville scale was developed by Wilbur Scoville in 1912.

What's the hot-



test pepper in the world, you ask? It is the Carolina Reaper, an incendiary chili pepper developed in South Carolina in 1912. The Reaper pepper is a fireball that contains 2.2 million Scoville Heat Units

(SHU). A close second is the Scorpion pepper, at 2 million SHUs. Third is the Ghost Pepper at 1 million SHUs.

Now the well known Jalapeno, which I would not eat if you paid me, is mere child's play at only 8 thousand SHUs.

The Mother Bomb, I understand, of hot sauces is one called Flatline. It is comprised of all of the Big Three peppers enumerated above. Of course, neighbor Maltz is in possession of Flatline, but even he treats it with the utmost caution

(Hot cont. pg 42)



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Superior Shotshells

Growing up a mid-western boy in the late 1950s with almost unlimited pheasant hunting opportunities, there was always

Yikes, sounds pretty deadly: “inescapable torrent”. Federal’s Bismuth blend combine 70% payload of premium steel with 30

ger ranges than traditional steel.

Kent Cartridge has always been recognized as a superior shotshell. They use the line Often Imitated, Never Duplicated. Kent promotes their Bismuth shell as having exceptional patterning, superior retained energy and

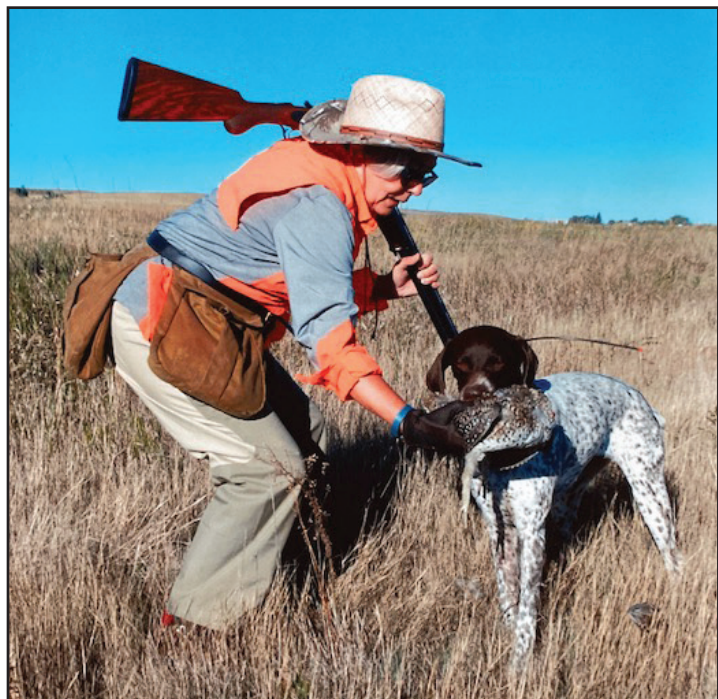
Kent Cartridge has always been recognized as a superior shotshell. They use the line Often Imitated, Never Duplicated. Kent promotes their Bismuth shell as having exceptional patterning, superior retained energy and penetration. Their HD Hull provides smooth loading and ejection.

penetration. Their HD Hull provides smooth loading and ejection.

And, then we have Baschieri & Pellagri (B & P). B & P’s latest is Green Core Wad Technology. Here is their explanation.

Green core wad is a fully biodegradable shotshell wad that decomposes on exposure to bacteria naturally present in the environment. I personally have not shot B & P’s Green Core,

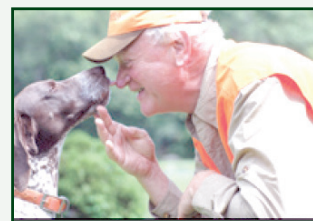
more than a Green Core. They also make the Upland Game Classic. Here’s a quote from B & P. The search for short-chambered, low -recoil, and low-pressure shot shells



an open box of shot shells next to my dad’s gun cabinet. They were always low brass six shot in 20 gauge. I shot my first rooster at age nine. I still have that same 20 gauge shotgun.

Although I still have the same shotgun, the opportunities for shot shells have greatly expanded since the 1950s. Back then everything was lead and almost all shells we had were made by Remington. Hulls were still paper. Today, there are a variety of choices. Just thumb through one of the latest gun dog magazines and you’ll see ads for B & P, Federal, Kent, HEVI-Shot, Apex, Boss and more. And, several different shot materials.

Federal offers something they call Flitecontrol Flex. Federal refers to their Flitecontrol Flex as a “mixed payload of pellets which produce an inescapable torrent of shot through both ported and standard upland chokes.”



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by Paul Fuller,
Durham, N.H.

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Craze

(Cont. from pg 27)

fall, so safety is always a key element, as it is in all things! Tower Blinds can also be difficult to transport or move once they are set up. Extreme winds can knock one over unless it is properly anchored, and fogged up windows can often be a problem. Also, because of the downward angle for shooting, estimating distances can sometimes be a problem, which is something you need to

practice if you decide to go this way. And finally, you are kind of stuck in there, and unable to move toward game when the situation calls for it. But I've convinced myself that the benefits outweigh the negatives, and that an elevated Tower Blind, especially for deer hunting, can open some great hunting opportunities when placed in the right area!

Joe Judd is a lifelong hunter and sportsman. He is an outdoor writer, semi-

nar speaker. Member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association, and a 2019 inductee into the N.E. Turkey Hunting Hall of Fame. Joe is also on the Quaker Boy Game Calls and Bass Pro/Cabela's Pro-Staff

Shotshells

(Cont. from pg 29)

Basewad Technology, this may be the softest shooting shotshell available on the market.

Next comes Fiocchi.

Another shotshell maker that I haven't tried, however, have heard good things. Their big push is Bismuth shot. Both Golden Pheasant Bismuth and Golden Waterfowl Bismuth. Here's a quote: The high velocity paired with greater energy transfer, dense patterns and extended ranges makes you the deadliest wing shooter..." Also, Fiocchi states: No one else can deliver more lethality at an effective price from a trusted brand.

Finally, there is RST.

I say finally, only because you no longer see their ads in the magazines. Folks at RST tell me that they're definitely still in business, however, they've had a difficult time buying components. RST is the low pressure shell I've been using for at least ten years. For woodcock and ruffed grouse, you need to look no further. RST is a small manufacturer in Pennsylvania. It's a high quality shotshell that always performs well. Although it's a perfect woodcock and ruffed grouse load, it's a little light for prairie shooting. For woodcock and grouse shooting in New England and the Great Lakes States, RST is all you'll find in my hunting jacket.

So, shotshells have come a long way from hat box of low brass six shot always sitting next to my father's gun cabinet. Whether you're shooting a classic s x s Parker or a modern s x s Fausti, there is a perfect shotshell for your gun. Have fun and shoot straight.

Paul and Susan, his wife, host the TV show Bird Dogs Afield. Over 200 episodes are available on their YouTube Channel. Go to www.youtube.com/birddogsafiel. Contact: paul@birddogsafiel.com

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The Way Back Machine

Those of us of a certain vintage remember Rocky the Flying Squirrel and his “Way Back Machine” The machine that took one back in history; I was recently reading Pleasant River by Dale Rex Coman; a book about his love affair with the Pleasant River Downeast. The focus is on the river and fishing for Atlantic salmon. This took me back to the days of my youth and memories of salmon fishing.

My first recollection of salmon fishing was at the old Stillwater pool (before the dam) on the Narraguagus River. I was but a sprout of about ten, there with my Mom and Dad who were fishing. An old gentleman by the name of Hal Wasson decided it was time I learned to cast a fly and he led me to the shore. I remember two things: First, keep my elbow in like I had a newspaper folded up under my arm and second, getting cuffed up back of the head because I let the line hit the ground; lines were greased and dirt affected the way they fished. The lesson took, as I have fished flies ever since.

A few years later when I was in the eighth grade, my Dad took me out of the last week of school to go fishing on the Dennys River. We stayed in Pembroke at Pop Lawnmowers Cabins. I did not even know there was a three o'clock in the morning, but we were up then and on the river before daylight. I was let loose and allowed to fish on my own, after intense instructions

of etiquette on the river. The older fishermen were great at giving me tips and one fellow even gave me a few flies. I finally figured out that they were so kind, because I was not fishing in the good lies. I was spellbound by the grizzled up old anglers and their stories. I was infected by the salmon disease when I saw my first fish caught.

Just as my Cosseboom swung around the corner, bang, he hit. Problem is I was so surprised and inexperienced that I did not set the hook. That was that.

I was on the corner, right below Charlie's rips and the club house. Seeing the magnificent fish jump and the expert angler handled him captured my imagination such, that it is still in my mind. I saw three fish caught that week. Anyway I felt very grown up and besides, I had strawberry short- cake every night at the restaurant.

Fast forward again, but still way back, my

brother-in-law, Brian and our friend, Alan, decided we needed to really try fishing for Atlantics. We ventured to my bother-in-law's family homestead in Edmunds for several days of fishing the Dennys River; all we had in the way of expertise was couple of books of flies and some rods. I had been gifted a classic Bangor- made

Thomas rod and was determined that if I was to catch a salmon, it would be on that rod. The reason being, it was just such a rod the Mr. Wasson introduced me to fly casting with and I felt a classic fish deserved to be caught on a classic rod. For several days we followed the same routine. Up at about 3:30, quick doughnut or such with coffee and off to the river. Most of the fishing consisted of rotat-



From Craig Pond

by Bob Mercer,
Bucksport, ME

ing through Charlie's Rips just above the club house bend. There was ample time to listen to stories and tales of fish caught and lost from fisherman famous to the area, such as Ab Maher, Donald and Lippy Cushing, Ed Bartlet, and others.

About mid morning, we went back to the farm for breakfast and a nap. Afternoons, we tied up a few flies of patterns spoken of by the old experts on the river and then headed back to the river for the evening, followed by supper and early to bed.

I never did catch a salmon but I had a near miss. One morning there was a brief shower and instantly the river level went up a small, but noticeable amount. The next guy in the rotation hooked up and the next person went with him to help net, as the fish ran down river. That happened again and again, until there were three people with fish

on just below Charlie's Rips. I was next in line; I cast out across the current and mended my line, as I was shown. Just as my Cosseboom swung around the corner, bang, he hit. Problem is I was so surprised and inexperienced that I did not set the hook. That was that.

I did get to feel the tremendous wildness and power of that magnificent fish. I squatted down and shook like an aspen leaf. I never went salmon fishing again, but that” Way Back Machine” memory is still fresh in my mind.



Bob writes from his camp on the shores of Craig Pond, where he and his wife Jean raised three children and ten Grand-children. He is an avid outdoorsman and former Registered Maine Guide. Bob can be reached at craigponder@myfairpoint.net

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Tales Of A Maine Woodsman

by Joel F. Tripp
Limington, ME

From the history of Newfield Maine.

During the American Revolution and the War of 1812, guards or pickets were stationed on the high hill overlooking the present Newfield village. That is how Picket Mountain

Silver Lake now because camp lots sell better on Silver Lake then they do on Poverty Pond. There are several stories connected to Poverty Pond Camp but this particular one features Uncle Ronnie as the primary character.

As it began to get dark the men filtered back into camp with Forrest in tow. Luther Straw was camp cook, owner of the camp and my grandfathers' brother-in-law. "What's for supper Lute?" "Pot Hellion" was the reply.

acquired its name.

Uncle Ronnie was six foot four at the age of 16. He was built like a string bean and his legs went all the way up to his Adams apple.

When my father was growing up, hunting camp was at Poverty Pond in Newfield. They call it

When Ronnie was 16 and hunting on his own, my father, Forrest, was 12 and had to stay with one of the older men. On the morning in question Ronnie was headed for Picket Mountain and when my father told the story in later years he always said that he was jealous of his older brother heading off alone.

It was still dark when Ronnie, with a ham sandwich in his pocket, headed down the camp road. When he got to Bridge Street he went straight across and into the block of land where Picket Mountain was located. There is no record of the day except the weather. The day began sunny and turned lowary with a north-west wind. Whether or not Ronnie saw any deer, or even any sign or whether or not he found the peak of Picket Mountain, was not handed down.

As it began to get dark the men filtered back into camp with Forrest in tow. Luther Straw was camp cook, owner of the camp and my grandfathers'

Lost on Picket Mountain

brother-in-law. "What's for supper Lute?" "Pot Hellion" was the reply. The pot hellion had been on the back of the stove for a week. The volume of the stew ebbed and flowed as new game was added and meals were taken away. Someone was quickening the woodstove as Lute

take Bill and head down Mann Road."

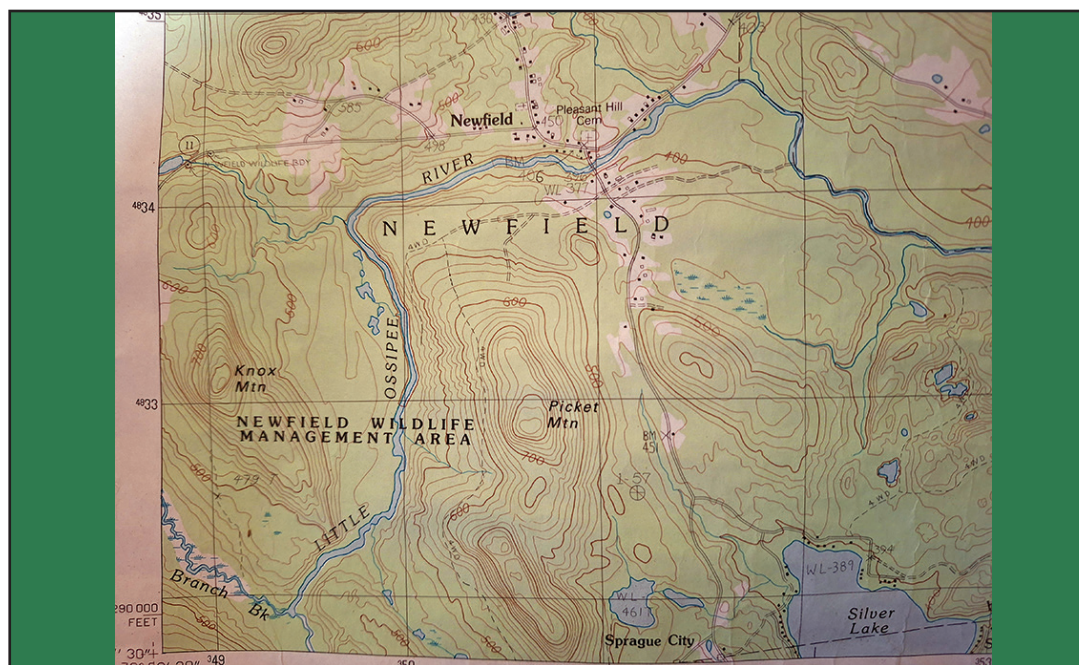
Millard, "what time do we meet back?"

Lute, "if you find him fire one shot. Meet back at camp at eight."

My father reported that they drove slow and every couple hundred of yards they turned and

The comments, some good natured some not, lasted for a long time. My father had a front row seat to the teasing and decided then and there to never be in the woods without a compass and to never get lost.

When it was time for my brother and I to start exploring the woods we



mixed biscuit dough.

Lute spoke to my grandfather "Mid, (Millard) poor me a drink". As drinks were handed around my grandfather asked "did anyone run into Ronnie today?" There were many comments about Ronnie's long legs and mountain goats but nobody had seen Ronnie. Nothing was said but my father said the mood of the camp changed. It was now full dark and no sign of Ronnie.

"That SOB is probably dragging a big one."

Lute, "Did anyone hear a shot?"

"Nope."

Lute took charge. "Mid, you take Forrest and drive up Bridge Street. Flash your headlights into the woods and beep the horn. He won't cross the Little Ossipee so turn around at the bridge. I will

flashed their lights into the woods and beeped. They turned at the bridge and just as they got back to the camp road they heard a shot. In a few minutes Lute came along with Bill still riding on the fender and Ronnie in the front seat.

Back at camp Ronnie was given a bowl of stew and drinks were handed around. Millard broke the silence, "what happened?"

Ronnie, wide eyed and ashamed, "after the sun went in, I got turned around. After it got dark, I saw lights and ran to them. Uncle Lute picked me up."

Millard, "compass?" "At home."

I never spoke to Uncle Ronnie about Picket Mountain. I can tell you that the lesson was not lost on my father. Ronnie had gotten lost and the whole camp had turned out to find him.

never left the house without a compass and usually two. We knew the bearings of all the boundary lines and which way to head if we got turned around. Hunting someplace new I can still hear my father, "check your compass. What is the bearing to get back to the road?"

Thanks to my father's early training neither my brother nor I have ever been lost. Turned around? Yes. Question the compass? Yes. Several times. Always home for supper? Well, that pot hellion didn't eat itself.



Joel F. Tripp is a Master Blacksmith and Maine Woodsman who always carries a Silva Ranger compass. For more information go to; trippsend.com

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Cor-Lokt: THE Big Game Round

In the outdoor industry, the name Remington is known by everyone and used by many. The Remington ammo, known as the deadliest mushroom in the woods because of its reliable expansion is called the Core-Lokt. It has been the

mote expansion at longer ranges when velocities are lower. The tip also aids in the aerodynamic performance of the bullet. Here in the thick woods of New England, long range aerodynamics are not our main concern. The SP and PSP

yards. The SP penetrated better and expanded as well as the PSP. I was testing 180 gr. bullets in .30/06. These tests were the basis for my recommendations. Since those tests, Remington has made some subtle changes to the bullet jacket.

The other change that has happened is that the SP

Guns & Ammo: A Guide's Perspective



by Tom Kelly,
Orient, ME



soft point. This round penetrated through all 32" of gel, WOW! So, we do have options. Hopefully, in our new freedom loving, more Second Amendment friendly society, ammo will be more readily available. I would remind everyone that they should be look-

like to remind everyone to honor our veterans who have given so much to ensure our freedoms. Help a disabled veteran go on a dream bear hunt by helping Maine Bear Hunters provide these hunts. Provide a kid or new hunter, a good example of who we are by thanking a veteran.



