

STICKTALK



The Official Publication of the Michigan Longbow Association

www.michiganlongbow.org

**Building a Self-bow Part VI
City Kids and the Longbow
Interview with Two Track Bows
and Wool Company**

**Volume 26
Number 3
Summer 2014**



STICKTALK

Publisher: *Michigan Longbow Association*

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DEADLINES

The next issue of *STICKTALK* is due

October 2014

The deadline for advertising and editorial material is the first of
September 2014

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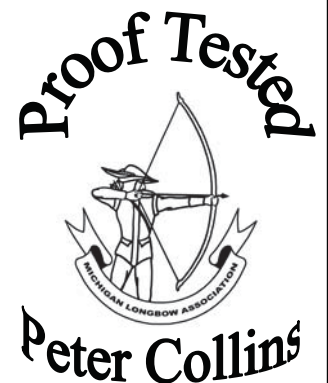
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Editors' Point

With Ms. Caroline & Bub

The summer shoots are in full swing now that the calendar says it's the season for such frivolity. We had a great MLA Spring Shoot experience despite the rain and an equally fun time at Compton Traditional Bowhunters Rendezvous. The MLA dinner at CTB once again drew over 50 MLA members. If you missed it, then you were likely able to stay on your diet which would have been a total loss had you joined us. Wow! What good food it was! Chris Gault had a grand time at the MLA booth in the big tent and the kid's shoot once again saw a sizable number of volunteers from the MLA. We have many more shoots coming up in the next few weeks including the GLLI. It is fun being a part of something so exciting. Here's to all of you who make the MLA a worthwhile endeavor.

There are a number of things happening with your MLA Council. Committees have been formed and the process is underway to create an adequate budget and to address the glaring inadequacy of the MLA by-laws as they apply to the twenty-first century. Some of this work is not easy. It takes long hours of dedicated service by your representatives on this year's Council. Take the time to shake their hand and say thank you for all the hard work. There is little doubt that this organization will be stronger and more able to serve the needs of the longbow lovers because of their unselfish labor.

Those graduating seniors who are planning to attend college may want to send an official letter of application for the MLA scholarship. \$1000 will be awarded to a worthy student at this year's GLLI. Be a 2014 high school graduate, a member in good standing, and have applied to attend a college of your choice. The deadline is August 1, 2014.

You will note that the MLA is becoming more active in the community. We have had representation in one form or another at a variety of different venues this past spring.



We had an information booth at the Charlton Park Days, a shooting program at an elementary school, a recruiting booth at the CTB rendezvous, and are slated for several more community outreach activities. One of these will be the Great Outdoors Youth Jamboree at Hudson Lake State Park in September. Please contact one of the MLA Council members if you can volunteer for any of the upcoming outreach days your club is involved in.



It burdens our hearts to include in this issue a number of MLA members who have left us in this last year. The obituaries of Gene McGlashen, Gary Vanraemdonck, and John Beckwith are recorded here on the pages of *STICKTALK* magazine. Our sympathies go out to their family and friends. May we never forget their dedication to the longbow and continue to celebrate their lives as we venture a field with stick and string.

Within the pages of this edition of *STICKTALK*, the reader will find a number of first time writers. It is always exciting to see new ideas and fresh twists on the old subject of archery. Because of the many submissions we received this quarter, we will not even have room for business cards in this edition, but it has been our experience that most everyone has a story to tell, even you. Please send us your pictures and stories so that we can continue to make *STICKTALK* a meaningful part of the MLA experience. Get us your material and keep in mind that we **will** make you famous.





President's Corner

Nick Viau

On July 1st, Mike Vines stepped down as the president of the MLA and (as your former VP) I stepped in to fill the role. Even as I type this, it

seems surreal, as Mike was one of the people that encouraged me to join the Council in the first place. I will miss working with him, but am happy to have his support and am comforted to know he isn't far away should I have questions.

That being said, I am honored and excited to be your new president. Being on point for an organization as wonderful as the MLA, and serving a community as vibrant as this membership, is a blessing I never anticipated. I have tremendous respect for this association and every component of it. I feel that, as president, it is my responsibility to keep this organization strong, its membership happy, traditional archery thriving, and the longbow alive and well within our culture. I will not fail in this task. I cannot. It is far too important to me and to you.

But I can't do it alone either. Nor can your Council. We need you — every, single one of you. As members, you are the lifeblood and the *potential* of this association. We can make an event good, but you can make it *great*. We can increase the numbers of this organization, but you can



make it *thrive*. The longbow is synonymous with experience, which makes it an easy sell, as I've yet to hear a negative one. We are in the business of creating positive, unforgettable experiences. We've been doing it since 1983 and business is good. Time to make it better! We can start with the GLLI. As your new president, my first order of business is to ask you all to share the longbow with someone who isn't familiar. Wearing your MLA shirts in public is a great icebreaker. When someone asks, tell them about us and invite them to the GLLI. It's as simple as that.

We could also use a hand at the event as well! The more the merrier. Please contact a Council member if you are interested or reach out to us on www.michiganlongbow.com via our "Contact" form.