Tom is a Registered Maine Guide. He is the owner/operator of Shamrock Outfitters in Orient Maine with his wife Ellie. He is a retired police officer as well as a retired manager from two major firearms manufacturers. He is an NRA Certified Instructor as well as a Hunter Safety Instructor in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. You can reach Tom at Shamrock Outfitters (207) 694-2473. Please visit our Facebook Page: Shamrock Outfitters and Properties and come visit us on East Grand Lake.

For the bear hunter and his .30/06, there is another Core-Lokt choice that is just a freight train and is readily available. It's the 220 gr. round nose soft point. This round penetrated through all 32" of gel, WOW!

is not available. It's still listed in the catalog, just impossible to find. So, new testing was called for. The test consisted of rounds fired from a .30/06 rifle with a 22" barrel shooting 180 gr. SP Core-Lokt rounds at 50 yards alongside of a 180 gr. PSP rounds into 10% ballistic gel. The results were different than my old testing. Both bullets penetrated to virtually identical depths in the gel. The SP penetrated to 23 1/2" and expanded to 1.9X. The PSP penetrated to 24" and expanded to 2X or .60 caliber. The terminal performance at short to medium range is identical. I am sure that the PSP at extended ranges of 100 yards and beyond, will show an advantage. But, for my bear hunters, they can shoot the ammo that is available with confidence.

For the bear hunter and his .30/06, there is another Core-Lokt choice that is just a freight train and is readily available. It's the 220 gr. round nose

ing for their favorite ammo now. Please do not wait until the last moment. You could be disappointed. I have spoken to a couple of people who went through the last hunting season with only 3 or 4 cartridges in their pocket. That means no preseason practice or sight-in. We all need to be shooting and trying out our equipment before we head to the woods. I would also



working man's big game round for generations. It is known for accuracy and reliable terminal performance. Every big game caliber commercially available can be had in the Core-Lokt flavor.

Recent developments have given shooters a choice under the Core-Lokt banner. There are three types of bullets available. The soft point or SP. This is a round nose version. There is also a Pointed Soft Point offering or PSP. The newest version is called the Tipped Core-Lokt. It has a plastic tip on the point of the bullet designed to pro-

versions are much more popular here.

In recent years, the scarcity of ammo and the popularity of the tipped version have made the SP an endangered species, especially in popular big woods calibers like .308 and .30/06. I have always recommended to my bear clients to use a .30 cal or larger round nose soft point like the Core-Lokt SP. The shots for bears over bait are usually under 30 yards and we favor penetration over expansion. The SP has always given us both. Some years back I tested the SP and PSP in this brand at 50

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The Gun Cabinet

by John Floyd,
Webster Plantation, ME



The thing about misses is that no one talks about them. Tales of the 275 yard shot, the last minute shot and the dropped it where it stood shot abound. If you are a hunter I know you've heard just as many as I have.

But I cannot recall the last time a hunter sidled up to me, grinning and said, "Man, I have to tell you about the worst shot I ever made." Or better yet, "I made the perfect miss!"

The truth is we've all missed once. We just don't care to remind ourselves of it; and we certainly don't brag about it. Better to sweep that little mistake under the carpet and hope no one sees the lump!

Sometimes the miss generates laughter and ribbing back at camp. Sometimes it causes heartache. One thing it always creates is an unforgettable memory. Here is the first installment of the most

memorable misses we've had on Tucker Ridge.

It may be hard to believe, but it's as true as a well-made arrow - folks miss shots on black bears at close range.

I was very excited to have an old hunting buddy

It may be hard to believe, but it's as true as a well-made arrow - folks miss shots on black bears at close range.

in bear camp. Harley and I have been hunting deer together for years and when I started guiding bear hunts I couldn't wait to get him a Maine black bear. During week two of the 2020 season I had Harley parked in a two man tree stand at the edge of a small clearing overlooking a cedar bog. Skidder trails intersected at multiple points about 50 yards from his perch - a perfect setup for the bait site.

I had multiple good sized bears on camera tending all of the sites so it wasn't a surprise when I heard my phone bellow one late afternoon. My ringtone is a cow moose calling, but that's a story for another

Memorable Misses – Bears

day.

I was back at camp anticipating hunters' calls. I looked at the screen and when I saw the call was from Harley I pumped my arm and with a big grin answered. "Bear down, hit him hard and rolled him over." Harley relayed. I told him to sit tight. I was

to track. And it shouldn't go very far.

After an hour of due diligence, searching in concentric circles out to over 300 yards, I asked Harley the hard question. Are you sure you hit him? I could see the answer in his eyes.

After replaying the sequence of events in his

dies all took turns verifying zero on the rifle range, it was apparent to me these guys were a tight knit group. The ribbing and jawing made that clear. Adam in particular had a swagger about him.

Midway through the hunt, that swagger disappeared when he missed a



After the miss, Adam's bear looked at him, turned away and moved into thick cover.

on the way.

That euphoria quickly turned south.

I had Harley direct me to where he shot the bear. It was about 40 yards directly in front of the stand, on the edge of some small brush and fir saplings. The bear was nowhere to be found. Nor were there any blood or hair evidence to be seen. When a bear takes a .300 Winchester Magnum slug, we should have something

mind, we realized what happened. The bear appeared fast without a sound. The big rifle came up faster and the snap shot made. The bear crouched and hit the afterburners upon hearing the shot so close; the round most likely sailing over its back.

It was a classic case of bear fever. Harley owned it back at camp; but while I didn't show it, I was some disappointed.

Fast forward to last year's bear season. Adam was a new client tagging along with friends who were returning hunters. He was a ten-year USMC veteran from South Carolina and pulled some quality equipment out of his rifle case.

As the hunting bud-

broadside bear at 70 yards – standing right at the barrel. It simply turned away and bounded into thick spruce cover. He was devastated.

His hunting pals gave him the business back at camp but he bore the brunt of it with good humor; even the best trained riflemen in the world aren't immune to bear fever.



John is a Registered Maine Guide, an NRA Certified Instructor and is the owner of Tucker Ridge Outdoors in Webster Plantation, Maine. He is also an active member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association. Reach him at john@tuckerridge.me or on Facebook @tuckerridgeoutdoors

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Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 23)

compromise is the soul of democracy. But democracy is anathema to people like you. It would dilute your narrow, selfish, and single-minded point of view."

He paused to look once more at the people who were his friends and neighbors for so many years. I could see the glister of tears on his cheeks in the harsh lights.

"So, I must bid you adieu. Please believe my sincerity when I admonish you to fight the good fight. To oppose this oppression wherever it raises its ugly head. It is an uphill battle with most of the money and most of the ruthlessness on the other side. But my faith is strong in the American people, and in Maine people in particular, that injustice cannot live where tolerance and a keen sense of justice holds sway. Goodbye, and may God bless you all."

He tottered down off the platform and, as he reached the floor, the applause started and spread rapidly to every corner of the room. Every person in the building except those left on the platform rose to their feet and continued clapping until ten long minutes had gone by. Milton sat in his seat, stunned by the ovation, while Bannum and his cronies sat and fumed in silence.

As the crowd resumed their seats the rear door opened and a medium-sized young man with broad shoulders, dressed in a conservative suit, strode down the center aisle. He stopped by us and whispered into Joe's ear. Joe grinned slowly and gripped the man's hand in his. Then the newcomer headed for

the platform.

At the same time, Bannum's principal lawyer took the podium.

"Well, now that all the complaints have been heard, we will have the signing of the papers and the transfer of ownership."

"Just a moment!" The newcomer stepped up on the platform and faced the lawyer. He held a sheaf of papers in his hand.

"I'm sorry young man, but comments are closed and we are getting on with business."

"I would suggest that you refrain from signing just now." The newcomer said. "You'd look pretty foolish later on if you made a mistake at this point."

Mistakes and looking foolish are the bane of every lawyer and this one moved back quickly from the microphone. The young man stepped up to the podium.

"I'll make this short and sweet. My name is Glendon Purge and I represent a group of businessmen who have just purchased the Leander Tract."

The room exploded in pandemonium. It was some minutes before order could be restored with the mayor banging his gavel. As a relative quiet returned, Flatlander Bannum stood, his face flushed crimson.

"Are you mad?" he cried in a high-pitched voice. "I am buying that land from this man right now!" He pointed a crooked finger at Lute Pillage. "Now get out of my way!"

"Lute Pillage doesn't own the land," Purge said firmly. "He never did. It's owned, or I should say was owned, by the First Northern Maine Bank of Presque Isle. Pillage mortgaged it a long time ago. WE signed

the papers at the bank at 4:00 pm this afternoon. I have the deed in my hand."

"Oh yeah..." Lute said absently. "I forgot about that."

The meeting dissolved into chaos. It ended with the ecstatic crowd carrying both Glendon Purge and Milton Geezer out through the front door on their shoulders. Bannum and his lawyers, together with a befuddled Lute Pillage, escaped through a side door.

Two days later me and Joe met Milton on the boardwalk in front of the Five N' Diner. The consortium represented by Joe's longtime friend, businessman Glendon Purge of Portland, had given Milton a 99 year lease at a modest fee, with the right to extend it. The land would be managed for controlled timber harvesting and would remain open to the public for use by all.

Joe held Barbara in both hands as he looked at the older man. "Milton," he said softly, "It pleases

me more than I can say to give this gun back to you.

Geezer looked at the gun with an expression the puzzled me. It was a mixture of affection and sad resolve. The ordeal had taken its toll and Milton looked frail and old. I knew he had returned gladly to his little house and sat for long hours staring appreciatively out over the East branch.

He rubbed a hand lovingly over the ornate breech. "No, Joe, I want you to keep her," he said quietly. Joe voiced a surprised protest but Milton just shook his head.

"The joy of the hunt has gone out of it for me," he said sadly. "But I still have my house and my garden and the joys of the natural world around me. That's all I want for right now." He looked at Joe with astern gaze. "I want you to keep her. Use her well and enjoy her as I have. I want to thank you both." He looked back and forth between us. "For your support and all you have

done. It means the world to me." He turned and walked slowly off down the street toward his Land Rover.

Joe swore, softly and bitterly. "You know," he said in a gravel voice. "The people who do these things ain't just doing wrong; they're committing an evil act. No matter what some folks want to believe, there is evil in the world." He looked at the old man shuffling slowly along and swore again. "An' I know evil when I see it."

"I wonder if he was named after the poet," I muttered.

"What? What poet?"

"The Englishman, John Milton."

"Oh, yeah... I remember. Wrote a bunch of famous poems."

"I was thinking of one in particular."

"Yeah? Which one was that?"

I watched Milton Geezer climb slowly into his vehicle. I said softly, "Paradise Lost."



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View From The River

by Laurie Chandler
Bremen, ME

In author Audrey Sutherland, I have found a kindred spirit. At age sixty, she took the first of more than twenty summer expeditions in Alaska and British Columbia. In total, she would kayak a total of 8,075 miles there. *Paddling North: A Solo Adventure Along the Inside Passage* is her story of the

Alaska's Inside Passage is protected from the outright fury of the open North Pacific but still presents formidable challenges in its dramatic tides, 48-degree water, and abundant grizzly population. Wind, it turns out, has far more impact than the tides. Difficult days far outnumber those with sunshine or

Sutherland sings and encourages herself out loud. She delights in leaving firewood for whoever follows. She develops numbing tendonitis, which grows steadily worse. Her wool cap is her "single most useful item." As time goes on, she writes of becoming one with her boat—the steady rhythmic stroke went on and on like breathing with

Then there is the food, and the sheer joy with which Sutherland prepares and savors "elegant cuisine." She forages from land and sea, eating berries of course, but also

slather with butter, salt, and Ponape pepper, and pour a stemmed plastic glass of Monterey Peninsula Winery Petite Sirah.

Sutherland's goal of writing "to satisfy the gray,

The wild beauty of snowcapped peaks, tranquil bays, and the ever-changing sea comes through vividly in Sutherland's writing. One senses a woman at one with the natural world, the sea and its rhythms, the land and its bounty.

first of those solo expeditions, from Ketchikan to Skagway, in a 9-foot inflatable Sevylor Tahiti kayak. The book features detailed route maps and many of the author's favorite recipes.

The wild beauty of snowcapped peaks, tranquil bays, and the ever-changing sea comes through vividly in Sutherland's writing. One senses a woman at one with the natural world, the sea and its rhythms, the land and its bounty. For her, this is a new land, and yet there are aspects of this place that are already a part of her, after years exploring Hawaiian waters.

tailwinds. There are four perilous straits to cross: Clarence, Summer, Chatham, and Icy. As the trip unfolds, Sutherland writes honestly and courageously about overcoming these dangers, sometimes just barely.

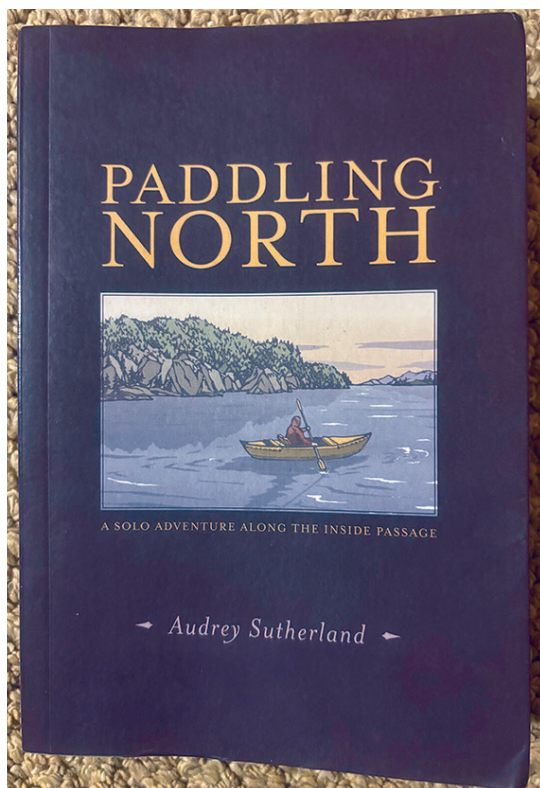
Sutherland's mantra was "Go simple, go solo, go now." She lived her life by these powerful words, in a humble and matter of fact way. No sponsorships, no fanfare.

Although the waters we travel are vastly different, I find myself nodding in agreement again and again. In moments of peril,

no conscious direction or effort.

Amid the perils and the drudgery, come many shining moments. Sutherland knew how a place, an encounter could become a treasure to "hold in her mind and forever recall with gratitude." *Day by day I was becoming part of this world. With no other human to communicate with, I began to forget I was human. I felt I was part of the sea and the animal world.*

Her wildlife list is impressive: mink, seal, orca, whales (fin, minke, humpback), and my favorite wildlife encounter: *The black wolf came loping home from the morning hunt, tongue swinging, alert, assured. I straightened, skin prickling in a primitive reaction. His glance took me in with instant comprehension of all that I represented. His fluid pace did not slacken nor his paws miss a step, but he veered off the trail, through the forest, and was gone.*



fragile lady of ninety reading her memoirs," was surely accomplished. Born in 1921, she died in 2015 at the age of ninety-four. Inspired by women like Ballard Hadman, author of *As the Sailor Loves the Sea*, she in turn has

beach asparagus and goose tongue, mushrooms and staghorn seaweed. From the ocean and streams come thick fillets of cod and trout, mussels, salmon roe, and even limpets. One evening she prepares a full gourmet Japanese meal for which she whittles spruce chopsticks.

The most memorable meal may have been one of the first. After herculean efforts and a good bit of luck, Sutherland makes camp. Knowing she is on the verge of hypothermia, she gulps down hot chocolate, then builds a fire and commences the "rite" of cooking a steak. *Cut off a piece of suet, fry it crisp in a hot pan, insert slivers of garlic into the meat, sear it all to medium rare,*

made me believe that I have expeditions left to accomplish. Here is the true power of the written word. It reaches across generations, and even beyond our passing, to light the fire of adventure and possibility in another soul.



Laurie Apgar Chandler is the author of *Through Woods & Waters*, which provides an adventurous look at Maine's Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, and *Upwards*, the story of her 2015 solo self-propelled thru-paddle of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. To learn more or purchase the books, please visit www.laurieachandler.com

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Moose & Moose Hunting

This moose hunting tale was written by the editor of the Bangor Jeffersonian, and republished in the Semi-Weekly Eagle, at Brattleboro, Vermont on Feb. 19, 1852.

“Having resolved upon hunting moose to-night on the Tomhegan Stream, we strike our tent,

moose to-night. We run up a few rods, opposite to one whose voice we hear back in the woods. We position close under the edge of a meadow whose tall grass is above our heads.

Meanwhile the sounds of moose thicken upon us. There are no less than eight or ten within hearing. The

Presently these sounds cease, and now a large bull has come out in sight, the moon shining brightly upon him. It is a good chance, a capital mark, as big ‘as a barn door.’ Now our birch is making rapidly toward him, the gun at our shoulder, both locks bent, --we are now within fifty



**Old Tales
from the
Maine Woods**
by Steve Pinkham
Quincy, MA

not see him. The stream is too deep for a foothold, and he makes prodigious headway through the water, which roars like a cataract. Now he emerges upon the opposite bank, makes good his escape, into the woods. We give him up for lost, and feel mortified thereat. For a few minutes we indulge the fear that the reports and smell of gun-

with good success. Not finding “our moose,” which was undoubtedly dead of dying at no great distance off, and having but little time to reach Kineo, in season to take the downward Lake steamer, we retrace our steps, reserving a little time to follow the larger and first moose we shot at. At this spot, too, where the bull moose left

Now our birch is making rapidly toward him, the gun at our shoulder, both locks bent, --we are now within fifty yards of him. Now he turns his head towards us, and we let go the ball barrel. He makes an all powerful bound in the stream.

powder, would frighten all the moose from the steam and leave us minus game. We put about up the steam, and had not proceeded 40 rods when, on turning a bend in the stream, and a good-sized cow moose was in full view, feeding in the stream. While our birch is making rapidly towards her, we let go the ball barrel, and give a ‘fir in the rear.’ She starts towards the shore, and we discharge the shot barrel, which seems to have no effect than to hasten her retreat to the woods.

Friday morning, we spent an hour in trouting

the stream amid the noise and confusion of last night, we find blood. Following the bloody track, about a half mile in the woods, we espy the huge object of our last night’s solitude, ‘alive and kicking,’ but evidently near dead. We dressed him forthwith, taking a hind quarter, weighing 125 pounds, and the head and horns, weighing 75 pounds.



Steve is an avid hiker, paddler, and historian, having collected over 40,000 Maine Woods articles to date.



Moose watercolor (by V. Paul Reynolds)

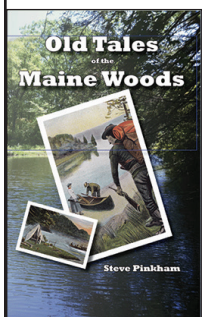
after taking dinner and tea. We reach its mouth at 8 o’clock, and without unloading a single article of our boat load—neither the bear, nor cooking utensils—we immediately proceed up the stream after moose. Our ears are soon greeted with the bellowing and tramping of moose in every direction. It bethinks us that we must have a

scene is rather exciting to an amateur moose-hunter like myself. We drop down a stream a few rods, and come to the edge of small meadow in which are three moose—two bulls and a cow. The bulls are fighting furiously; the clanking and clashing of the horns reverberates in the woods, and causes us sensations bordering on the frightful.

yards of him. Now he turns his head towards us, and we let go the ball barrel. He makes an all powerful bound in the stream.

The foam rises, feather white on either side, concealing him from our sight. We let go the shot barrel into the foam, whence we suppose he is, for we can-

Old Tales of the Maine Woods



Steve Pinkham

Maine Woods Historian, Author and Storyteller

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~ Al Elkin, General Appliance in Brewer, Maine

The Buck Hunter

by Hal Blood,
Moose River, ME



As I write this at the end of January, winter across Maine has been underwhelming to say the least. Few areas of northern Maine have enough snow for the snowmobilers to hit the trails. Deer are bunching up some, but many are still out and about far from any deer yard. This helps the deer tremendously as they can get to the best feed, instead of being rel-

season had flipped ahead on the calendar, the entire muzzle loader season was in December. I knew that finding a big buck track was going to be difficult to find, and with the snow getting deeper, hiking in the woods to find a track was going to be challenging. I hate riding the roads to look for tracks, but with the snow and being worn down from the deer season,

ways has been. There is just something about the mystique of following that buck and reliving his life through his track. Killing that buck if the chance comes, is just the final result or the icing on the cake so to speak. It's the journey along the way that is the most important thing to me.

The first morning I decided to take a ride up into the North Maine Woods, as I knew that there was less snow up there. I fired up the Grey Ghost shortly before daylight and struck

The Last Hoorah

made since daylight. About an hour later, I spotted a track coming down off from the bank and crossing the road. I jumped out to take a look and it was definitely fresh. I doubted that it was more than an hour old, but it was not "the track". I decided to

fast as I could and finally after six and half hours, he finally decided to stop and feed. I knew he wasn't far away, but he went into an old swampy cut where twenty yards was the extent of visibility. I poked along slowly hoping he would get through the thicket, when

That late in the day, the hope is to find a track made since daylight. About an hour later, I spotted a track coming down off from the bank and crossing the road. I jumped out to take a look and it was definitely fresh.

egated to the marginal feed available in the yards. Also, with the deer being spread out, it's harder for the coyotes to zero in on them, like they can in the deer yards. With any luck, this trend will continue, and the deer will come out the other end in great shape to start the spring. This is the final installment of my last fall's deer season as I wind up with muzzle loader season.

By muzzle loader season, most of the bucks have slowed down their travel as the rut has pretty much ended. Since deer

I resigned myself to doing it. The buck tracks that I want to follow are the ones that are the smallest minority of tracks. They are about five to ten percent of all buck tracks and in some areas even less. In other words, I'm not just looking for a buck track, but I'm looking for the "right" buck track. At this stage in my hunting career, just shooting another buck is not a priority. The hunt is the most important thing for me. Being on the track of an old mature buck is what's in my blood and al-

off on my own for the first time all season. I put on a lot of miles without finding a track big enough. At about 10:30 I finally found where a big buck had crossed the road. The problem was that it looked like it had been made either early in the night or late the day before. I hemmed and hawed a little thinking that it would probably be hard to catch up to him with that much of a head start. I reluctantly drove on hoping for something better.

That late in the day, the hope is to find a track



take it anyway, just to see if I could get a look at him. An hour later, I caught him feeding. He was a nice young buck, and I bid him farewell and took the hour walk back to the truck. It was time to make my way back home, still hoping to find that big fresh track, but to no avail.

Even though there was less snow up north, I didn't want to make that drive again, so I struck out for some local haunts. As luck would have it, I found the track at 7:30 and was off to the races. The track was several hours old, and that buck decided that he had to find every doe in his territory. I pushed on as

I came to his bed with a fresh track leaving it. I one stepped along hoping he would get into more open country, but he had only gone about 150 yards before laying down again. The running track told me that I had spooked him. With the day wearing on, I knew I might only get one more chance. There was no time to wait so I ate a granola bar quickly and took up the track. A little while later he crossed a hardwood opening and saw me coming into it. The jig was up, and I headed out for the two mile walk back to the truck.

I never found another good track until noon on (Hoorah cont. pg 42)

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Snow! Snow At Last.

Well, folks, we have snow statewide! That has been a welcome sight for outdoor events, especially snowmobiling. Our supporting businesses depend on us to keep them going through the next season. Snowmobiling is

mote their clubs by attending summer events and asking for volunteers and new club memberships. Please join a club and help our workforce, which is getting older and we need young people to lend us a hand.

They're very passionate and proud of what they do. When a situation arises, they get up and get it done.

Our ITS trails are unique, and a Statewide Interconnecting Trail System is the MSA's Interstate snowmobile highway. Over 3000 miles of ITS go East, West, North, and South. We were just recognized as the



Snowmobile Trails

By Al Swett



big business for our state. The University of Maine has ongoing studies on how much money we bring into Maine, between \$600 million and over \$800 million. Of course, the more snow, the more revenue. On a good year, registration is over 88,000 sleds. This registration money is very important; it funds our grant programs that allow our clubs to purchase equipment to maintain the trails. Like groomers' drags, chainsaws, and anything related to trail work that makes the trails the best in Maine.

Many clubs rely on grants, but many still have to raise the money on their own. They work all year long, having raffles, food events, and vintage snowmobile shows; they pro-

Our trail system is over 14,000 miles long stretching from the Limerick area to Madawaska and many points East and West. We have one of the best trail systems in the country. I'm very proud of these Maine Snowmobile Association clubs. Over 280 strong, they get it done after Mother Nature packs a wallop of off-season rain and high winds that destroy bridges and countless trees.

er it be on the Western border to view the mountain range, the vast fields of The County, spectacular waterfalls, or the northeast beauty of the Atlantic. Our trails take you to these incredible places. Along the way, we have the best-supporting businesses. These destination points are full of services that supply the riders with everything they need: good food, a place to spend the night, fuel,

service, and parts for your sled. Want to ride but don't have a snowmobile? Many of these destination points have rentals available, everything you need to do a ride. The snowmobile, the helmet, gloves, the

and Moosehead have some pretty large pressure ridges. Be careful around these areas and ask the locals and fishermen about the thickness.

Please respect our landowners. Over 90% of

Our trail system is over 14,000 miles long stretching from the Limerick area to Madawaska and many points East and West. We have one of the best trail systems in the country. I'm very proud of these Maine Snowmobile Association clubs.

third-best destination point in the USA for this trail system. That's quite an honor.

The State is full of scenic beauty and wildlife. Snowmobiling takes you to these remote areas, wheth-

snowmobile suit. They'll go over the safety side of riding and even guide you out on the trail. It's a great way to get into the sport.

Please be safe out there. We've had several accidents this year, mostly due to a lack of snow and inexperienced riders. Slow down. Lots of folks have not ridden much yet and need to get reacquainted with the snow conditions and riding conditions. We've had a good freeze this year but that still does not mean all ice is safe. The big lakes like Rangeley

our system runs on their land. We need every piece of the land to be successful. It only takes a few to ruin it for everyone. Maybe a reroute will solve the problem, or maybe not. The clubs and the MSA need to have a great relationship with them to make trails for you to ride on. No littering, going slow by homes and farms, and no loud exhaust are just a few things to consider.

Al Swett is operations director for the Maine Snowmobilers Association.



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SAM News

by David Trahan,
"Executive Director"

by Ginny Hurley Thompson

If you're reading this, you're probably a hunter, trapper or angler. Maybe you're a competition shooter, a trainer of hunting dogs, or a snowmobiler. A landowner or wilderness explorer.

If you answered yes to any of the above, be assured that you have received some (or many) benefits from the work of the Sportsman's Alliance

fall of 1975 NBC aired a program, "The Guns of Autumn," which was an open attack on hunting traditions and guns in general. Filmed in Madison, Maine it was an anti-hunting piece that slammed hunters, portraying them as cold-hearted and unethical. It was a mockery and condemnation of our whole sporting culture. Fear and anger jolted sportsmen, and they woke up to the possibility

organized the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine. Since 1975 SAM has been a powerful force in protecting 2nd amendment rights, and sporting traditions that are the fabric of Maine itself.

Over the past 50 years, threats from the antis have never stopped. They were a clear and present danger in 1975, and still are today. The Sportsman's Alliance is committed to watching what happens in the halls of legislature in Augusta or Washington. We take ac-

legacy of the sporting traditions for everyone of all ages and abilities. Through the generosity of many private and corporate donors, SAM has received parcels of land, near our headquarters in Augusta. Over 130 acres of woodlands, fields, wetlands have become the setting for a Youth educa-

SAM News, social media, and a book is planned. You can help. We are seeking to talk with any people who have stories to share about the leaders or events, especially from the early days. Did you know Doc Garcelon, Oscar Cronk, Bud Leavitt, Tieche Shelton, Harry Vanderweide or

Over the past 50 years, threats from the antis have never stopped. They were a clear and present danger in 1975, and still are today.

of Maine. SAM exists because of you, and most importantly, for you.

50 years ago the future of Maine's sporting traditions were under serious threat. During the

that their way of life might change forever. But seven concerned individuals took action. Called a meeting at the Augusta Armory. Sportsmen rallied behind their wise leadership, and

tion to protect your rights.

Today's SAM has grown to be even more than a legislative watchdog. We have an active veterans outreach. Another part of our mission is to assure a



**SAM's current executive director
David Trahan.**

(Photo by V. Paul Reynolds)

tion and recreation center with trout ponds, hiking trails, gathering spots for groups and ADA facilities.

As SAM celebrates this 50 year milestone, David Trahan, Executive Director, and I will be writing the story of the battles, accomplishments and passionate individuals who shaped our organization. Segments of this story will be on our website, in the

other founders? If you're not already a member of SAM, we invite you to partner with us in continuing the important work we do for all Maine's outdoor sportsmen and women. Hope to see you at the State of Maine Sportsman's Show March 28, 29 and 30. Feel free to email me (Ginny) at trappergigi@gmail.com



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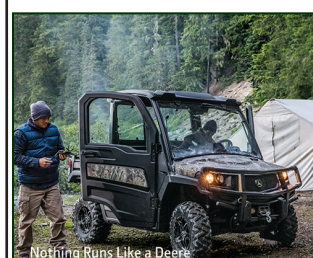
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The Hoarding Habit

While I may not fit the textbook definition of a hoarder...I can see it quite clearly from where I sit. According to the Mayo Clinic, "Hoarding disorder is an ongoing difficulty throwing away or parting with possessions because you believe that you need to save them. Hoarding usually starts around ages 15 to 19. It tends to get

I do make half-hearted attempts to jettison things. But then the memories come flooding back and I say "I can't do this". So they go back into various, boxes, drawers, closets or filing cabinets to be "rediscovered" in another few years. Here's what I'm talking about.

Recently, on one of my cleaning forays, I found



worse with age". Assuming for a moment that they're correct, I'm screwed. Forty years of fishing and hunting gear plus a like number of years of souvenirs and mementos from my days as broadcaster and writer for ad agencies. Not to mention pictures, CDs and VHS tapes of the kids growing up and stuff handed down to me from the family over the years. Can I understand why storage units are in big demand these days? You bet'cha!

a picture at the bottom of a drawer of two guys standing behind a very big deer mount. I don't personally know either guy. But, here's the backstory. I knew a gentleman who was manager of a grocery store in New Hampshire. One day he said "I know you love to hunt", as he pulled a picture out his pocket and gave it to me. Come to find out, the two men in the picture are my friend's brother, Ron "Bushey" Boucher and Milo Hanson. And yes,

the rack they're standing in front of is Milo's world record buck that scored 213 5/8 B & C. Ron was one of six panel scorers from Boone & Crockett to score and certify the Milo Hanson buck as the World Record Typical Whitetail in 1993.

That started a long friendship with Milo where he accompanied him traveling the country to hunting shows. But the relationship soured when Ron measured

I do make half-hearted attempts to jettison things. But then the memories come flooding back and I say "I can't do this". So they go back into various, boxes, drawers, closets or filing cabinets to be "rediscovered" in another few years.

the Johnny King buck five years after it was killed, reaching a score that would still beat the Hanson buck by 1/8 of an inch... even after five years of drying. And this isn't even factoring in the Mitch Rompola buck. But that's a whole different story. The bottom line is, that picture to me, is a piece of hunting history and it goes back in the drawer for my kids or grandkids to discover some day and say, "Who are these guys"? Hopefully, they too will see it as part of our hunting heritage and hang on to it. Just in case you were wondering, Hanson took his world record

New Hampshire Outdoors

by Peter St. James, Warner, N.H.

buck with a .308.

March marks the last full month of ice fishing. It can run through mid-April depending on from late December through mid-April depending on weather and ice safety. Most of the action is on warmwater fish populations, including perch, pickerel, black

get ready. Check out the New Hampshire Outdoor Expo at the Hampshire Dome in Milford, NH, March 7-9. For more info, go to : nhoutdoorexpo.com. Boats, bass, trappers and trout mixed with guides, flies, jerky, gundogs and old fashioned soda. Something for everyone!

crappie and bass, with a few waters providing opportunities to catch brook, rainbow or brown trout through the ice. Waters managed for lake trout and/or salmon have a defined ice fishing season of January 1 through March 31. Remember—salmon may not be taken through the ice. Trout ponds are closed to ice fishing.

Bob houses must be removed from public waters, public property or private property no later than April 1.

With salmon and trout seasons just around the corner and turkey season, not far behind, it's time to

Applications for the 2025 N.H. Moose Hunt Lottery are available. Check out : huntnh.com for your chance to apply online or by mail.

Well, back to cleaning because I don't want to be known as a hoarder. Somewhere between eclectic and somewhat compulsive would be just fine.

Peter St. James is a member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association, Outdoor Writers Association of America and is a licensed NH Fishing Guide. You can reach him at : outsideinsides603@gmail.com

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Hoorah

(Cont. from pg 38)

the last day of the season. I pushed hard on that track for an hour and came to his bed. With the track freshened up some, I kept pushing on. The buck got in with some other deer and bedded again. It took me a few minutes to sort things out, but then the bucks' track was pretty fresh and he was feeding his way down into a fairly new hardwood cut. I thought to myself that I was going to get a chance at him for sure. I eased downhill searching everywhere for a glimpse of the buck. Eventually I came to the running track of the buck, which I had apparently spooked.

I was dumbfounded to say the least. I couldn't believe that I hadn't seen the buck, as I had the advantage of coming down-

hill on him. There were plenty of old wood tops to snap in the cut and apparently, I had snapped one too many and he heard me. I went from the top of the roller coaster to the bottom in two seconds. Such is tracking bucks. There are a lot of highs and lows, but the ride is always worth it. I followed the buck down into a spruce thicket where there was no chance of seeing him. So, once again I headed back to the truck with an hour of daylight left. Reliving these stories is what keeps us deer hunters going until another season rolls around.

Until next month, good luck on the trail!

Hal is a Master Maine Guide and author. He lives in Moose River Maine with his wife Deb. He can be contacted at: bigwoods-bucks.com

Groomed

(Cont. from pg 22)

New snowfall is usually low density, small particle size snow which is relatively dry – meaning it has a lot of air space in it

Fresh, cold, dry snow generally doesn't stick together well – but grooming can enhance its ability to form bonds

The snow's temperature must be below freezing for bonding to occur

Hot

(Cont. from pg 28)

and regard. "A little dab will do ya," says he.

Not to get too Freudian, but some men, and perhaps some women, probably find an adrenaline rush from the risk taking when it comes to ingesting hot sauces that have an unforgettable kick, or that

Well bonded snow can be achieved through grooming even at very, very cold temperatures"

All good things must come to an end, and snow will begin to melt. The melting snow can be slow and steady, shrinking in volume under increasing daylight, revealing fossilized animal prints in the frost laden soil. The snow could also have a quick exit, being wiped out by a patch of warm weather or one big rainstorm. In either

can make your eyes water and your tongue burn. And maybe they like the challenge.

"I like the after burn," says Maltz, "it is relaxing."

If you want to really find some interesting lines of hot sauces with high SHUs check out the Pepper Palace chain or Capt. Mowatt's in Portland, Maine.

But keep a fire hose

case, the next unofficial season is "mud season" where we'll be in transition from snowmobiles to ATVs.

Thank you to our trail groomers and volunteers, from snowmobile clubs to state agencies, who are maintaining our state's trails.



Daniel Wilson works in healthcare and enjoys time outside in nature with his family.