Stay safe and shoot straight!

Nick



The Officially Recognized Outdoor Wish Granting Organization of
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Granting the Outdoor Wishes of Terminally Ill & Life-Limited Children Nationwide with the Continued Support of the Outdoor Community!

For more Information contact 877-B4K-KID0 or visit our website at www.B4K.org



Mike Vines

I'm saddened to say that effective 1 July 2014 I am resigning my position as the MLA President and also my seat on Council. I honestly do not have the time to dedicate to the MLA that I once did.

Having a young family, full time job and countless other needs that deserve attending, I simply cannot continue. I'm sorry

to have to do this, but I need to do what is right for my family.

Over the years, I have made some wonderful, lifelong friends and great hunting partners. You all know me well enough to know that I'm not going to disappear, and I will continue to support, and promote, the MLA at every opportunity I get.

I'm fully confident that the enthusiasm on the MLA Council will be able to make this a seamless transition. Please give your full support to MLA Vice President Nick Viau who will be assuming the role of MLA President, effective today, 1 July 2014.

Thank you for the years of dedicated support,

Mike Vines



Michigan Bow Hunters

The Voice of Michigan's Hunting Archer

On behalf of the board of Governors and the membership of Michigan Bow Hunters I would like to personally thank you for your contribution to our Sixty Eighth Annual Spring Awards Banquet.

Thank You for helping us support, Bow hunting and the archery sports in the state of Michigan.

Thank you
Michael Brownfield
Banquet Chairmen.



2014 Spring Shoot Chili Contest

Recipes' by contestants

Matt Cowie

"No Mercy Chili" – Because young men shouldn't stand in the way of everlasting glory!

1/2 # bacon, cubed and fried
 1 1/4 # ground chuck, browned in a bit of bacon grease
 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
 1 medium/small white onion, chopped
 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
 1 green pepper, finely chopped de-seeded
 3 cherry peppers, finely chopped de-seeded
 2 large jalapeno peppers, finely chopped de-seeded
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX - Ingredient selfishly omitted
 2 14 1/2-oz cans diced tomatoes
 8-oz can tomato sauce
 1 can kidney beans, drained
 1 can great northern beans, drained
 1 tsp. ground cumin
 1/2 tsp. pepper
 1 tsp. seasoned salt
 1 tbsp. brown sugar
 1 tsp. Chili powder
 1 bay leaf
 Pinch of ground sage
 Pinch of cyan pepper
 Dash of oregano and parsley



Put everything in a crock pot on low for 10-12 hours. Chili might seem a tad thin or bland, but be careful about adding to much heat. Refrigerate overnight to really let the flavors blend. Slowly reheat and enjoy. If you didn't de-seed the cherry or Jalapeno peppers you might be sorry now.

Nick Vines
"Declassified"

1# burger
 1 small onion, chopped
 1 tbsp. minced garlic
 1 tbsp. olive oil



Cook onions and garlic in the olive oil till the onions soften and garlic browns. Add the burger and pepper to taste. Cook till the juices are clear, then drain off about 1/2 of the grease. Add this mixture to the crock pot and then add...

2 small cans "Chili Fixins"
 1 small can kidney beans
 1 large (28.5 oz.) petite diced tomatoes
 1 small can tomato soup
 1 small can tomato sauce



Seasonings:

1/4 cup brown sugar
 2 tbsp. chili powder
 1 tbsp. crushed red pepper
 1 tbsp. Montreal Steak Seasoning

All that's left is to grab a bunch of your closest friends, some freshly made cornbread and enjoy the Michigan outdoors.

Luke Vines

1 jar Northern Beans
 2 jalapeño peppers
 2 poblano peppers
 1 large onion, chopped
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 2 tbsp. ground cumin (or more if you like it spicier)
 1 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
 1 tspn Ancho chili powder
 1 1/2 - 2 limes, juiced
 4 cups chicken stock
 3-4 chicken breasts, roasted

Sauté peppers, onion, and garlic 3-5 minutes; sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.

Bring the chicken stock and lime juice to a simmer and add beans, chicken (roasted and shredded or cubed), pepper mixture, spices and simmer 20 minutes. Serve topped with crushed tortilla chips, cheese, and sour cream.



Spring Shoot American Round

by Thom Jorgensen

It is a custom for the Michigan Longbow Association to shoot an American Round at the conclusion of our annual membership meeting. This year twelve archers loosed 90 arrows in gusting winds, rain, and even hail. The tough conditions were generally reflected in the scores posted, this was a hard year to earn points!!! Several people expressed scoring 100-150 points lower this year than previous years. In spite of the conditions, Mike Clevinger posted a very respectable top score of 495 points.