The author is editor of the Northwoods Sporting Journal. He is also a Maine Guide and host of a weekly radio program "Maine Outdoors" heard Sundays at 7 p.m. on The Voice of Maine News-Talk Network. He has authored three books. Online purchase information is available at www.sportingjournal.com, Outdoor Books.



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To Military Personnel Worldwide!

In these troubled and divisive times for our country, we at the Northwoods Sporting Journal remain proud to be Americans. We still stand for the National Anthem and thank our lucky stars that we live in the land of the free.

And we still salute our military men and women, who have served and continue to serve their country, here at home and in faraway lands. To them we owe our gratitude and appreciation for what they do, and for safeguarding our American way of life, which we value deeply.

BRING THEM ALONG!

Maine has a proud history of local fish and game clubs that continue to serve sportsman and their communities. With your membership and support, these organizations are the best hope for perpetuating and promoting our hunting and fishing legacies for younger generations to come. The Northwoods Sporting Journal, along with those sponsors listed below, urge you to become part of this important state network by joining a fish and game club near you, and bring them along.....



If you have a youngster who needs guidance in learning to hunt or fish, contact a Maine Fish and Gun Club in your area. They can help!

Ancient Ones of Maine-Livermore
Androscoggin Cty Fish & Game Assoc. – Auburn (207) 777 5200
Arnold Trail Sportsmen's Association – New Sweden
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Slipstream

by Scott Biron,
New London, NH

Every year I dig out a few fly patterns that seemed to have not been used and reintroduce them to the water. These patterns either worked and for some reason they found their way out of the power rotation or I never got around to tying some to replenish my fly box.

my fly box.

This year a few of those patterns I'm resurrecting are the Daisy Mae, Beetle, Tabou Caddis Emerger and the Woods Special variant.

The Daisy Mae is one of those flies you can tie as a casting streamer, a single hook trolling streamer or as

it this spring. In the past I found myself giving these out to friends which is why they disappeared from my fly box.

I heard an interesting story about this fly a number of years ago. The story is that the fly was developed in a local barbershop. What does that mean? Well, I can safely say it doesn't use any human hair in the pat-

would make a change to cut a corner. Changes were made to enhance a fly.

The next fly is a Beetle and it was a pattern that Ora Smith tied. Hands down this fly has over produced for friends I've tied this for over that last few years. This pattern came

He reported back to me that after a week of fishing he caught more brook trout on the fly than anything else he fished with.

It's worth going through the fly box a few times a year to resupply what you haven't used for a while like I've done this

The fly pattern is attributed to G. Alden MacDonald and for the Moosehead Lake region. I can confirm that it works in NH as well having used it as a casting streamer many times.

Whichever the case may be, I find myself thinking about or discussing them with friends over the winter. Just last week my friend Chuck sent me a photo of two flies I tied years ago for him. When I looked at them my first thought was..."I haven't fished that pattern for years." I do remember it catching fish so I quickly made a note to tie some for

a tandem trolling streamer. The fly pattern is attributed to G. Alden MacDonald and for the Moosehead Lake region. I can confirm that it works in NH as well having used it as a casting streamer many times.

The fly pattern has simple readily available materials that most fly tyers have on hand. I have not trolled this pattern but I'm making a point to try

tern. The connection to the barbershop was that it was a local meeting spot for anglers to discuss fishing. I can only imagine that the fly went through a number of changes and refinements based on how it was working. Maybe materials were added or removed, the hook size could have been changed but in the end the Daisy Mae was developed, it's a great story and I can see it happening.

Wood Special was a Joe Sterling pattern that honestly is a staple fly in New England. Years ago, I was visiting my late friend Ellis Hatch and he was tying this pattern. I noticed that the body of the fly was different from the original recipe which had orange chenille. Ellis's pattern had an orange wool body. I asked him about this and he said that he tied it both ways but preferred the wool body. He went on to explain that he felt the wool had a richer color when in the water.

I agree with him. Ellis was a great fly tyer, angler and sportsman. He never



to my attention years ago, I tied it and gave it to friends. The original fly had polar bear as part of the wing which I substituted out with arctic fox or doe hair. Both substituted materials have worked well. The fly has a dark barred teal waterfowl feather wing, which for me is always is productive in a trout pattern.

The Tabou Caddis Emerger is a very easy fly to tie. It basically uses two feathers a rib to give it segmentation and a hook. I've tied this on a curved nymph hook and a standard nymph hook. It's a great pattern with a very buggy look.

After Chuck brought it to my attention, I then was with a fly tyer from NY at The Fly Fishing Show who was tying these. I chuckled when I saw him tying them and listening to him talk to people at the show who asked him about the fly. Years ago, I tied a dozen of these in two different shades for an angler going to Maine fly fishing.

year. It's always good to have some dry powder to fish with each year or in my case to give to the people I fish with. I'm making a mental note not to give all of these away this year and will report back on how they worked.

Special thanks to everyone who stopped by to say hello at The Fishing Show in January. Always great to see and hear from folks. Next show I will be at is in Rangeley Maine at White Nose Pete Day June 6 & 7th. It's a great show so plan to attend if you can.



Scott Biron learned to tie flies and fly fish back in the 1960s in the North County of New Hampshire. He is a regular contributor to the American Fly Fisher and Atlantic Salmon Federation Journals. Scott is a Master Artist in the NH Traditional Arts Program and instructs fly tying both nationally and internationally.

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Wild Game Dinners

Game Dinners. They come in many shapes and forms.

For those of us that hunt and enjoy the outdoors, this can sometimes present us with an opportunity to share our harvest with fellow game and hunting enthusiasts.

Ever wonder what Jackalope sausage or deer heart tastes like?

There is always great

dinners, provide us with an opportunity to enjoy the company of others while we partake of food that brings comfort to us. It is a form of “breaking bread” with your outdoor brethren.

Having participated in many game dinners over the years, I have played the role of attendee, volunteer cook, hired game chef, food consultant, and guest speaker.

show others that wild game can be elevated, but also approachable.

Recently, I was asked to create six signature dishes for an annual game dinner that draws 200-250 people, and always has a waiting list.

For this dinner I donated moose, bear, and elk, and I was presented with coming up with additional dishes for goose breast and braised squirrel meat that was assigned to me. There were also a number of varieties of fish and game that



anticipation by all who attend, wondering what will be on the menu. You may get a chance to try moose, deer, bear, beaver, wild boar, squirrel, rabbit, grouse, goose, duck, trout salmon, steelhead, or so many other unique offerings.

Some participants cook up their famed dish, while others can be assigned amounts of donated game, which they can then transform into a dish to be enjoyed by those who attend the dinner.

There are also varied levels of cooking skill that exist within these dinners, but people generally cook from the heart.

Whether the game is wild or free-range and raised by a game farm, it is the premise of why such events bring people together that matters.

Game Dinners, much like the historic church

My takeaway is that a well-organized dinner that incorporates a good menu plan can be a great annual event. It's a very enjoyable time when you can let your hair down, be yourself, with no expectations, and simply be around people that share common ground.

It's always fun to observe how creative people get with their recipes, and the types of fish and game that show up on the buffet, and then to discuss with others at your table what everyone thought about the dishes.

Another thought is that when you attend one of these, you may find new ways to experience fish and game that you may have thought can only be consumed a certain way.

When I get to participate as a game chef, I always perceive that as the gauntlet has been thrown, I see it as an opportunity to

When I get to participate as a game chef, I always perceive that as the gauntlet has been thrown, I see it as an opportunity to show others that wild game can be elevated, but also approachable.

were donated such as deer meat, wild boar and handed off to other experienced cooks.

My creative dishes this year were Tuscan Elk Marsala Meatballs with Red Cabbage, Moose Short Rib Shepherd's Pie with Root Beer Gravy, Moose Chorizo Stuffed Peppers, Maple Bear Mac & Cheese, Asian Goose Stir-fry and Squirrel Jambalaya.

This particular game dinner has a reputation for being one of the best you will ever experience. The dishes are always tasty, and nobody ever goes away hungry. I always feel that I'm experiencing the biblical story of the loaves and the fishes as food comes out of the woodwork and there are lots of smiles throughout the room.

I would encourage you that if you've never attended a game dinner, find a good one and attend. If you have never cooked at a game dinner and enjoy cooking and eating game, get involved and enjoy the

Cookin' With New England's WildCheff

by Denny Corriveau,
Kennebunkport, ME



ride.

WildCheff's Wine Braised Rabbit (Lapine au Vin)

This a great way to create a comforting rabbit dish that resembles a French Coq au Vin.

Ingredients

4-5 slices of smoked bacon, sliced crosswise into 1-inch pieces

Place pan over medium-high heat. Working in batches (do not overcrowd pan), brown rabbit pieces on both sides, transferring them to a plate after they are browned.

Reduce heat to medium-low. Add mushrooms, garlic, 2 tablespoons of parsley and 2 teaspoons of thyme.

Sauté until mush-

2 medium sweet onions, peeled and roughly chopped

8-10 pieces of wild rabbit (similar size to a chicken thigh)

8 oz. of baby bella mushrooms, halved

5-6 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

4 T of Italian parsley, chopped

2 Tsp of fresh thyme, stripped from stem

1/2 bottle of Riesling wine
1 container of chicken bone broth

Directions

Place rabbit pieces onto a plate or baking sheet. Coat with light amount of olive oil, and then season with sea salt and pepper.

Place a large Dutch oven or other heavy-bottomed pan over medium heat. Add bacon, and then cook until most of the fat has been rendered. Add onions and sauté until softened, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer mixture to plate, leaving behind as much liquid fat as possible.

rooms are coated in fat, about 1 minute. Return rabbit pieces, onions and bacon mixture to pan.

Add wine and bone broth, and then raise heat to bring to a boil. Partially cover, turn heat to low, and simmer for 1 hour or so until rabbit is fork tender.

To serve immediately, sprinkle with remaining parsley.

Optional: Cool and refrigerate overnight. The next day remove any chilled fat on surface with paper towels. Reheat gently, sprinkle with parsley, and serve.



WildCheff - Denny Corriveau is Award-Winning Native American Game Chef. He is a Wild Game Evangelist and a nationally recognized trendsetter and pioneer for preparing wild game. He is also the National Game Chef for TenPoint Crossbows. You can learn more @www.wildcheff.com or visit him on Instagram @thewildcheff

Best Bassin'

by Bill Decoteau,
Hampden, MA



Most bass fishing manufactures will reveal their new 2025-year products either at the annual March Bassmaster Classic, or during the annual July ICAST show held in Florida. (International Convention of Allied Sport-fishing Trades). Japanese Master Lure Designer Hiroshi Nishine decided to

been designing for over four years!" (www.NishineLureWorks.com)

With over ten newly designed Nishine Lure Works products to be released during 2025. I was totally intrigued as Master Hiroshi went into depth explaining the actual lengthy process of his handmade meticulously crafted lures!

With over ten newly designed Nishine Lure Works products to be released during 2025. I was totally intrigued as Master Hiroshi went into depth explaining the actual lengthy process of his handmade meticulously crafted lures!

begin revealing his collection of 2025 Nishine Lure Works products during January. "We have a wide variety of new products we will be announcing with product availability dates throughout 2025." Master Hiroshi Nishine also informed me Nishine Lure Works will be displaying all of their 2025 new products, during the **July 15-18 ICAST Show** in Orlando, FL. "I will be showcasing one NLW Lure I have

Strolling within his workshop I witnessed the birth of his masterpieces from sketches to scaled sized drawing and actual lures. All of Hiroshi's lures are hand crafted wooden models, then transformed to precision balanced molded plastic for his on the water testing. "I spend many hours personally testing, fine tuning each bait on the water, then I test allowing the fish to tell me if the bait is realistic in every

way in their forage world." Adding, "I never release a Nishine Lure Works bait until I'm totally satisfied it will catch fish and make the angler very happy!"

It appears many lure manufactures will be catering to 'Finesse Techniques' in 2025. Nishine Lure Works has several of their own additions. "Our very popular SmeltHead

bladed jighead, inspired me to design a smaller 1/16 oz. size #1 hook. Expected date for availability online is **April 2025**. We will also be adding both a 1/10 oz. and 3/16 oz. SmeltHead bladed jighead in the Fall of 2025" stated Hiroshi.

Taking me over to his test tank Hiroshi introduced me to the Saugeen 40. "The Saugeen 40 has a unique system to generate action. It is a 'Tail Drive System' the blade

Japanese Master's Workshop

on the bottom imparts a very realistic swimming action into the hard plastic body." Designed basically for trout the small minnow shape NLW Finesse Hardbait has a treble hook attached just above the tail. The Saugeen 40 is going to be a Must Have Hardbody Finesse bait for all serious Finesse anglers!

Master Hiroshi Nishine's hospitality continued as he pri-

it closely. Hiroshi politely handed me the bait and replied, "BQ Otama". That is Japanese for Tadpole. I designed as a Wake Bait, it is 3.4 inches long, weighs 2/7 oz. During the on the water testing the first day the prototype Otama had the bass going crazy. They were engulfing the bait, and

the treble hook would get caught



**NLW BQ
Otama-Tadpole
Wake Bait**
(Photo Credit:
Nishine Lure Works)

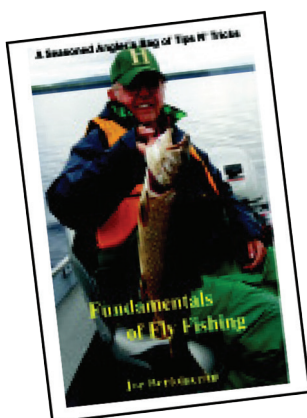
vately revealed all of his newly designed 2025 baits. Explaining while pointing out the minute design details, which caused the baits to roll side to side naturally. Sending vibrations within the underwater world, mimicking nature's forage. Hiroshi then handed me a fishing rod, replying, "This is the first rod for NLW in collaboration built by Japanese North Fork Composites. It is a Spinning 5' 11" Ultra-Light Power, designed for baits 1/16-1/4 oz., very sensitive, and available in Spring 2025."

Heading back to the test tank, Hiroshi began pitching a topwater bait. As he reeled it back the bait swam on the surface with enticing movement reminding me of a mouse! Since, I have a real passion for topwater baits, I asked if I could hold the new 2025 NLW bait and look at

in their gills. This was very bad, and I couldn't release a bait that did damage. After much consideration I changed the treble hook to a double hook size #5. This not only solved the problem with the treble hook, but it also increased the Otama's ability to be fished excellently around cover."

So, what does the "BQ" stand for? I replied. Laughing Hiroshi informed me, "Because the bass were so aggressive previously with the treble hook, I kept repeating 'Be Quiet' on every cast. Since the hook-up results with the double-hook were excellent, the movement on the surface continued to be smooth and realistic it was my way of being thankful." Thus, the BQ Otama! (Follow all of the Nishine Lure Works updates on Facebook at Hiroshi Nishine and Online at www.NishineLureWorks.com)

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Fundamentals of Fly Fishing A Seasoned Angler's Bag of Tips N' Tricks. by Joe Bertolaccini

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Hunting Elk the Maine Way

By Arthur Ward

I am a Master Maine Guide, originally from LaGrange Me. I now have a camp on Vinegar Hill in Lowell, Me. I guide a hand full of bear hunters each September. After the baiting season ends I head west to my new home in

The next morning I was again in my stand at daylight and watch some deer go by. At about 8:45 I heard a loud snap behind me and slowly turned that way to see what it was.

Upton, Wyoming where I hunt Prong Horn Antelope, elk and mule deer. I soon learned that I had a lot to learn about western hunting! After three years of unsuccessful elk hunting I decided to try hunting the Maine way.

I found an area with



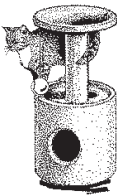
good elk sign and moved my camper into the area to stay for the fourteen days that I would be allowed to camp there. The first day I scouted for the place to set up my tree stand and had it set up at about 5:30 p.m. Having made enough noise for the day, I decided to wait until morning for

my first set. I was in the stand at first light and had a few deer visit for a couple hours. At about 9:30 a cow elk came by to my right and I decided not to shoot and hope for a bull to show up. The rest of the day was spent watching a few deer and remembering that I always tell my hunters not

to pass today something you would shoot on the last day!

The next morning I was again in my stand at

daylight and watch some deer go by. At about 8:45 I heard a loud snap behind me and slowly turned that way to see what it was. My first thought was “Wow that’s a big deer!” Then I realized it was a cow elk. She had a few elk following her and I could see one was a rag horn. As they made their way around to my right, I could see that they were going to come by me at about 120 yards so I got ready to shoot. Soon the lead cow came out with three others following in line. I looked to see if the rag horn was still following, which he was! Just then this six by six that I hadn’t seen stepped out. He dropped at the shot and two cows and the rag horn walked by him and never broke their stride!



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Vermont Ramblings

by Dennis Jensen
Vermont

I'm looking out my kitchen window on this cold, cold day and contemplating what it is I should be writing about. And then, just like that, it comes to me.

This work is for March but deadlines are deadlines and this piece is supposed to be about what the outdoors can offer us during this miserable month. But I will stray from March and talk about a stray dog and how that dog took me back to memories of another dog, long gone, but one that lives with me to this day.

Just 10 feet away from where I sit is a lump under a pretty blanket. That lump is

a stray dog that showed up in our yard only hours ago. Kathleen, my wife took the poor thing in, riddled with porcupine quills, maybe an hour ago. I had just returned from the nearby college gym where I am trying to stay in shape for the May turkey season.

Matt, our youngest son who lives just up the road, came to Kathy's assistance right off and the two of them managed to get the dog, a small breed unknown but with a pug face and pointy ears that resemble that of a pig's, inside and comfortable.

The little female blinks nervously when I pet

it. There is trauma written all over its face. The dog's ribs protrude like that of a corpse and it is clear that this little canine was probably only hours from death.

The fur around the dog's mouth is gone and I have to wonder how the critter survived *last night's*

dog's future is unknown. Kathy called the local veterinarian, told her about the dog and asked that the word go out that the sickly canine can be found at our home.

Kathy asked if I could find a leash for the dog and, after looking in the base-

the memories of him stand out above all the others.

I come from a sadly-fractured family, including a mean, racist father and a mentally ill mother and it saddens me to report that I cannot even remember the days or years that my parents passed. But I

God, how I miss that dog. Along with so many family photos in place in my study, one photo, of a jet-black dog as big as a young bear, stares back at me with nothing but peace on his face.

brutal cold, down to about 8 above zero. The dog appears to be an old one but that could be because she is in such poor condition.

Where this is all going is anyone's guess but we shall see. Kathy put the information about the dog, as well as a photo, on Facebook. At this point, the

ment I found three leashes of long-ago dogs, including the one that belonged to my old friend, The Bear.

So now I am grieving again because, despite the many years of dogs in my family as a kid growing up and the three dogs we had in our family over the past five decades, The Bear and

can remember, well, the day that The Bear died. I shot a turkey that morning, on *May 15*, 1995, and upon returning home Kathleen told me that The Bear was nowhere to be found.

I searched our property, then went up and down all roads to see if, perhaps, The Bear had been struck down by a vehicle. Finally, hours later, I found my old friend in a fallen-down pen where we once raised pigs years earlier just off our vegetable garden.

My guess is that our 10-year-old, part Newfoundland and St. Bernard, had passed of old age. We are approaching 30 years since The Bear died and I still can see him. Like, on those dark nights returning home from my newspaper job at about 2 a.m. and parking the truck down near the road and then, without any warning, The Bear would side up to me, in the black of night and joyfully rub his enormous side up against my leg. Yeah, he was thrilled to see me but the first couple of times that happened I almost passed out.

We heated exclusively with wood in those years of struggling to get by and, (Best Dog cont. pg 56)

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(See pg 47)



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Of Syrup and Snowshoes

March is a transition month in Vermont, better known for maple sugaring than for hunting or fishing. A visit to a sugar house for a taste of new maple syrup and a raised doughnut when sweet smelling steam is rising from the pan is never to be forgotten.

senses and can be a real challenge to hunt. Hunting the wild canids is a test of wits, yours against theirs. Those hunters who learn the ropes often get hooked and consider coyotes their favorite quarry.

The end of the rabbit hunting season does not

bass through March 15 on most lakes. There is generally plenty of ice the first part of the month and much more daylight to enjoy.

The second half of the month one has to be careful to check the depth of the ice and its consistency. Warm weather, sunny days

One thing I am sure of is that steam will rise from sugar houses all over the state and delicious maple syrup will be made. Most sugar makers welcome visitors and I urge those who have the time to do so, perhaps after a day on the ice or in the woods.

Avid rabbit hunters will be out with their beagles pursuing snowshoe hare until the season ends March 9. The melodious barking of beagles bounding after a fleeing snowshoe is music to the ears of many a hunter.

It is always a challenge to get in front of the hare who often runs in large circles attempting to elude the dogs. Shots have to be quick and accurate if one is to bring home the game.

Coyotes are legal year round and March is a good time to set up before dawn or dusk. Some of my friends use bait quite successfully while others rely on calling. Either way, stealth and camouflage are a must.

Coyotes have keen

mean you need to put away the shotgun. Crow hunting is a good way to practice your wing shooting. The autumn waterfowl and upland bird seasons have been over for months and it will be many more before they reopen. Good shooting takes practice and crow hunting provides an opportunity to hone our skills.

The 2025 season is Friday through Monday only, January 17-April 11. No hunting is allowed Tuesday through Thursday.

Camouflage is a must and an owl decoy a big help. Most farmers welcome crow hunters as they consider the big black birds a nuisance and a destroyer of freshly planted corn.

Ice anglers can still fish for trout, salmon and

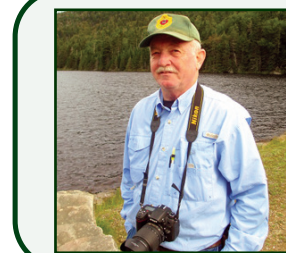
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and inflows to the lakes and ponds often make for unsafe conditions.

If you do find good ice, you are likely to have plenty of action. Late March is when I concentrate on perch and often can fill a bucket while getting some much needed sun and fresh air. A meal of freshly caught perch is a nice reward for a few hours on the ice. I always freeze any extra perch I catch for cooking later in the year.

A warm March day is also a good time to do



Outdoors In Vermont

**by Gary W. Moore,
Bradford, VT**

some exploring to see how the deer have faired. I don my snowshoes or cross country skis depending on the conditions and terrain and move silently through the woods, always vigilant for movement.

When you do see deer, swing wide around them to avoid forcing them to run and use up dwindling fat reserves. Often, I will back-track a bit and then begin to work my way around.

Late March is a good time to look for sheds as the snow begins to melt. Those you don't find will soon be gnawed on by squirrels, mice, porcupines and other critters. Nature recycles well.

One thing I am sure of is that steam will rise from sugar houses all over the state and delicious maple syrup will be made. Most sugar makers welcome visitors and I urge those who have the time to do so, perhaps after a day on

the ice or in the woods. You will gain an understanding of why the amber liquid is so expensive.

Syndicated columnist Gary W. Moore is a life long resident of Vermont and a former Commissioner of Fish and Game. His latest book, Four Season in Vermont, is available at many bookstores and sporting goods shops or from him directly. He may be reached by e-mail at gw-moore1946@icloud.com or at Box 454, Bradford, VT 05033.

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Maple Country Outdoors

by Ben Wilcox,
Essex, VT

Go Time in the Sugarbush

As predicted, we began tapping the day after Christmas and made syrup on the first day of 2025. We processed 24,000 gallons of very low sugar sap and made 100 gallons of syrup. This first run was super valuable as we discovered

traditional sugaring season of March and April, I'm reminded of how often people ask "how do you think the season will turn out?" The only true answer is "I'll let you know when the season's over". There are too many variables that

what makes it so exciting. In sugaring we have 30-45 days to make the entire crop, and therefore the paychecks of our families and employees families. Losing a single day can cost us tens of thousands of dollars, and once its gone, you cannot get it back. For this reason we have almost two of everything. Redun-

are among the many screw ups that can cost a lot of money. Everyone at the sugarhouse has heard me say, "we work way too hard to dump it all on the ground!"

When the weather is

every boil. I've never been so sleep deprived in my life! Thankfully we have upgraded equipment and technology allowing us to usually finish up boiling somewhere between 8 to midnight, but that doesn't

Day to day in the heart of sugaring season is always a true roller coaster. The intensity of the season are what I love. Some call it extremely stressful, and there certainly are times when stress levels are through the roof, but thats what makes it so exciting.

that two sap pumps and a vacuum pump needed to be repaired or replaced. We were also out of dark robust grade syrup for our customers so making 100 gallons and knowing we have 250 more gallons in the evaporator, ensures we will have a good supply of dark, the most difficult grade for us to make.

Looking towards the

need to line up correctly to have an above average sugaring season that it is impossible to predict.

Day to day in the heart of sugaring season is always a true roller coaster. The intensity of the season are what I love. Some call it extremely stressful, and there certainly are times when stress levels are through the roof, but thats

dancy and back up equipment is key so that when something breaks like a reverse osmosis machine or pump we can swap them out and keep processing sap. There is also a mental side to keeping production up. Remembering, when you are sleep deprived and run down, to close the right valves, or drain lines and pumps when things freeze



Boiling on a March day.

above freezing its go time 24 hours a day. The easiest seasons are the ones where it warms up for 3-4 days then freezes up for a few, giving us some time to sleep and recover in between runs. Of course this is rarely the case. One season we boiled 43 out of 45 days, and with the older equipment we had at the time, we finished up between 12 and 4 AM

mean the day is over if the sap is still running.

A typical day during sugaring season starts with immediately checking tank level, and vacuum level sensors as well as cameras from my phone. Making my way up to the sugarhouse and checking that sap is running as it should, I then check the two pump houses, which are addi-

(Sugarbush cont. pg 51)

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Sugarbush

(Cont. from pg 50)

tional collection points in the sugarbush that hold sap from the trees that cannot flow on gravity to the sugarhouse. I then pump the sap that ran overnight back to the sugarhouse. It's then time for someone to start one or both reverse osmosis machines to take the sap from 1-2% sugar to 20-24% sugar. This creates space in the 40,000 gallons of sap storage tanks to hold the sap that runs throughout the day, and greatly reduces out boiling time. At the same time, the evaporator needs about 2-3 hours of

cleaning and maintenance to be ready to boil. We then head into the woods to repair leaks in the tubing system. These pop up every day of the season and reduce our sap yield so every leak is hunted down until found.

At some point during the afternoon we are ready to boil. On an average day we make about 500-600 gallons of syrup. Big days

are over 1000 gallons. If the sap is still running overnight I'll set my alarm for every two hours and monitor vacuum and sap flow from my phone, hoping nothing happens that I need to head back in the middle of the night. On the biggest runs I'll stay at the sugarhouse to swap over tanks, pump sap and run the Reverse Osmosis machines. This will go

on everyday the sap runs until the season wraps up in April. We then get all the taps pulled from the trees over the course of 2-3 weeks and I roll right into guiding fly fishers!



Ben Wilcox is owner of Maple Country Anglers, located in Northwest Vermont. He was a member of the USA Fly Fishing Team from 2020-2024.

He is a registered Maine Guide and graduate of the University of Maine. He also owns a large Maple Sugaring Business, Amber Ridge Maple. These occupations allow him to be in the woods or water nearly every day of the year. He can be reached at maple-countryanglers@gmail.com, or on instagram @benwilcox_maplecountr-anglers.

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Warden's Words

by Game Warden
Kale O'Leary,
Ashland, ME

In my article from two months ago, I wrote about getting back into marten and fisher trapping in the Northwoods. At the time I wrote the article, the general trapping season had several weeks remaining, but now with the traps hung up for another year, there is no better time for a

One of my favorite parts of running a trapline is looking for habitat and locating areas to make my sets. I began the season a few days after the trapping season began in early November by starting a line about 20 miles west of my home in Ashland, in the heart of the North

spots to catch fur. I set out 10 boxes the first day, often travelling 4 or 5 miles between sets searching for these ideal locations.

An ideal location for me may not catch the eye of another trapper, which is the beauty of trapping. Many trappers will make all their sets in mature softwood stands with a thick canopy cover. I, too, like these areas as they are

or draw. Marten and fisher often hunt by getting to vantage points and sight hunting down across these terrain features.

I also got very ambitious this fall and ran a line of ten boxes further north, along the Maine-

flipped from November to December, I had taken 18 marten, 5 ermine or weasel, but had not caught any fisher. Late November had brought some snowfall, and the further west I went into the woods, the deeper the snow. I decided

One of my favorite parts of running a trapline is looking for habitat and locating areas to make my sets. I began the season a few days after the trapping season began in early November by starting a line about 20 miles west of my home in Ashland, in the heart of the North Maine Woods.

quick recap of the season. Those of you who read the Northwoods Sporting Journal know that I generally focus on topics related to my job as a Game Warden, and this article is not claiming my expertise or infinite knowledge as a trapper. The intent is to share the excitement and fun of running a wilderness trapline and learning the habits of Maine mustelids.

Maine Woods. Every trapper has his own thoughts on good-looking habitat when targeting marten and fisher. For anyone not familiar with trapping, marten and fisher will frequent similar habitat as they both prey on similar species such as mice, voles, squirrels and hares. Having only 20 exclusion boxes total, I prioritized making sets in areas that I felt were prime

prime areas for marten and fisher to be living in or at least frequenting while hunting; however, I make many sets along hardwood ridges with ample amounts of "blow down" trees, stumps and other floor debris that provide lots of hunting areas for furbearers. When making these sets I often place the exclusion box along a high spot overlooking a valley



New Brunswick border from my father-in-laws camp near Glazier Lake. This was an awesome experience, trapping out of a remote off-grid camp in some beautiful country. Just like my line west of Ashland, I prioritized each set location and was off and running with 20 boxes set. For bait I used a mixture of different meat including fish, deer and grouse. I used Jeremiah Wood's "Long Distance Call" lure at each set, generally putting some lure about 6 feet off the ground and then a small amount inside the exclusion box near the bait. All 20 of my exclusion boxes are the smaller size, with 4x4 inch openings and used with conibears with a jaw spread less than 5", namely 120 and 155 sized traps.

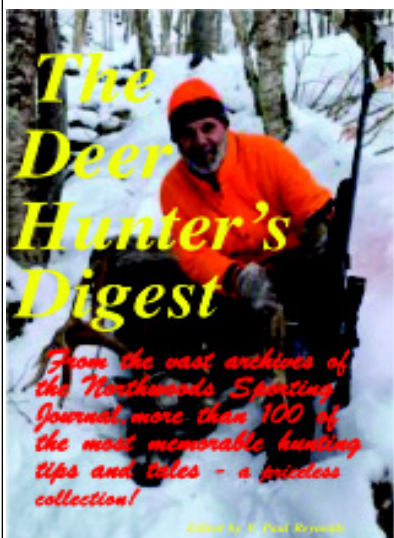
As the calendar

to pull my line near Glazier Lake during muzzleloader season and on my final tend caught 5 more marten in the 10 boxes! A 50% success rate on a check is likely something that I will never have again in my trapping career! After getting to 23 marten, I put 10 boxes away for the year, and then pulled 6 off the line closer to home, leaving 4 boxes out total. For anyone unfamiliar, Maine has a limit on marten and fisher of 25 animals per trapper. I was confident that I would be able to catch two more marten over the final two weeks of the season with just 4 boxes.

I caught one last marten before the season came to a close, ending just one marten shy of a limit. I also never caught

(Trapping cont. pg 69)

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- V. Paul Reynolds

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The Old Dog

Winslow Homer is a Labrador Retriever. He resides with my wife, Trish, and I, on twelve acres of land located in the foothills of the Kittatinny Mountains. He's been our constant companion for thirteen-and-a-half years. Old for a big dog.

First to turn white



was the black fur around his paws causing Trish to call him "Socks." His belly and rump were the next to go, followed by the fur over his eyes and around and under his jaw. A most distinguished gentleman by any standard.

We lost his "brother" earlier this year. Even when the cancer sapped his zest for life, this happy-go-lucky, bigger-than-life, lovable, pureblood, Lab's banana tail refused to droop. So, earlier this year while mourning the loss of this most special dog, we began to wonder how much longer Winslow would remain by our sides.

Trish and I have been

married for more than forty years. During that time, a number of dogs, all black Labs, have accompanied us on our adventures. Each was relegated to two meals a day, notwithstanding voracious appetites; except perhaps, on a birthday or holiday, when a dog is entitled to lick a near empty bowl of ice cream, but never a table scrap.

Winslow is the first of our many dogs to be permitted to share my breakfast — a few pieces of my buttered toast, scraps from eggs. In his fourteenth year, he now partakes in whatever dessert we may be having—a bit of crumb cake or a spoonful of pudding. He has remained trim throughout his life and so we no longer see a reason to watch his weight.

Our dogs have always had free reign of the house, spending evenings curled up on the couch between Trish and I, but at his age, Winslow can no longer climb onto the couch, spending much of his time sleeping in a bed purchased through an Orvis catalogue and set by our woodstove. Winslow has lost much of his hearing and his eyesight is not what it once was, so it's hard to

tell if the dog is addled, but for long minutes he'll stare off into space.

He was recently diagnosed with Geriatric Onset Laryngeal Paralysis Polyneuropathy (GOLPP). It is a disease of the nervous system, characterized by the slow, but progressive degeneration of some of the longer nerves in the body, resulting in partial paralysis of the larynx, esophagus, and hind limbs, a condition we were told occurs in larger dogs. The

Trish and I have been married for more than forty years. During that time, a number of dogs, all black Labs, have accompanied us on our adventures.

effect on his esophagus led to gagging, and at time vomiting of his meals while the effect on his hind quarters has been to weaken his back legs.

To reduce stress on his larynx and esophagus, we now soak his meals to soften the kibble, making it easier to go down. We also sit in a chair while holding his bowl upward so he needn't lower his head when eating. To reduce stress on his back legs, we've placed mats on the pinewood floors of our kitchen. Staring down at his familiar brow, I hold his bowl in my two hands and watch while he eagerly licks the final contents.

Soon after our little house was built, we installed an electric fence on roughly four acres of our property. The fence has kept the deer away from our gardens and allowed our dogs freedom to roam without supervision. A dirt-and-grit drive runs from the macadam road connecting our twelve acres with the rest of the world. It bends once around a small wet



Against The Current

by Bob Romano,
Rangeley, ME

area where skunk cabbage twist upward out of the damp soil and cattails grow upon unruly hillocks rising alongside a tiny rivulet. The dirt drive turns again a few yards before a metal gate in the form of a lopsided S.

An acre of hardwoods, mostly oak, maple, and poplar abuts one side of the drive. The brooklet

Since he now has difficulty climbing stairs, we've built a ramp leading to the side door of our home, lining it with felt.

Once, sometimes twice each day, Trish or I will tramp along the dirt drive outside the fence, accompanying the dog on his travels. Each time, the aging Lab stops to gaze across the marsh. Is he

flows through the marsh we call "The Swamp," slipping through the remaining seven acres of woodland as quietly as a mouse sleeping in its nest of twigs and bark.

Although we've always accompanied our dogs outside the gate, they were permitted to explore the interior four acre on their own, running up the steps to nudge the back door when they were through.

As a result of the GOLPP, Winslow's hips tend to lower when he stands in one position for too long, in silhouette appearing to be a German Shephard. To relieve the pressure and defer the loss of nerve damage and muscle tone, we encourage him to spend time outside.

staring into the future or perhaps gazing into the past? I'd like to believe neither. That like Zen Master Dogen, after all these years, Winslow Homer has attained enlightenment, freed to live in the moment, his mind as still as a summer pond at twilight, while, I, on the other hand, nowhere near enlightenment, experience only a gentle melancholy.