Jennifer Jorgensen had never shot over 20 yards before this year's event. "I just wanted to try it out for the fun of it. I didn't know if I could shoot 90 arrows in a row, or even hit a 60 yard target!" Indeed she did score points at 40, 50, and even 60 yard ranges with her 28# longbow. Here is a summary of the submitted scorecards:



Mike Clevinger – 495
Mark Carpenter – 417
Paul Pardy – 407
Greg Denny – 395
Bob Jones – 377
Ed Pierce – 362
Jorden Shaw – 354
Willis Auxier – 285
Thom Jorgensen – 240
Larry Fill – 208
Jennifer Jorgensen - 79



I just want to take a minute to thank the members for letting me serve on your Council, and as your vice-president, and president. I have been involved with the Council since 2003. The best thing I ever did was to become more involved with the MLA. I truly have been blessed to be involved with such a great group of people and to have met so many great individuals and families. As I have said before, I feel we run the MLA from the heart and it shows. We now have a lot of new blood on Council and that is a great



thing. New people and new ideas coming forward to work for the betterment of the MLA. I am not going anywhere. I still plan on being very much involved.

Thanks to everyone for making the MLA the best it can be.

Yours in the spirit of the longbow,

Brian Carpenter





CITY KIDS AND THE LONGBOW

By Suzanne Schmier

It couldn't hurt to ask. That's what I was thinking when the idea of archery came up as a reward for our 2nd and 3rd grade students. I'm a teacher at West Kelloggsville Elementary in Wyoming, Michigan, just south of Grand Rapids. I'm also a member of the Michigan Longbow Association. Since I talk about archery often, some of my fellow teachers asked if we might do something with archery for our students. Our school has many at-risk students, and pulling a bow is something only a handful of students have had a chance to do.

I sent an e-mail to president Mike Vines asking if the MLA might be able to do a one-day shoot at our school. I didn't think anything would come of it. However, I got a response back that he would bring it up at the next Council meeting. Shortly after, I got an e-mail from a very enthusiastic Nick Viau saying the MLA would love to come to our school and asked for some details to get started. I was so surprised and pleased!

Over the next couple of months, details were finalized.

Nick came over to the school to scout out a safe shooting area outside. My husband, Doug, visited a local Styrofoam company, asking if they would donate some blocks. Turns out the owner is also an archer as well as a community member and gladly gave us six giant blocks. Nick began gathering volunteers with his energetic and friendly approach using the MLA's Facebook page.

I began giving the teachers information to prepare their students. They went over a lesson and safety plan with their classes that Nick had written up. They sent home permission slips, kept track of who could participate and separated the kids into four groups. Floyd and Nick planned the day to include shooting the bow, and stations for kids waiting to shoot.

It all came together for the shoot on Friday, April 25th. Volunteers Nick Viau, Floyd Wells, Doug Schmier, John Buchin, Todd Greenwald, Ryan Smit, Rob Jones, Rob and JoAnn Kruko, Julie Miller and Kevin Bowers showed up bright early, some of them driving an hour or more to



arrive at West Kelloggsville by 7:00 a.m. to set up. Unfortunately, it was raining pretty heavily with a forecast of the same all day. We quickly changed plans and started setting up in our small gym. We put the Styrofoam blocks all across the front of an elevated stage. Boards full of balloons were set in front of the blocks. A heavy, velvet curtain covered the stage. Our principal said not to worry about arrows hitting the curtain or walls. A couple of holes in the curtain or chips in the paint was worth it for the fun the kids were going to have.

Because it was raining, all 270 students had to come in to the gym before school, which doubles as our cafeteria, for breakfast and to wait for the bell for school to start. It was mighty crowded! We had lunch tables blocking the kids from our equipment, but they were very interested, leaning over the tables and asking many questions. I think the kids' enthusiasm and excitement really fired up our volunteers. Thankfully, the teachers started taking their classes early, before the bell, to give us time to move equipment into place.

Our first group of second graders came in at 8:45. The stations Floyd and Nick planned worked perfectly. As students waited for their turn to shoot, they learned about the longbow, arrows and eye dominance using cardboard paper tubes (attractively covered with contact paper by Caroline). All the kids were engaged and listening. My job was timekeeper and kid-mover, so every seven or eight minutes, I announced to switch stations. It all went so smoothly! We got a new group of kids every half hour with no breaks until lunch time at 11:45. We quickly moved all the equipment into a room near the stage so our friendly, patient custodian could set up the cafeteria for lunch in record time. Our school provided Jimmy John's for lunch, which the volunteers ate in about 20 minutes,

then rushed back to set the gym up for our next group at 12:30. A new group arrived every half hour with a short break for recess until the end of the day at 3:30.

It was so rewarding to watch those seven, eight and nine year old kids come up to the shooting line. Some were eager, some were timid. You really have to get close to someone when teaching them to shoot a longbow, and most of our volunteers were big guys with thick beards. But all the kids know me and I was standing right there, so I think that helped them feel a little more comfortable. Every volunteer used a gentle, friendly voice, and once each kid shot once or twice and popped a balloon, that was all it took. Shyness was gone!

My favorite moment of the day was when a third grader, who I had as a second grader last year, came to the line. This little girl is autistic and doesn't like loud noises. She timidly came with me to the shooting line with her fingers in her ears because she didn't like the sound of the popping balloons. I put the bow in her left hand and helped her hold it. Her right hand was plugging her ear. When I told her to pull the string, she let go of the bow with her left hand and plugged that ear so she could use her right hand to pull the string. That went back and forth for a few shots. Finally, she unplugged her ears and happily shot the bow herself! I asked, "Do you want to do it again?" She shouted, "YES!"



Another fun moment was when a boy came to the shooting line and announced, "I'm so anxious!" His teacher said he's been saying how nervous he was for the last two days. By the time he came off the line, he was totally relaxed and asked, "When can we do that again?"

One of my second graders, who was one of the few to shoot a bow before, announced as she came to the line, "I'm right handed, but left-eye dominant."



It was so cute when I came to get the kids from the last station before getting to shoot. They were trying to pay attention and be polite, but every time they heard a balloon pop, they glanced eagerly at the shooting line, excited for their turn. Most kids wanted to keep their elbows bent and close to their bodies and needed help shooting, but several kids were naturals.

I know the other volunteers had similar rewarding moments during the day with these great kids. We were happy to see several parents come to watch and take pictures. After their class' turn, each student got an MLA pencil and rubber wristband with the MLA website on it. Those were a big hit! A photographer from the *Advance* newspaper came out and we ended up with an article on mLive.com and in the *Advance*.

Whew! By the end of the day, everyone was tired! Then, even though it was a Friday after a long week, a few curious teachers came down wondering if they could try shooting a longbow. Without hesitation, the volunteers stopped packing up and patiently waited while a few more people were introduced to the longbow. Even our principal

wanted to try.

Months later, the kids are still talking about it. I see many of them playing at recess pretending to shoot a bow. They're asking questions. The teachers keep telling me that this was the best reward day ever. They were so thankful to the MLA volunteers and amazed at their kindness that they would all be willing to adjust work schedules or take days off and drive so far to bring this experience to our students. The staff and students of West Kelloggsville Elementary cannot thank these Michigan Longbow Association volunteers enough for the special day they provided for our students.



Suzanne has been an elementary teacher since 1985. While her husband Doug and her sons have been involved in archery all their lives, Suzanne has only been involved for the last 4 years, having attended about 10 different archery events so far.



On September 7th, 2014 the MLA will again be hosting a shooting booth at the Great Outdoor Youth Jamboree sponsored by Pheasants Forever and the Michigan DNR. Last year we saw nearly 1,000 people come through the gate at Hudson Lake State Park, near Clayton, MI. This year it promises to be an even bigger event than last year. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Please volunteer to help a child learn to shoot. Lunch will be provided. Contact information on the inside cover of *STICKTALK* for Floyd or Caroline Wells.



OBITUARIES

It is with heavy hearts that the MLA family is saying good-bye to three dear friends. Their lives will be celebrated at this year's GLLI, and honored at the 21 Arrow Salute Saturday evening. We will indeed miss your smiling faces and warm embrace. The music at camp this summer season will not be the same...



Eugene Charles McGlashen lost his three-year battle with liver cancer late last year. Gene was born December 18th, 1947, and passed away on November 4th, 2013. Gene was a multitasking man with a thirst for knowledge. He was an accomplished gunsmith, bowyer, and inventor. He was a talented self-taught musician with early memories of singing with his mother. Gene was a life-long learner, pursuing knowledge, understanding, and truth in all things. Many of us know him best as the very talented bowyer of Stillwater bows.



Joseph "Gary" Vanraemdonck was born on April 8, 1941 in Detroit, Michigan to the late Joseph and Charlotte Vanraemdonck. He passed away suddenly on June 26, 2014 at the age of 73. Gary was the loving husband of Denise. Cherished father of Charlotte (Tim) Fleszar, Karen (Rich) Albert, Ron (Janie), Craig (Laurie) and step-father of

Keary (Ashley) Schelling and Doreen Schelling. Proud grandpa of 13. He is also survived by his former wife Janice and many cousins. Gary was a member of the MLA for over 25 years. Both he and Denise were accomplished "Cowboy Action Shooters."

John Gordon Beckwith, 72, of rural Harrison passed away suddenly on Monday, March 3, 2014 at his home. John was born February 15, 1942, in Lansing, Michigan, the son of Gordon and Elaine (Bedore) Beckwith. John was united in marriage to the former Wanda I. Sanford on August 18, 1986, in Toledo, Ohio. Mr. Beckwith had resided in Harrison since 1984, coming from Farwell, Michigan. John was an avid musician and song writer, bow hunter, fisherman, and enjoyed leather and bead crafting in his spare time. A long-time member of the MLA, John won the Silver Arrow Contest numerous times. Surviving is his loving wife of twenty seven years, Mrs. Wanda I. Beckwith of Harrison, two daughters and one son.





Two Tracks Bow and Wool Company Interview

by Bob Wyman

The weather was brutal this winter during the Kalamazoo Traditional Archery Expo. It was an extremely cold and uncomfortable weekend to be sure. While watching the folks who attended the show, I noticed that a lot of visitors seemed interested in Chris Deshler's felted wool products from Two Tracks Bow and Wool Company. Wool clothing and bow-hunting just seem to go hand in hand around these parts so I decided to schedule a sit-down, and find out more about their high quality bows and wool products.