But then, the old dog turns slowly in my direction. We continue walking. I wait, as now and again, he sniffs this or that scent. On occasion, we take a detour into the woodlot should he wish to follow a trail left by a doe or perhaps an opossum, more likely a mouse or vole, his tail wagging with excitement.



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Digesting Deer Season: Volume V

Since 2021, the March column of Maine Tails has been dedicated to reflecting upon the prior deer season. As I noted then, "Just like a gourmet meal, a deer season requires time afterwards to properly digest; four months appears to be ample time."



The author and his 2024 buck.
(Photo courtesy of Jonah Paris.)

Sportsmen are stubborn, nostalgic, and maybe a bit irrational. We are a unique breed, as grounded in superstition and unproven theory, as we are in tradition. We stop along the river and cast into the same empty pool every trip because "it looks good." We hike the same unproductive gravel road, shotgun at the ready, and stomp through the same barren raspberry patch every bird season because "it looks good." When November finally comes and we take to the woods, we sit patiently with our rifles observing a familiar landscape because "it looks good." We imagine the possibilities; we trust our instincts. "One of these days..." we mumble to ourselves with a quiet,

unbending confidence.

During the 2023 season, I tallied over 30 hours perched on a stump overlooking an oak hillside because "it looked good." Under a nearby beech branch, I constructed a mock scrape and hung a trail camera. By the second week of

November 2023, the scrape had attracted several bucks. Despite virtually no deer sightings from my stump, I positioned a tree stand at the same location prior to the start of the 2024 season. I also recreated my scrape in the same spot.

Heavy rain was expected to fall through the night and into the morning of November 5th. I saw the forecast as an excuse to sleep in. When I awoke to the sun shining through the window, I felt more than a twinge of guilt. Always one to embark on an outdoors adventure at some ungodly hour, strolling into the woods at noon, especially for my first sit of the season, felt strange.

The ground was wet and the air temperature

hovered in the mid-50's, unseasonably warm for deer season in Maine. Legal shooting ended at 4:47 PM, so I prepared for a nearly five hour sit. The wind was supposedly a steady southwest, but I could feel the breeze against the back of my neck. A short while later, the wind was blowing into my right cheek, then directly into my face.

Though most of the leaves had fallen from the October winds, a few deter-

The buck stepped between two trees and paused in my shooting lane. I had been tracking him through the firs, and already had the crosshairs in position. I squeezed the trigger.

mined ones remained, producing a frequent soft rattle. With warm rays beaming down, I soon caught myself drowsily planning the next day's hunt, comforted by the promise of more time in the woods. I rummaged through my pack and located a bag of Haribo Goldbears; gummy bears are a proven antidote for when a hunter's attention starts to drift. The hours passed and the bears disappeared. Deer hunters have an innate sweet tooth.

Typically, as the sun prepares to set, the woods undergo an abrupt transformation. The wind dies off and the incessant chatter of daytime critters is sud-

denly hushed. However, on this particular evening, the woods never settled into a trance. Around 4:15 p.m., I heard faint pressure on leaves, but never the orchestrated four-step. I was surprised when a lone doe appeared at the bottom of the hill. Having drawn and purchased an antlerless permit, I raised my rifle and found the doe in the

scope. But it was the time of day when distance becomes distorted and shadows erase small twigs and branches that were visible only moments before.

Initially, she seemed to be transiting. But when the doe appeared closer, I realized she was seeking out her favorite oak tree. She had her head down eating acorns when I heard a branch break somewhere off to my right. At the sound, I looked away from the doe. When I turned back towards her, she had vanished. I lowered my gun. Seconds later, I heard another rustle and caught peripheral movement. I slowly rotated my head to

the right.

The first thing I noticed was his tall rack. He would smell the air, lower his head to the ground, smell, and take a few more steps. Initially, there was no shot opportunity. The buck was in position to walk directly underneath my stand and across the ridge without ever turning broadside. I was fully

prepared to let him walk if he continued on his current path. Less than 150 yards away, a dark, wet swamp guarded by a web of alders constantly threatened the afternoon hunter. The swamp is a nightmare of deer habitat, nearly impenetrable to two-legged creatures. If a wounded deer entered the swamp at this hour, I was not going to find it. With the forecast calling for a drizzly 50 degree night, and a record shattering 75 degree afternoon predicted for the following day, a wounded deer would be a rotted deer.

Instead, the buck started down the hill in (Season cont.pg 66)



Maine Tails

**By Jonah Paris,
Scarborough, ME**



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March Question Of The Month

Who Pays for Deer Yard Purchases?

By V. Paul Reynolds

When the Maine 130th State Legislature enacted a law to set up a fund to underwrite the cost of purchasing deer wintering areas by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W), not a lot was said about exactly where the money would come from. The law is called An Act to

taxpayer, but by deer hunters themselves!

That's right. In fact, MDIF&W recently in a press release said "Thank you" to all deer hunters who support the deer management fund by simply purchasing antlerless deer hunting permits each year.

The Department writes: "Looking back at

permit.

- Rangeley WMA — 708 Acres, funded with Pittman Robertson (PR) and Deer Management Funds
- Caribou Stream

funded with PR, LMF, and Deer Management Funds

These protected deer yards also protect more than just deer, too. As the Department points out,

liance of Maine (SAM) played a key, pivotal role in the creation and passage of the law that establishes deer-yard acquisitions and protection. When lobbying for the new law, SAM noted in its testimony that at one time deer wintering areas (DWAs) comprised about 10 percent of Maine forestland. Today that figure hovers between three and four per cent!

In its press release thanking hunters, MDIF&W observed that hunters foremost ARE the wildlife conservationists. This is an accurate refrain and one underscored often by SAM as well. Regrettably this is a point either ignored or seldom acknowledged by our state's anti-hunting element.

In its press release thanking hunters, MDIF&W observed that hunters foremost ARE the wildlife conservationists. This is an accurate refrain and one underscored often by SAM as well.

Preserve Deer Habitat. It is Public Law 409. According to MDIF&W, this deer management fund allocates \$1.2 million a year for deer yard acquisitions.

Currently, MDIF&W owns and manages about 10,000 acres of deer wintering areas in Maine.

Where does the money come from? Some of it is provided by the Land for Maine Future's Fund and from Pittman-Robertson, which is money generated by national excise taxes on hunting equipment. However, the brunt of these funds to acquire and manage deer wintering areas is generated, not by the state

the 2024 hunting seasons, we're thankful for deer hunters and their important role as wildlife conservationists. Since 2022, \$12 from each antlerless deer hunting permit is deposited into the Maine Deer Management Fund, with the \$2 agent fee covering administrative costs. These funds have helped acquire and manage over 10,000 acres of critical deer wintering habitat in Maine! "

Here are some of the recent deer-yard acquisitions by MDIF&W that were purchased for protection in perpetuity thanks to deer hunters who lay our \$12.00 for any any deer



Currently, MDIF&W owns and manages about 10,000 acres of deer wintering areas in Maine.

WMA — 1,105 acres, funded with PR, Land for Maine's Future (LMF) and Deer Management Funds

- Lexington Deer Wintering Area — 1,490 acres, funded with Pittman Robertson (PR), Land for Maine's Future (LMF) and Deer Management Funds
- Macwahoc Stream

WMA — 6,326 acres,

"These lands provide habitat for a variety of species including a wide diversity of birds and waterfowl, wildlife including bobcat, fisher, marten and others; and several of these new WMAs also have waters that include brook trout, landlocked salmon and other species."

The Sportsman's Al-

The author is editor of the Northwoods Sporting Journal. He is also a Maine Guide and host of a weekly radio program "Maine Outdoors" heard Sundays at 7 p.m. on The Voice of Maine News-Talk Network. He has authored three books. Online purchase information is available at www.sportingjournal.com

Best Dog

(Cont. from pg 48)

early on, that dog could never spend the night in our house. No matter how cold it got and I'm talking night after night of below zero weather, The Bear slept outside.

He loved me and I loved him. He was loyal, he let the kids who attended my wife's pre-school get on his back and ride. I don't remember The Bear ever growling at anyone of our many visitors but he was on the watch night after night and I can only imagine anyone who would be

foolish enough to try get through that front door in the middle of the night.

God, how I miss that dog. Along with so many family photos in place in my study, one photo, of a jet-black dog as big as a young bear, stares back at me with nothing but peace on his face. That photo-

graph sits directly in my line of sight, if I happen to look out the window.

There's more but I will put an end to this. My head hurts from the memories and there is another dog for us to consider. I don't know where this is going but, if I know Kathleen (and I told her after we

lost our last dog to old age that we are done with dogs. Yeah, as if I rule this place), we just might have a new member to the household.

Dennis Jensen is a freelance writer who lives in Vermont.

The Big One

On January 31 I had a heart attack. I was actually on my way to the Ford garage for the yearly inspection on the F-150 when I felt the pressure build in my chest. It eventually subsided but when it returned at the garage and I broke out in a cold sweat I knew I was in trouble. I managed to drive myself to the hospital and the good folks SMHC in Biddeford and eventually the new cardiac wing at Maine Med in Portland took over from there.

As it probably did for everyone who has experienced “the big one,” the attack hit me by surprise because no one in my im-

mediate family from my grandparents on down has died of a heart attack. The Big C is what takes us, plus I’ve always been active outdoors, tried to eat right and don’t smoke, but I guess 71 years of living catches up with you.

To say the least a

granted would not go on forever and would end at some point ,but I just never thought about it. I was enjoying life and living too much to give it any thought, but a heart attack reminds you in a hurry of your mortality, how quick it can all end, how precious

I don’t mean or want to get overly philosophical here, it is what it is. I had and survived a heart attack. I’m one of the lucky ones and for now life goes on. A life that has and will change in some ways, some good, some bad...

heart attack put things in a whole new perspective. I’ve never been one to think or worry about death, knowing somewhere in the deep recesses of my brain this life we often take for

every minute of every day is.

I don’t mean or want to get overly philosophical here, it is what it is. I had and survived a heart attack. I’m one of the lucky



Muzzleloading Afield
by Al Raychard,
Lyman, ME

ones and for now life goes on. A life that has and will change in some ways, some good, some bad, a life more closely monitored and supported by more meds than I

slow down and enjoy life more, that I’ll spend more time with a fly rod in my hand, or a muzzleloader, or bow; spend more time with the family and friends or just enjoying the simple things that make life, life. Here’s to hoping I have the chance.



Al Raychard and his wife Diane live on 43+/- acres in Lyman, Maine that offers good deer and turkey hunting opportunities they both enjoy.. Al can be reached at alraychard@sacoriver.net

Bird Dog Foundation Inducts Maine Couple



Cary and Barbara spent over two decades training dogs, participating in field trials, organizing trials and eventually, judging trials.

On November 19, 2024, Cary and Barbara Haupt, residents of Tenants Harbor and Rockland were notified that they were to be inducted into the

National Cocker Spaniel Field Trial Hall of Fame in Grand Junction, TN. The induction ceremony took place February 8, 2025 at 505 W. Highway 57, Grand

Junction, TN.

Cary and Barbara spent over two decades training dogs, participating in field trials, organizing trials and eventually, judging trials. They were instrumental in establishing and growing the Maine

Spaniel Field Trial Club, mentoring many people in Maine and the Northeast on the benefits, value and joy of a well-trained field bred English Cocker.

Among their awards include :Certificate of Merit, National Cocker Cham-

pionships, 2009, awarded to “Sunny”, trained by Cary Haupt. Harold Bixby Awards Award to Barbara Haupt, 2010.



Contact – Kevin LaBree, kjlabree@yahoo.com

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Everything Maine

by Greg Burr
Addison, ME

I remember years ago speaking to one of the regional wildlife biologists who was tasked with managing the Downeast region. His area included the offshore islands from Stonington to Passamaquoddy Bay. He was frustrated with the provincialism and politics being played surrounding the need to establish deer seasons on several of the

allow the public to participate. This of course was selfishness raising its ugly head yet again in our society. Once he explained the situation to me, he rolled his eyes and shook his head and said, "I wish I didn't have to deal with these islands." My response as the regional fisheries biologist for the area was to smile and say, "welcome to my

say that trying to move forward fair and equitable fisheries management on each and every water in the Downeast region was a battle. The balance was always trying to apply Maine values and our traditions on the waters where Mainers were clashing with incoming cultures. This is nothing new. For eons thorough out history, one culture would come along

**He said, We don't know. I said, you don't know.
He said, that's right we don't know, and we have to
guard against what we don't know.**

islands that had long standing communities that were being plagued with an over population of deer. Some of the residents of the islands put the call out to the state to help with their deer problem and subsequent Lyme disease issues.

Others on the islands wanted the communities to take care of the problem on their own by having a residents and friends of residents only hunt and not

world." He said, "you deal with lakes and ponds, what would you know about dealing with the politics of islands?" My retort was, "What do you think inland lakes and ponds are? They are just isolated inland islands on the landscape, each with their own politics and issues." He said, "I never thought of it that way, but I guess you're right."

So, in that light, I will

and gobble up another or bend the old culture to the will of a different one. This phenomenon is neither, fair, kind, or just. We Mainers are seeing it everyday as our traditional culture of hunting, fishing, and gathering is being attacked. This is being accomplished in a number of different ways. One of the ways is to control the landscape or the access to it. As the old saying goes "control land, control the culture."

As I say, I ran into this situation many times throughout my career. One of the fights was at Jordan Pond on Mount Desert Island. For years local anglers on the Island tried to persuade Acadia National Park officials to fix the boat launch at Jordan Pond in Seal Harbor. The launch is gravelly, rocky, and bouldery, making it very difficult for the average vehicle to back a trailered motorboat into the water for fishing.

The pond has terrific landlocked salmon and



lake trout fisheries. The pond is ringed with a shore front hiking path with iconic views of the Bubbles and Jordan Mountains. The

path is used by thousands of visitors each year. The Park's vision for the pond was to keep it relatively (Pond cont. pg 65)



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The Budworm is Back!

History tends to repeat itself, and the infestation of the Spruce Budworm is no exception. Those of us who have spent the last 50 years working and playing in the North Maine Woods remember the old budworm days of the 70's & 80's. It destroyed more than 7 million acres of spruce and fir, and the forest products industry lost millions of dollars. Today, the budworm is back in town!



Spruce Budworm in destructive feed larvae stage.

Spruce Budworm is one of the most damaging forest pests in North America. Larvae feed on the buds and needles of host trees, which, left untreated, will kill the tree. The mortality rate can be 30-66% of spruce trees and 84-97% of fir. As the infestation has spread in Canada, New Brunswick has taken an approach called the Early Intervention Strategy (EIS). This approach is rooted in early detection of population increases through intensive monitoring of the Spruce Budworm population, before it begins to feed. This allows for early detection and intervention. With early targeted treatment in these areas, populations have decreased by 60-80% before becoming an outbreak. Maine will take a similar approach, as it has shown to be the most effective in preventing large-scale tree mortality, and requires the least use of pesticide relative to other control strategies.

Beginning in May

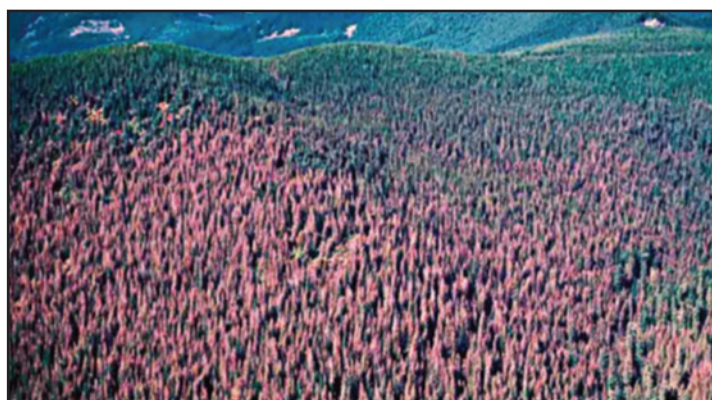
2025, landowners will treat approximately 250,000 acres with a targeted spray program aimed at specific high-infestation areas. Much of this acreage will be in the North Maine Woods. This is a \$15 million project for 2025 alone but will counter a potential \$794 million loss to the largest natural resource industry in Maine. Without early intervention, Maine could suffer a loss of 3,865 jobs, or about 12% of the industry.

If you are reading this

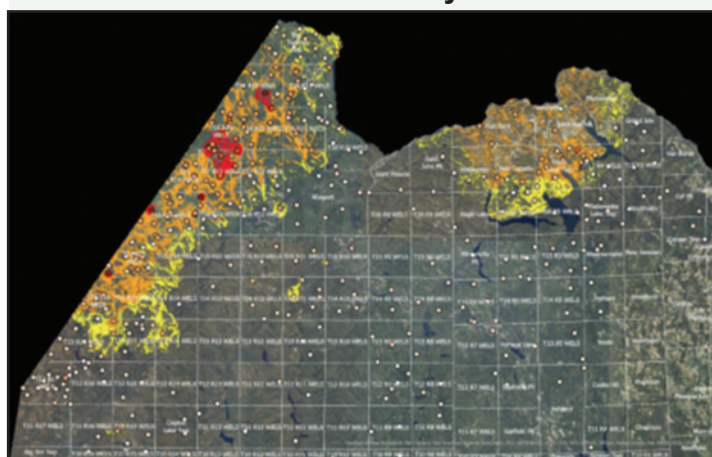
article, chances are good that you either make a living in the woods or have a passion for recreating there. You may take part in hunting, fishing, viewing wildlife, or just plain enjoy being outside. None of this would be taking place, if it were not for landowners supporting public access to

Beginning in May 2025, landowners will treat approximately 250,000 acres with a targeted spray program aimed at specific high-infestation areas. Much of this acreage will be in the North Maine Woods.

their land. Please join me in showing some gratitude by



Effects of Spruce Budworm defoliation and tree mortality.



Map showing overwintering population of Spruce budworm based on 2024/2025 samples. Updates can be found at maineforest.org/spruce-budworm/

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North Maine Woods

by **Bill Greaves**
Ashland, ME

supporting these landowners in their effort to combat this destructive insect early, before the population can reach an unmanageable size.