ST: Chris, you two make a great team; tell me about how you started this family business.

Chris: Charlie and I first met at work in 1994; I was gathering deer hides and heads for making buckskin. Chuck offered his and I noticed he was carrying a *Traditional Bowhunter* magazine. I told him I wanted to shoot a longbow, and that was 20 years ago! Both of us have always loved old time ways and craftsmanship. Chuck has immersed himself in his passion for the longbow and it has become a lifestyle that we have embraced on every level. While we were living and guiding in northwestern Montana, we learned to put our trust in wool for our com-

fort and survival. I had in mind to learn how to make wool felt garments to endure the elements that we lived in every day. As time went on, we realized that we wanted to build a home-based business, specializing in handcrafted goods that have stood the test of time.

ST: Chris, where do you get all this wool?

Chris: I have developed a sheep raising program using multiple breeds in order to obtain soft, durable wool in every natural color, from white to black. It has all shades of grey and brown in between, including the golden hues. I use the wool for making felt in solid natural colors,



using the contrasting colors to create a camouflage effect.

ST: Chris, you make mostly felted wool products. What is involved in the felting process?

Chris: Feltmaking is a process of layering wool fibers perpendicular to one another and shrinking them to form a dense material. This is done by layering the wool fibers perpendicular to one another, adding hot soapy water, and rolling with a weighted roller. This is done in all directions and on both sides for four sessions, creating a bundle. Then the sheet of material is rolled onto itself and is "thrown" it by hand every 1/4 turn, continuing to roll with a pressurized roller. This process shocks the fibers into shrinking to 1/3 of their original size, and makes the surface bumpy in texture, which makes for a dense material.

ST: I know from experience these are very durable garments. Do you recommend any special care for them, considering that dry cleaning leaves an odor?

Chris: The wool garment is a very durable product due to the layering and volume of wool fibers. It does not need to be lined as it acts as a breathable insulator next to your body. It also breaks the wind, absorbs light, and blends into natural surroundings. Furthermore, burrs shed off easily because their barbs can't hook into the felt surface deeply. I recommend hand-washing with a mild, vegetable-based soap, or hunter's scent-free soap, rinsing, then laying flat or draping to dry. Charlie tosses his hunting clothes over the bushes or tree limbs to dry. For storing all types of wool wear, I recommend placing it in cotton or muslin cloth bags, like a pillow case, and tying off the end. This allows the wool to breathe, and moths won't be able to get to the wool protein they seek.

ST: Your daughter Jessica is growing fast, is she involved at all in the business?

Chris: Jessie has a love for animals too, and helps with the chores, moving and sorting sheep and maintaining the

health of the flock. She also makes wool felt jewelry; they are the colorful items in our booth. She has started raising and showing French Angora rabbits, and is learning how to spin yarn and crochet for her product line.

ST: For both of you, what is the experience with Michigan Longbow Association?

Chris: My first longbow shoot was in 1992 at the GLLI in Brighton. I was interested in traditional archery, as most things of old have intrigued me. Charlie and I have been to most of to GLLI events since.

Chuck: I was involved with MLA years ago. After moving to Montana I lost track of my membership. We have renewed our membership and look forward to being active and supportive of the MLA.

ST: Chuck, There are a lot of traditional bow styles out there: How do you decide which ones you want to develop and offer to your customers?

Chuck: I am an old-school kind of guy. I like the classic rather than the contemporary, but I also like to do the best I can, and get whatever performance is possible. So, when I started making selfbows I always wanted to know the how and the why. I would push the limits and try to make the best bow I could, and still remain in the style or design standards I started with. Then I started to build the glass-laminated bows and I would build them like I did a selfbow, taking away what wasn't needed until I had a bow. I didn't know any other way. After a few bows, I figured out how I could change all of the components of the bow and make huge changes to the final product. This opened up many possibilities for a guy who is always trying to improve his final product. So in short, I like to stay classic, but I have found that if you do it all just right, we don't miss much in the way of performance, *and* we still look good.

ST: Chuck, what species of woods are your favorites to work with? I know you like walnut limb cores.

Chuck: I enjoy all woods, from all over the world. But as my friend the late Gene McGlashen told me one day, "It's hard to find prettier wood than we have in America." I couldn't agree more.

ST: Chuck, expand a little on Black Walnut as a limb wood.

Chuck: I like the black walnut limb core for several reasons, but mostly because it works so well. I am strict on how and where I will use it, as well as the quality and the



cut of the wood itself. That said, I have found it to be a very lively core wood, doing what we like it to do in a bow.

ST: How do you feel the direction of traditional archery is going?

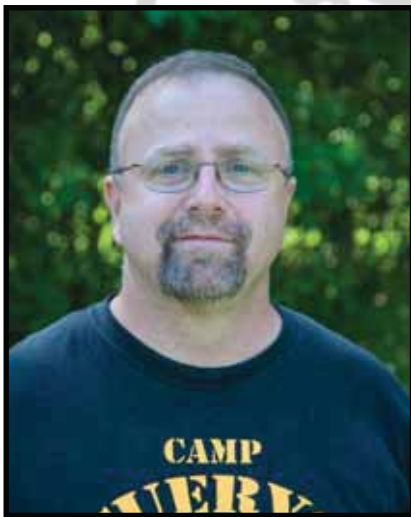
Chuck: The internet has really changed the way guys

shoot and buy new bows. It has made me, as a bowyer, raise my craft to meet the demand of the shooters. It is hard to get into the shop some days, because guys will call or e-mail me with questions. We have many great bow makers out there today. The shooter wants to know he is spending his hard-earned money on a quality product.

ST: For both of you, how do you feel Michigan Longbow Association can make it better?

Chuck: MLA does a great job with the kids and youth. I enjoy all the excitement that goes on at the GLLI. Lots of effort goes into the event, and MLA is putting or keeping the fun in archery. With all the great members and business owners that are involved, the fun is far-reaching. If the MLA can keep that in mind, we will do well.

ST: Thanks for your time, and providing us with a good choice of quality products that keep us warm and shooting straight.



Bio: John McIntosh

Greetings, MLA brothers and sisters. I'd like to take a brief moment to introduce myself as a new MLA Council member to those who may not know me. But first, I have to thank those past members who so unselfishly relinquished their seats to make room for several of us who had a desire to step up and give back to this great organization. It is with great admiration and respect that we have the opportunity to become part of the MLA Council. Thank you for your years of service and example.

As for me, I am married to my best friend and hunting partner Amy, and have two sons: Alex and Austin who have grown up attending MLA events. I am a retired firefighter and only work a few days a week now to support my outdoors addictions. I am also an instructor and Board Member for Camp Wilderness, an organization that teaches kids hunter safety and IBEP bowhunter education each

summer. I've been involved with Camp Wilderness for 14 years now and love teaching campers about traditional archery.

I first learned about the MLA several years ago, while serving on the Board of Directors for Benefit4Kids, and attended my first GLLI the first year it was held at Charlton Park. With my young sons in tow, I was blown away at the atmosphere of family and fellowship, and so impressed at what the MLA put together. I was immediately hooked. The GLLI is, in my opinion, is the best traditional archery gathering there is.

My love of the longbow was born out of my love of bow hunting and I've bow hunted exclusively with the longbow for about 12 years now. I own a few recurves as well, but my true love is the longbow. The MLA membership are all so giving in support of archers new and old. They are always willing to offer advice on shooting, hunting, and the historical aspect of the longbow.

I cannot think of a better organization for putting together events than the MLA and strongly felt I needed to give back for that reason.

I'm looking forward to helping out in any way I can, whether it be to offer ideas, help others promote theirs, and to continue to grow the create interest in the longbow within those who haven't shot one.

Thanks to all the members who make the MLA such a great family organization and for the opportunity to serve!



GLLI Schedule

Friday

9:00 am Vendor area and 3D courses open
10:00 am-3:00 pm Kids shooting area open
12:00 pm-5:00 pm Turkey Shoot/Stinking Fish/Snake Pit
6:00 pm Vendor area and 3D courses close
6:00 pm- 8:00 pm Tex-Mex Potluck and
Tomahawk Throwing contest [pavilion]

Kids raffle immediately following [MLA canopy]

4:00 pm Turkey Shoot sudden death shoot off
4:00 Cast Iron Cooking Judging
6:00 pm Vendor area and 3D courses close
6:15 pm 21 Arrow Salute [main event field]
8:00 pm Warrior Coup, shooters by invitation. Spectators welcome [pavilion]

Saturday

9:00 am raising of the Flag [MLA canopy]
9:15 am Vendor area and 3D courses open
10:00 am-4:00pm Turkey Shoot/Stinking Fish/Snake Pit
10:00 am-3:00pm Kids shooting area open
11:30 am Sherwood Challenge [main event field]
2:00 pm Silver arrow competition [main event field]
3:30 pm Kids silver arrow [main event field]

Sunday

8:00 am Non-Denominational church service
9:00 am Vendor areas and 3D courses open
9:00 am-12:00 pm Turkey Shoot/Stinking Fish/Snake Pit
10:00 am-12:00 pm Kids shooting area open
12:00 pm 3D courses close [no starts after noon]
1:00 pm Auction and Scholarship Presentation
2:00 pm GLLI closes



GLLI CAST IRON COOKOFF RULES

The cook-off will be Saturday, August, 9th, 2014. Cook time starting at 1pm, judging at 4:00 pm sharp

Cook-off contestants must sign up on the registration sheet at the MLA booth no later than 9:00 am on the day of the event.

Contestant can prepare 1 dish to enter the contest. Side dishes such as corn bread, rolls etc. can accompany the main dish, but will not be considered during judging.

Contestants may enter any type of dish they desire: breakfast, snack, appetizer, meats, stews, chili, desserts etc.

All entries shall be cooked in cast iron cookware: skillets, Dutch ovens, griddles etc. Grilled food is not permissible as a stand-alone entry. Food must be prepared by cast iron cooking.