With application in

The window for spraying in the North Maine Woods is during the last two weeks of May and the first two weeks of June. The exact timing is weather dependent, and of course depen-

May and early June, impacts to recreation should be minimal, but you may find that some areas are temporarily closed to access to facilitate the spray application. The pesticide is highly targeted to these insects, so any such areas will be reopened within a day. Please be patient and check on campsite and accessibility before driving in.

Having said that, the intent of this article is to provide preliminary information to help you plan for next summer's activities.

dent on the development of the Spruce Budworm. The potential coverage area in the North Maine Woods is from Daaquam to Escourt, and from the Quebec border to the St. John River. During the treatment period, public access will be restricted. Signs will be in place and there will be people monitoring all activity. Please keep yourself, your family, and any friends safe by not entering the restricted area during this short time frame.

(Budworm cont. pg 67)

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Maine Outdoor Adventure by Rich Yvon, Bradford, ME

Here we are in midst of a great ice fishing season. Our winter, an El Niña year, has certainly been no disappointment like the last few years. Simply put, an El Niña year is a winter colder than normal. Episodes of El Niño and La Niña typically last nine to 12 months but can sometimes last for years. El Niño and La Niña events occur

Safety, first and foremost. Checking ice and having the proper safety gear is critical. Some essential safety gear are...

- * Ice pics around neck
- * PFD – Personal floatation device or better yet a floatation suite.
- * Spud Bar – to check ice as you go.
- * Fishing Buddy – never ice fish alone.

Our jet stream pattern has proven how the country can certainly be much colder than a typical year. Below are some tips, that may help you get the most of our short, hard water, season...

every two to seven years, on average, but they don't occur on a regular schedule. Generally, El Niño occurs more frequently than La Niña.

Our jet stream pattern has proven how the country can certainly be much colder than a typical year. Below are some tips, that may help you get the most of our short, hard water, season...

* Always let loved ones know where, when, and what time you will return.

Note - White—or snow—ice is about half as strong as new clear ice. Double the below thicknesses guidelines if you are traveling on white ice. Also, river ice is approximately 15% less strong as new clear ice.*

Learning the water you intend to fish will not

only keep you safe, but will also help in fishing key spots that may produce fish. Using a contour map, topo map, and google maps, are a great way to learn a lake. Fishing near inlets, humps, and drop offs, tend to be key fishing areas.

Trap fishing is a fun way to cover distance and varying water depth.

Fishing big glacial lakes always have the potential of hooking into extremely large fish. Lake

On a bright day, sunglasses will help see those flags!

Jig fishing is very productive giving a live flashy action in the water for weary fish. Using a proven lure such as a Swedish Pimple by Bay de Noc, will certainly get you into some fast action. A great all around set up, is using a medium heavy jib rod, and 10 # test ice fishing line will work nicely on all inland species. An old school sounding weight can give you an idea how deep your water column is. Knowing your depth, will help in setting your traps with the proper depth. What is the proper depth? That would depend on your target species. Targeting salmon requires shallow set traps, while Lake trout are typically found in deeper water on edges of underwater drop offs. Getting a lake depth map and knowing your lake will help you become more successful in ice fishing.

Checking the Ice

You are about to step out onto the ice, but you see no signs of previous activity, now what? The only way to check the ice is to make test holes with your auger or spud bar. Keep in mind that the shoreline

typically freezes first on a lake or pond. So, ice can get thinner as you venture away from shore. Study the ice color, clarity, and conditions.

In March, as ice melts, the shoreline will open first, presenting a dangerous exit for anglers. Picking shoreline to exit lake that is shaded the entire day, will help reduce the risk of being stuck on the ice or worst, falling through. Getting to know the lake such as springs, inlets, outlets are important. Being aware of ice pressure ridges is always critical. Avoiding ridges is important in preventing falling between ridges or driving into one, on a snowmobile.

An approximate guide for blue, black, or clear ice only

- * 2" or less stay off ice
- * 4" Ice Fishing/Ice Skating
- * 5" Snowmobile or ATV
- * 8"-12" Small Car or Pick Up
- * 12"-15" Medium sized Truck

Check out your waters regulations, get to know your hard water, and stay safe!



Rich is a full time Registered Master Maine Master Guide. He owns and operates Twin Maple Outdoors guide service and sporting lodge located in Bradford, Maine. He is a "Certified Yamaha G3 Guide" that runs fly and spin fishing trips with a G3 Jet boat and Stealthcraft drift boat. Rich also guides Maine Partridge, Turkey, Moose, Deer hunting and recreation adventures.

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Getting Away From It All

Our woods and waters pursuits, when you put them under a microscope, are much more than hobbies, pastimes, or just plain fun. They are respites from a world which increasingly looks to be coming off the rails. Even some of my most reclusive friends are not immune from the news. It reaches them if they have a phone. It comes in over their TV sets. Even if they're locked into the old-school world of

radio, they cannot help but hear of horrors and tragedies on a scale outsized from anything they've known in their lives.

So, you're hurriedly packing up the gear for a day on the ice when the TV in the background blares the latest breaking news: a school shooting somewhere in heartland America has taken the lives of four children and wounded a dozen more including teachers. You aren't out the door yet when you learn that the death toll in Gaza is topping 47,000, mostly civilians, including women and children, and those left are sick, starving, or both. Then this little tidbit: A five-story apartment building was blown up because a militant was spotted on the

roof. 92 dead. You slam the door behind you. You've got breaking news fatigue.

Just seeing the flags sticking up out of the pack basket in the truck bed makes you feel better. Today, you're going to try out your brand new propane ice augur. Yep...all you've



gotta do is screw in a propane canister just like you would for your outdoor grill, and you're good to go. But now you make the regrettable mistake of turning on the truck radio...

Will the stock market go into a death spiral following U.S. tariffs imposed on our allies? And will the price of eggs and gas, two big reasons for voting the way you did in November, go in the opposite direction? Your head is spinning. For godsake, turn the radio off! Pull into the Irving for a cup of coffee. Top off the snowmobile tank and check the brace locking down the skis. It's 4 degrees out but the wind is down. You brought the Eskimo pop-up shack anyway, so you'll be toasty in

there with your propane space heater.

While the gas pump is chugging away, your phone lets out its Notifications beep. It's the News Feed. You try not to look, but Elon Musk, who received a government appointment from the President, is moving into the Eisenhower building adjacent to the

While the gas pump is chugging away, your phone lets out its Notifications beep. It's the News Feed. You try not to look...

White House. He is cutting wasteful spending big time, but he's also been given access to the U.S. Treasury's payment system which can reveal your social security number and other information about you. Before you can figure out how you feel about that, you quickly turn off Notifications and jam the phone back into your pocket.

The snow on the lake is moguled from recent high winds. It means that as you get under way towing your heavy tote sled you've got to go slow—very slow—or half your gear will bounce out of

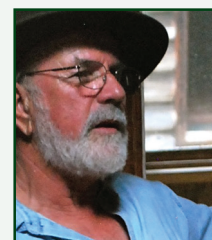
the sled. Thank God for goggles and heated handle bars! The good news is that no one's out here yet. You've got your pick of hotspots. But first, you'll set up the Eskimo right off that rock shoal where you jigged up a 13 lb togue last

winter.

All set! Three tip-ups are in, two with dead suckers hovering just off bottom in 60 feet of water, and one with a smelt just under the ice off that point where you're almost sure to catch a salmon. The stove is on and your little hut is warm. You cut off the tail end of a dead baitfish, hook it onto a lead fish jig and find bottom. Thoughts of the world outside your shack have all but vanished when you hear the drone of a snowmobile engine approaching. You open the flap to see the same guy you met out here last year.

The Singing Maine Guide

by Randy Spencer,
Grand Lake Stream, ME



"You hear the news?" he asks after you invite him in and offer him a stool. "I hope not," you reply. "Yep, we're gonna have a new vacation destination—the Gaza Strip!" He sees you looking at him likes he's nuts, so he laughs and goes on. "We're taking ownership of it to turn it into the Middle East Riviera. Hotels, beaches, casinos, boardwalks...spring breakers getting cheap flights to and from...it'll be awesome!" You hold back your laughter because you're not sure if he's kidding. Then he shows you his News Feed. "Shut that thing off!" you retort. "I'm out here to escape all that."

And you almost did.



Randy Spencer is a working guide and author. All of his award-winning books are available on Amazon and all songs from his six albums are available on major streaming services. Reach Randy at randy31@earthlink.net or www.randy-spencer.com

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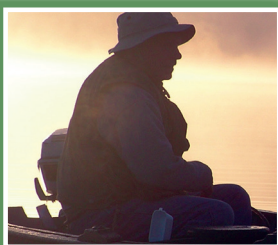
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Cracker Barrel

by Homer Spit



In a lifetime of fishing, I have never been drawn to the dream of trophy fish. That is to say, big fish still impress me but I'm not driven by the need to conquer big fish. I figure that if it happens, it happens. In Alaska a few years ago, I caught a 63-pound King salmon on the famous Kenai River.

I'd sooner catch a dozen small brookies on a #16 dry fly than one lunker brookie lured off the bottom by a bead head nymph.

What about you? We anglers seem to be of two different schools of endeavor: quality versus quantity.

Outdoor writer Lamar Underwood probably

backing as it rests beneath the colorful coils of fly line. The tight band of braided line arouses deep and irresistible passions in the fly-fishing faithful. Here are 250 yards of emphatic reminder of the possibilities of sizzling big-fish runs that await the skillful angler."

Underwood may be right. Perhaps those of us who settle for small fish just need to have our appetites whetted. Honestly, now, how many times in all

Into the Backing

tion for the first time more than 20 years ago on New Brunswick's Upsalquitch River. An 18-pound Atlantic salmon sucked down my Rusty Rat and made a wild dash downriver with my fly line and most of the backing. "Chase the fish, b'ye! Chase the fish," yelled the guide.

Two decades later, that same old backing had a chance to unwind in the waters of Labrador's fabled

big pike cruise the shallow river backwaters and like to hang out near the big rocks and overhanging arctic willows.

It was a still, bright day by Labrador standards. Even the incessant bugs were on lunch break. I eased the square-stern canoe onto a ledge island near the pike hole and began casting from shore. The big white popping bug made a couple of glubs

It's ironic, too, because most fly reels were made to sing. In all its years of holding line and backing for my Sage 9-weight rod, my old Medalist reel has wound down to the backing only twice.

My guide broke his net getting that monster in the boat. Catching a fish like that is an experience not soon forgotten. Your arms get tired. And once a fish of this size is in the well and the photo is taken, you are slack-jawed by it all. Looking back, though, the fight itself was more akin to raising a 50-gallon oil drum off the river bottom. A small landlocked salmon on a 5-weight rod put up a bigger tussle.

In fact, given a choice

would roll his eyes at my attitude. "If you call yourself an angler," he would sneer, "and you profess not to care about big fish, it is just because you haven't caught many big fish." Underwood contends that all of us who fly-fish pray for that ultimate moment and the sound of a shrieking reel as a big fish takes out all our fly line and then tears into the backing. He writes: "Seen from a side angle, most fly reels offer a teasing partial view of the

of your fly-fishing experiences have you had a fish take you into the backing? Unless you are a veteran Atlantic salmon angler or bonefish buff, your backing -- like mine -- only sees the light of day during periods of line dressing.

It's ironic, too, because most fly reels were made to sing. In all its years of holding line and backing for my Sage 9-weight rod, my old Medalist reel has wound down to the backing only twice. It saw ac-



Atikonak River. A world-class fly fishing water for brookies and a variety of fish, large northern pike make for fast midday action on days when the trout aren't cooperating.

At the suggestion of the camps' head guide, Wilson Lawrence, I used my lunch hour to cast big popping bugs over a so-called "p'yke hole" not far from the lodge. These

as I stripped in line and then the water exploded. POW! A toothy 14-pounder smashed the bug. Inexperienced in the aggressive ways of pike, I thought at first that a beaver or other large furbearer had grabbed my offering. But then I saw this fish's shark-like silhouette turn under the surface. The battle began.

(Backing cont. pg 67)

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Dipping Smelts

By Matt LaRoche

Smelting is one of the rites of spring for many diehard outdoorsmen and women. I certainly enjoy getting out there and dipping a few of the silvery beauties each spring. Dipping smelts is not for the faint of heart, because often the trip turns out to be waiting beside the brook for a couple hours with the harvest of only a handful of smelts to take home. Last year, I hit the smelt run just right and was able to dip two quarts in about an hour. It was truly a fun time!

There are two types of smelt commonly sought by the sporting community. Sea run smelt, that grow to maturity in the ocean and run up freshwater streams to spawn. These are usually caught by hook and line, in a shanty along the tidal sections of rivers and streams. The second type of smelt and focus of this article, is the landlocked smelt- commonly called the rainbow smelt.

The rainbow smelt grows to maturity in freshwater lakes and ascend tributaries to spawn in the spring. The spawning run

can last from a couple days, to a couple weeks, depending on the water body. Peak activity typically only lasts for a few days to a week. Usually, the bigger the lake, the heavier and longer the smelt run. It has been my experience that the smelt run occurs at or just before ice out in the lakes of northern Maine.

I can still remember the first time I ever went dipping smelts. I was working at Chamberlain Bridge in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW). Dwayne Larry, who worked for Great Northern Paper Company, picked me up about dusk. We drove as close as we could get to McNally Brook, on the Arm of Chamberlain, then we bushwhacked to the brook. We waited a couple hours by the brook without seeing a single smelt! Next night, we did the exact same thing. On the third night, the brook had several jack smelts 6 - 8 inches long in it and we were able to get enough for a feed. On the fourth night, there were so many smelt in the brook you could catch a quart in



one dip!

My brother, Mark came up a few days later to go fishing. We decided to try our luck at McNally Brook, to our surprise, there were large schools of smelt swimming in the brook in broad daylight. We had a trout net with us and were able to catch all the smelt we wanted with that small net. It was fun because the schools of fish would move when they saw our silhouette. We got soaked getting a limit of smelt. While we were chasing the smelts around, we noticed several big fish jumping and swirling in the brook feeding on the smelt. We weren't smart enough back then to hook a smelt on a line and throw it out in the mouth of the brook.

When I was working on the West Branch of the Penobscot, dipping smelts at Ragged Stream (now closed) was a spring ritual. One year, I took my two older kids, Anna and Levi smelting at Ragged. They were too small to handle

THE BACK SHELF

From the files of the Northwoods Sporting Journal
The best hunting and fishing columns going back 25 years!



By their very nature backshelf articles, resurrected from our archives, may contain information or facts that have been altered or changed by the passage of time.

the smelt net, but the run was so heavy that they just grabbed them by the handful. It was fun watching the kids shriek with excitement, as they grabbed handfuls of the slippery little fish.

Cleaning smelts is not much fun, as a matter of

uncleaned and there really isn't that much difference. But my wife likes them cleaned, so we clean ours before cooking.

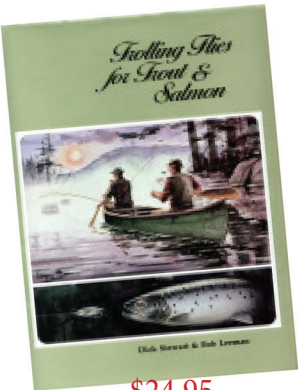
The traditional method of cooking smelt is to mix flour, corn meal, and Cajun seasoning in a plastic bag. Put enough of the

The rainbow smelt grows to maturity in freshwater lakes and ascend tributaries to spawn in the spring. The spawning run can last from a couple days, to a couple weeks, depending on the water body. Peak activity typically only lasts for a few days to a week.

fact- once I have cleaned two quarts, I don't really want to eat any that night. I have a friend, Steve Day who doesn't bother cleaning his smelts- he just fries them heads and all. I have eaten them cleaned and

silvery little fish in the bag to fill the frying pan, then shake the fish in the bag until they are well coated with the mixture. Drop the smelt into a skillet of hot cooking oil and fry until
(Smelts cont. pg 67)

At long last, revived from the archives of the once-authoritative books on New England streamer flies and how to use them: **Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon**, by Dick Stewart and Bob Leeman.



\$24.95

Trolling Flies for Trout and Salmon was first published in 1982 and again in 1992. There were 350 signed Limited Edition hardcover copies and several thousand hard and soft cover copies sold out with the two printings. Many fly tyers view this book as an up-to-date version of new and available streamer fly patterns and crave to have it in their library. Used copies have been selling on AmazonBooks.com for the last few years with a price tag up to \$300.00 for each copy! There are 125 pages with 32 color plates of more than 90 classic streamer flies and tying recipes from a Winnepesaukee Smelt to a Barney Google and a Rangeley Centennial. Leeman and Stewart also share with readers many tips and tactics for trolling streamer flies for trout and salmon throughout New England.

"This wonderful fishing book is the gospel when it comes to streamer flies and trolling tactics. A Classic!

- V. Paul Reynolds, Editor, Northwoods Sporting Journal

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The Maine Woods

**Matt LaRoche,
Shirley, ME**

When you are out on a canoe trip, you don't have to be restricted to eating freeze-dried food cooked on a single burner camp stove in order to have a decent meal. The canoe enables you to explore remote areas in relative comfort with plenty creature comforts and if you take time to organize and plan, you can eat like royalty on your next trip.

for one of my four-night guided trips would be: beef stew with hard bread, chicken with rice stir fry, steak with potatoes and vegetable, and baked beans with ham, cut veggies, and corn bread.

One-pot meals are great on camping trips. There are less dishes to wash that way!

After you have made the menu, make a grocery

The first day of the trip is often a hectic one so I generally have this supper prepared ahead of time. Actually, my wife Ruth usually makes a nice beef stew for this meal so all I have to do is warm it up.

Most of the meat for the trip will be put into meal size freezer bags and pre-frozen. This will be stored in a small cooler with other items that are required to be kept cold. The frozen meat will keep for several days in your cooler if you refrain from

give it a stir, turn off the heat and let it settle. A fresh hot cup of camp coffee sure does hit the spot when you're on the trail.