Entries should be primarily real, unprocessed foods. While some ingredients such as soup mixes or gravies can be purchased, simple heat and serve, or add-water and heat-instant meals are not allowed. Judges will be given final discretion in this regard.



The spirit of the event is cast iron home or camp cooking.

Contestants are responsible to provide everything needed to prepare their dish. This includes sanitary supplies for hand washing, dish washing etc.

All cooking will take place within the cook-off area. (To be announced). Cooking will commence no earlier than 1:00 pm, and all cooking will end precisely at 4:00 pm. Judging will take place at 4:00 pm. Chefs may set their cooking area up earlier, including getting cooking fire or charcoals started, but no food preparation shall begin prior to the start time.

The judges will taste each entry, and score it on a 1-10 scale for flavor, and a 1-5 scale for presentation/originality.

In the event of a tie, one randomly chosen judge will conduct a tie-breaker tasting and vote to determine the winner.





Phases and Challenges

By Jimmy DooLittle

On the morning of October 9, 2013 I took my first deer with a longbow. It was also the first deer I ever killed with a wood arrow. It was such a rewarding experience to harvest a whitetail deer using traditional equipment. There was a sense of purity and an immense gratification which came from the result of a humane kill; employing the simplest of equipment. I consider it one of my greatest achievements in my now 40 years of bowhunting white-tails.

I have always been a serious bowhunter, and my dedication and efforts have rewarded me with many deer over the years. While I may not have killed trophy, monster bucks by some people's standards, I have always tried to be a responsible and ethical hunter.

As a member of the Michigan Longbow Association I would like to testify to my fellow bowhunting congregation that I have not hunted exclusively with the longbow over the past four decades but I have always admired and envied the die-hard traditional equipment bowhunter. In truth, I am new to the longbow.

I hunted in the 1970's with several recurves but was never successful in taking a deer, although I did get quite a few rabbits, and other small game. I realized in later years my lack of success in harvesting a deer with a re-curve was not due to an inadequate weapon, but to my

lack of knowledge of the habits and traits of the whitetailed deer.

In the late 1970's I acquired a compound bow and I started killing deer. I continued to hunt with the compound and cam bows over the ensuing years and took many deer, but it wasn't due to the equipment I was using. It was rather due to my increased knowledge of the whitetailed deer, learned largely through trial and error. Some of that knowledge was gained through insight from fellow hunters and magazine articles.

I learned to set myself up for close encounters. Year after year, I killed deer with shots at 12 to 15 yards. I hunted thick brushy travel corridors so this was routinely possible. This is not a difficult method for filling tags, and it is a scheme well suited for the traditional equipment bowhunter.

Honestly, it took me a while to get up the nerve to go back to the stickbow. It is sometimes hard to change from something that you have been so efficient with. For me hanging up my compound in exchange for the longbow could be equated to the act of quitting smoking, which I did back in the early 1990's. It was difficult to say the least. I am basically an immutable person by nature, which may be the reason I am divorced, but I knew I would have to break out of my comfort zone. I would have to dedicate

myself to a change in my style of shooting. I would have to build up different muscles, shoot lots and lots of arrows. It would have to be a total commitment for me. I could not bounce back and forth from compound to stickbow. That would surely mess me up big time, so I began shooting my new 45# Bear Montana longbow in February of 2013. I shot lots of wood arrows though out the year. I got involved with the MLA and gained support from many ardent stickbow shooters. Especially from one particular MLA member by the name of Floyd Wells who assured me that I could do it because I was already an accomplished bowhunter. By the time October 1st arrived I was confident with my longbow.

Actually I don't need to prove anything to myself anymore, so I don't need to create unnecessary challenges. It is a challenge just getting out of bed in the morning. When I was a younger feller, I would be willing to crawl on my hands and knees for a 100 yards in a mucky creekbottom for just the chance at a shot at a buck. I often would cross a creek on an icy, half rotten log in the dark with a flashlight with weak batteries, but not any more. Now-a-days, my balance is poor, and I have a difficult time getting up from a kneeling position, so I try to avoid such strenuous efforts and precarious footwork. The cold bothers me more and its hard work packing my Summit Climbing Treestand in and out, let alone ascending and descending the tree with it. Likewise I'm pretty much worthless when it comes to dragging a deer anymore. Field dressing is tedious work at best. I used to always process my own deer meat. Last year I let someone else do it for me. The spirit is willing but the body is weak. I've determined that gravity "sucks." I still love it all though, and I've found few shortcuts that avert this discomfort and pain.

On the morning of October the 9th, 2013 before daylight I ascended a big poplar tree with my climbing tree stand. I was excited about this new location. It was an area I had hunted for 13 years and had taken a buck there every year that I could remember. It had been a real hotspot for me, but I had never found that "perfect tree" in which to place a stand. My favorite spot is a finger of thick brush with two main trails running through it. I had a good tree on each trail, but more often than not the deer would be traveling on the trail opposite the one I was hunting. I could see the deer through the brush but they were out of range. This occurred countless times over the years and really bugged me, so in the spring of 2013 I took a little field trip in search of the "perfect tree", if there was one, in which I could cover both trails at the same time. If I could find a tree that covered the place where the two trails converged, it would increase my odds of success by 50%. At least that is the way I figured it.