Baking with a reflector oven can add fresh bread and pastries to your menu. I have a gluten free corn bread recipe that comes out awesome every time! Actually, anything that doesn't require high heat usually

with an experienced trail cook can make the difference between a so-so trip or a memorable adventure.

Did I mention that when you're paddling most of the day, setting up camp, collecting firewood and lugging water that you build up a pretty good appetite? Well, you most certainly do - so pack large portions for everyone in

The first day of the trip is often a hectic one so I generally have this supper prepared ahead of time. Actually, my wife Ruth usually makes a nice beef stew for this meal so all I have to do is warm it up.

Food is a big deal on both my guided and my personal camping trips. Once you select a destination and trip itinerary, you need to come up with a menu. I suggest that you cook what is tried and true. If you want to make something new, I advise that you try making it at home before your trip. It can be difficult to make adjustments in the field. Don't make this part too tough, I cook pretty much the same thing on every trip.

A typical supper menu

list from that menu. Lists are great when packing for any camping trip especially on wilderness excursions.

Once you have all the food together, open the packages and repack the food into meal size ziplock bags. For instance, if you have oatmeal with raisins on the menu - put them together in a bag of the size for that one breakfast. I repackage anything that shouldn't get wet in ziplock bags even though all the dry goods are carried in water proof containers.

opening it any more than absolutely necessary. I use a separate cooler for items that only need to be kept cool. An added benefit of repacking food in water proof bags is that they are less likely to leak, leaky food containers can make a mess in your cooler and food can become cross contaminated if they leak.

Cooking breakfast is my specialty at home and on the trail. Bacon, eggs, home fries, toast and Allagash coffee is hard to beat. Allagash coffee is coffee made without a percolator. You add ¼ cup of ground coffee to 1 quart of cold water. Bring it to a boil,



cooks well with a reflector oven. When cooking with a reflector oven, keep in mind that the oven cooks with the heat from flames and not coals - you need to keep a flaming fire to have success. The key to keeping a flaming fire is to use dry standing dead softwood that has been split small for fuel.

As you can tell, food is a big part of our camping excursions. While in the backcountry, you just can't run to the store to pick something up for supper. A well-thought-out menu

your group.

All this writing about canoeing and eating has me wanting to take a river trip. Now is the time to start planning a multiday canoe trip. We in Maine are blessed to have some of the best wilderness canoe trips in the country right in our own backyard. If you would like help with planning a canoe trip that meets your purposes and skill level give me a call or send me an email. I would be happy to help point you in the right direction.



Matt LaRoche is a retired Superintendent of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. Owner of Maine Woods Guide Service and an avid outdoorsman. He can be reached at 207-695-2877 or at: matt.la-roche2877@gmail.com See: www.mainewoodsguide.com

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Pond

(Cont. from pg 58)

“boat free,” to be viewed by observers as untouched. We argued with Park that fishermen that want to use the launch were already being restricted due to the outboard motor limit of ten horsepower, the long 200’ back-in approach, and having little parking for trucks and trailers.

Finally, after years of pleading, the new Park engineer saw the light and agreed to smooth out the rough launch, so that the public would not wreck their vehicles and trailers when backing their boats into the water. Park officials also felt that this would be better for launching their emergency rubber raft crafts to rescue hikers and canoeists and kayakers. Smart!

Islanders applauded the construction that happened on a beautiful day in June. The Park did a terrific job removing the large rocks and boulders,

while shaping the descent into water for an easy float off trailers.

The problem was nobody told the Mount Desert Water District, which gets its drinking water from the pond for the town of Seal Harbor. So, when the water company superintendent found out he was furious. From there he made an irate phone call to the Park, and the Acadia officials came back and roughed the launch back in. This malevolent power play was to limit use on the water to protect drinking water.

Now, I have never heard where a few motorboats putt putting around a pond fishing, hurting the water quality for drinking. Yes, there are a few chemicals from oil and gas that linger on the surface but the risk from these derivatives is infinitesimal. This is another example of extremism. The taking away of local people’s opportunities just because they can.

As you can image, I was not happy with this de-

cision to take fishing away from anglers unnecessarily. So, I called the water company superintendent. He admitted that the company was unaware of the problems a few boats might cause to the drinking water but wanted to be conservative just in case.

While I was on the phone with him, I also asked about putting a fishway in the dam at the outlet, which the water company owns to back water up to cover over their drinking water intake pipe. A fish ladder would allow hundreds of wild brook trout and dozens of wild landlocked salmon residing in Jordan Stream the ability to migrate into Jordan Pond and create fisheries for wild fish.

The answer I got was an emphatic no! The reason was again, extreme conservatism. The migrating fish might bring in contaminants that would harm drinking water. When I asked what contaminants? He said, We don’t know. I said, you don’t know.

He said, that’s right we don’t know, and we have to guard against what we don’t know.

I said, pardon me, but I’m a fish guy and I’ve never in my life heard of diseases or contaminants carried by fish that would affect human drinking wa-

ter. He said, that may be but we don’t know what we don’t know.

Again, I scratch my head at these decisions and say “hey this is the world we live in.” Not much common sense!



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The Bird Perch

by Karen Holmes,
Cooper, ME



When I lived in Massachusetts about fifteen years ago, I was dismayed to see the impact of the West Nile virus on wild birds. It was just horrifying to see crows, blue jays and other species just drop dead out of the trees in front of you and you hoped all wild species of birds would develop some sort of resistance. This did happen over a few years and numbers of wild bird populations were restored. But now there is a new threatening virus which so far has appeared in waterfowl and in any birds that scavenge them. It is called the highly pathogenic avian influenza,

HPAI or bird flu.

This strain showed up in dead birds in the United States in 2021. One bird species which may serve as an indicator species for its appearance is the Bald Eagle. In Georgia, their nests in 2022 fledged less than the usual normal number of chicks. As of mid 2024, 600 dead Bald Eagles have tested posi-

ties which included head tilting, little balancing ability, and emaciation. It was unable to perch normally and this had caused its body to be covered with its own excrement. After tests showed it was not suffering from lead or mercury poisoning, the vets were puzzled, but continued to care for the bird. It had to be hand fed small pieces of meat and fish as it could not feed itself.

Finally it was seen the bird was not getting better and was suffering. It

caused by the HPAI virus. And yet it had shown negative for it and other viruses. It is thought now that the HPAI virus cleared the eagle's body and any tests would have been negative. But it was still present in the brain which was further damaged over time. Humans have shown a similar situation. The human COVID virus often tests negative in sick people and yet afterwards they suffer certain post covid effects.

I find all of this very scary and alarming. In

I really worry about the Common Loons we will see return here in Maine in spring 2025. They have come in close contact with waterfowl in fresh and salt water areas in the fall and winter. Let us all hope this HPAI virus, bird flu, does not impact them. In Maine in 2024, the Annual Loon Count showed an increase in chicks and a steady adult population. All of us need to keep informed about bird flu and report anything seen to Maine wildlife people.



Karen Holmes is the Cooper, Maine naturalist. She continues to be informed about what may impact wildlife in Downeast Maine and elsewhere. And she does research and surveys as a volunteer whenever she can.

This strain showed up in dead birds in the United States in 2021. One bird species which may serve as an indicator species for its appearance is the Bald Eagle.

tive for HPAI in the United States. In West Virginia, a bird rehabilitation center in 2024 treated an eagle that had neurologic abnormali-

ties which included head tilting, little balancing ability, and emaciation. It was unable to perch normally and this had caused its body to be covered with its own excrement. After tests showed it was not suffering from lead or mercury poisoning, the vets were puzzled, but continued to care for the bird. It had to be hand fed small pieces of meat and fish as it could not feed itself.

Finally it was seen the bird was not getting better and was suffering. It

Season

(Cont. from pg 55)

the general direction of the doe. Now, only 25 yards away, he stood behind some scrawny balsam firs. I knew to stay calm. I had a terrific

episode of buck fever years ago, and that was a lesson I will not soon forget.

The buck stepped between two trees and paused in my shooting lane. I had been tracking him through the firs, and already had the crosshairs in position.

I squeezed the trigger. The buck's head dropped and his hind legs kicked up; a good shot. My excitement immediately shifted to panic as the deer bounded down the hill towards the swamp. But he did not make it far. 60 yards away, the buck went down and never got up. I would soon discover when I went to field dress him that his heart was split. The deer was dead before he hit the

ground.

The emotions that encompass a hunter as they approach their kill cannot be understood by a non-hunter. Words can only come so close: excitement, respect, admiration, and gratitude. I could smell the buck before I was next to him. He was a symmetrical 6-pointer, except for a broken point on his right side. Shavings adorned the base of his antlers. His neck

was enormous. As I studied the handsome buck, I realized I had seen him before. My camera had captured a photo of him freshening the mock scrape on November 10, 2023, almost exactly a year prior.



A four-season outdoorsman, Jonah lives in Ellsworth, ME with his wife Ashley, and beagle, Aurora. Jonah can be reached at jonaheparis@gmail.com

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Backing

(Cont. from pg 62)

In a matter of seconds, I was into the backing as the pike made a high-speed run for the open river. I laughed aloud and joyfully urged this fish on. In the next half hour, three other large pike were hooked, beached and released - - with great caution. These predatory critters have toothy maws that can tear your flesh. Wire leaders and large pliers are a must for keeping the fish on and for releasing the fish safely.

Although pike fishing

is sometimes a hard sell to the fly-fishing trout purists who come to Labrador in search of the trophy brookies, these shallow-water bushwackers are fierce fighters on a fly rod. Pike also make fine table fare when filleted, chunked and deep fried in batter.

As Riverkeep Lodge's head guide Wilson Lawrence points out, pike are "nature's levelers," a balancing act that help keep the Atikonak watershed a fisherman's paradise that is home to trophy trout, salmon, lakers and whitefish.

Last May, while planning my trip to Labrador and cleaning my fly reels, I had a premonition that the moth-balled Medalist would get a long awaited workout. Before leaving the Atikonak, I got into the backing one other time - - on a big ole brookie. But that's the subject of another fish story.

Homer Spit lives on a lake in Maine. He likes to keep a low profile.

Smelts

(Cont. from pg 63)

they are cooked, then scoop them out of the pan with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels, serve hot.

My wife's recipe- uses the the same mix as above, but instead of frying them- she places them on a cookie sheet and drizzles butter over the seasoned fish. Then they are cooked in the oven at 425 degrees for about 20 minutes. They are best when eaten hot, right out of the oven. I eat them just like french fries, except I don't eat the tails. At the end of the meal, I have a nice little pile of fish tails on the side of my plate.

For ice conditions, or general information on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, go to: www.maine.gov/allagash for an information packet call 207-941-4014, or write to the Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry's Bureau of Parks and Lands, 106 Hogan Road, Bangor, ME 04401.



Brantley Peirce from LaGrange Maine with his 8 and quarter pound pike that he won the Pushaw Lake Derby with!

Budworm

(cont. from pg 59)

This is a small sacrifice to support our public and private landowners, and the people they employ. Again, early intervention is the key to reducing the budworm population before it becomes much more costly and difficult to contain. We appreciate your cooperation. There will be more detailed information available as the treatment window gets closer.

For more information about the Spruce Budworm project, please visit: <https://maineforest.org/spruce-budworm/>
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/insects/spruce_budworm_2014.htm

The author is the Executive Director of North Maine Woods Inc. He has lived and worked here his entire life, retiring after 33 years as a Maine Forest Ranger. Additionally, he worked for the Aroostook County Sheriff's Department and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.



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Northwoods Sketchbook

by Mark McCollough,
Hampden, ME

You do not see many blind deer...or foxes, or flying squirrels for that matter. How do they run at breakneck speeds (or glide in the case of flying squirrels) headlong through the dense forest without eventually 'poking their eyes out?' How do they travel swift-of-foot through a winter forest as dark

are in the dark about whiskers, we lost our vibrissae along the evolutionary path about 800,000 years ago. We and platypuses are the only mammals that do not have vibrissae, but all the other mammals depend on them for many important functions. Science is just beginning to unravel the secrets of this amazing

cially when distinguishing textures of the objects that a deer or cat brushes up against.

Most prominent on mammals are "mustacial" whiskers under the nose that are arranged in a grid of ordered rows and columns. Early naturalists categorized the rows and columns between different mammal species. That was the most that we knew about whiskers for about a

Whiskers bend when they contact a surface. That bending is sensed by nerve receptors within the follicles that is telegraphed to the brain. In fact, a mammal seems to have a map of the grid of whiskers to analyze structures they encounter in complete darkness.

as coals from last night's campfire without crashing into things? The answer is a super-sense. One that you and I cannot even fathom... whiskers.

Nearly all mammals are endowed with facial whiskers or vibrissae as they are known to biologists. We see these thick, tactile hairs growing from the nose, cheeks, chins, and eyebrows of our dogs and cats, but rarely pause to ponder what they are used for. No wonder that humans

sensory system.

Whiskers are slender rod-like structures made from keratin. They are more similar to your fingernail than hair. They join the body in a large follicle surrounded by a dense network of nerves. If you have ever found a whisker on the floor from your dog or cat, you know that it is curved and tapered – thick at the base and fine and flexible toward the tip. As you might expect, this allows better sensing, espe-

hundred years.

We now know that mammals with the most prominent whiskers are nocturnal and arboreal (e.g., flying squirrels, shrews, mice), aquatic mammals (e.g., otters, beavers), and marine mammals (walruses, seals). Daytime mammals such as horses, deer, and apes tend to have fewer and less-organized whiskers. Whiskers act as a 6th sense, operating closely with vision, smell, and hearing. Mammals



can position their whiskers forward or back to heighten their sensitivity or to better explore what is in front of them.

Whiskers bend when they contact a surface. That bending is sensed by nerve receptors within the follicles that is telegraphed to the brain. In fact, a mammal seems to have a map of the grid of whiskers to analyze structures they encounter in complete darkness. Whiskers are also able to sense water and air currents. Walruses and seals have 10 times more nerve endings at the base of their whiskers than your dog. This implies that whiskers are essential to the survival of these animals in the dark waters they inhabit.

Bobcats and cougars (and your housecat) have sensor whiskers on their forelegs. It is thought these whiskers help them navigate in the dark, but also to help them climb and to better sense and grip their struggling prey.

Some mammals twitch their whiskers to heighten their sensitivity. Squirrels and mice can rapidly move their whiskers with special facial muscles in a behavior called "whisking." This causes the tip of the whiskers or vibrissae to vibrate rapidly back and forth – so fast that it cannot be detected by humans. Whisking is only evident in nocturnal and tree-inhabiting species and enables them to quickly scan their environment.

Why do most mammals have whiskers? The long, organized whiskers of mice, otters, and foxes undoubtedly help them orient and move through a dark environment. The ever-twitching whiskers of a shrew leads them through crevices and small spaces in their never-ending search for food. The thick vibrissae of otters and seals are able to sense the wakes of fish as they swim through the water. Deer, carnivores, (Whisker cont. pg 69)

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Most outdoor folks like to eat what they bring home from the woods or the waters. And you like to cook it yourself, too right? So what is your favorite culinary lashup with fish or fowl? The Northwoods Sporting Journal would like to know. And we invite you to help us share your proud concoction with all of our readers. Our Northwoods Sporting Journal website: www.sportingjournal.com has a new addition: Outdoor Connections, which includes "Sporting Journal's Top Shelf Game & Fish Recipes." It has become a popular spot for visitors to find some great outdoor recipes, not from TV cooks, but from folks like you who live it.

Email us your favorite outdoor recipe to editor, V. Paul Reynolds, at vpaulr@tds.net. We won't send you any money, or give you a new boat and motor, but we will list your recipe with all the others, along with your name.

If your recipe catches on and goes viral, we'll figure out some kind of reward - say a new fry pan, a crockpot, or maybe a dutch oven?

So get crackin'...



Whisker

(Cont. from pg 68)

and other mammals probably use their whiskers to detect minute changes in wind speed and direction. This, combined with superb sense of smell, allows deer to detect a stealthy hunter creeping through the woods. Bats and whales depend more on echolocation to find their prey and so have diminished whiskers. Dolphins are born with whiskers that are lost as they mature. The whisker follicles are retained and used as specialized electro-sensing organs to detect fish instead. Whiskers also play a role in

social interactions. Think of a doe and fawn meeting in a meadow and touching noses and whiskers to greet each other.

Whiskers even have a practical use in wildlife conservation. Whisker patterns on a mammal's muzzle differ from one individual to another. This has been used in studies to identify individual lions, sea lions and polar bears. Artificial intelligence software is being used to map whisker positions from photographs and help wildlife biologists to identify individual mammals.

It's difficult for us to imagine the sensations that other mammals de-

rive from their whiskers. I suppose the best we can conjure is a network of sensors protruding inches from various parts of our face, constantly feeling the breeze, detecting objects we encounter in the dark, and perhaps enhancing our senses of smell, vision, and taste. Too bad we lost this super-sense eons ago. But whiskers do explain why deer can run through the woods without 'poking their eyes out.'



Mark McCollough is a retired wildlife biologist and can be contacted at markmccollough25@gmail.com

Trapping

(Cont. from pg 52)

a single fisher on the year, with several sets having tracks to the exclusion box openings, but never committing to enter further. I consider this a very successful "rookie year" as trapping isn't solely about numbers harvested. It all about the chase, constant learning, sharpening your observation and sign reading skills, and having fun in the outdoors.

I look back on the fall of 2024 with so many great memories from the trapline. The highlight of the fall was my wife shoot-

ing a nice northern Maine whitetail while checking traps one afternoon with me. Trapping to me is the ultimate connection with the land and the resource, demanding both physical and mental sharpness in order to be successful. I can't wait for next year and am already planning and preparing for 2025's fall fur hunt!



Kale O'Leary has been a Maine Game Warden since 2016. He patrols the Oxbow/Masardis district in central Aroostook County and lives in Ashland.



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