Like I mentioned, this is a brush-choked travel corridor with lots of small trees, too small even for a ladder stand. The larger trees were just not in the right position for an

ambush site. I found a pinch point and noticed a large slightly leaning, crooked trunked poplar tree that I had overlooked all these years. I took a second look at it now. The bark of a poplar is slippery for use with a climber and is my last choice of tree when it comes to a stand. It was, however, in the perfect location, so it was that tree I was situated in on the morning of October 9th. It is always a good feeling once I get settled into a stand and am all set for the hunt. It was a beautiful morning. The temperatures had dropped a few degrees as anticipated but I had dressed appropriately. I was ready.

At 8:20am I caught deer movement and I could hear them as they came my way at a rather lively pace. There were 3 of them. The lead doe was heading right toward me. My mind switched to full "auto-pilot" as the doe continued to get closer. If she continued on her course she would offer me a 15 yard broadside shot.

Once I have determined to take an animal, all my focus is directed in placing an arrow in that kill zone. This is what I would like to impress upon beginning bowhunters. First you have to make a determination that you will kill that animal. Your decision to draw your bow and loose an arrow must be a decisive and deliberate movement. You have to pick that spot for the arrow placement, concentrate on that spot, draw the bow and loose that arrow in a one fluent, deliberate effort. This paradigm is accomplished through repetitive shooting. Loosing lots and lots of arrows so that it becomes second nature. It is so natural to you that you do not consciously perceive the whole action.

The doe came in broadside at 12 yards. At the shot, I was aware of something new to me. It was how quiet the shot had actually been. When I let the arrow go, all I perceived was a soft whisper. That was it! That was very appealing to me, and it quite honestly surprised me a little. In a hunting situation I was used to the slapping sounds of the cables and wheels of the compound bow. I loved the quietness of the longbow. The next thing I noticed was yellow fletching protruding from behind the shoulder of the deer. It was surreal.

I watched as she ran off through the dense brush and out of sight. I didn't notice where the other two deer went. All my attention was focused on the doe. I heard her collapse not too distant. Less than 30 seconds after the shot. I descended the tree about 15 minutes later and walked quietly back to my vehicle.

I was happy when a family friend, Caleb Hubble, offered to help me track and recover the deer. He is a well disposed young man and very strong. His strength and youth would be invaluable when it came to dragging a deer out of the woods. My nephew, Brandon Fisk, who is 14, helped too. The doe had gone about 70 yards and had expired quickly. A fast humane kill is the hope of every bowhunter. I was elated that I had accomplished what I had set out to do, to take a deer with my longbow. But with



every kill, I experience a degree of sadness for a life taken. If I did not feel sadness and reverence for the taking of an animal, I would not care to hunt.

I field dressed the doe. She was not a huge deer but was full grown. Caleb had brought along a dragging harness and he with seemingly little effort dragged my doe all the way back to my truck, about 300 yards. I was very thankful to Caleb for that effort.

I had finally taken a deer with a longbow. I feel my bowhunting has always been a time of new experiences. I have gone through phases of using various types of bows and release aids, arrows, and broadheads, but the longbow is special. So are leather shooting gloves and arm guards and wood arrows.

I have to mention also that I have enjoyed being involved with the MLA and have met many new friends who are special to me too. Everyone has been so friendly and courteous. I have several longbows and recurves and I enjoy them all. As I grow older I become more and more nostalgic, but I expect this new phase I'm going through will last for some time to come.



Jimmy DooLittle is the author of "hunting Montcalm County Whitetails." This book covers a number of facets of pursuing whitetail deer in the county he resides in. He is a three season whitetail hunter; archery, firearms, and muzzle-loader. He is an accomplished musician having played professionally for a number of years.

Welcome New Members And Those That Have Been Away...

Jim Teets
Bob Jones
Steve Pray
Eric Mogren
Dave Parker
Jerry Richard
Jim Eeckhout
Todd Ekstrom
G. Fred Asbell
Ernesto Villarreal
Dean & Kara Schmier
Mike & Sara Balowski
Kai R & Theresa Benedict

Rev. Dr. Michael D & Vickie Mayfield
Andy Pollina & Nikki Baranoski
Keith and Darlene Lumma
Justin and Jennifer White
Richard & Lynn Hait
Wild Things LLC
Randy Hiffine
John Allmand
Nick Dedaker
Dennis Beck
Harry Hawn
Jim Belcher

Bill Hardy
Julie Miller
Peter Rohn
Isham Scott
Dave Young
Chuck Morey
Jeff Schubert
Mike Kowalski
George Marlatt
Jay & Kim Carlson
Amy and Greg Darling
Mohammad Muzammil
David and Shari Cartwright

Michigan Longbow Association Spring Membership Meeting Land-O-Lakes Bowmen Fenton, Michigan May 4, 2014, 1pm

The meeting was called to order by the President of the MLA, Mike Vines. Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag followed.

Roll Call was taken for MLA Council Members present or absent by Recording Secretary Floyd Wells. The record reflects that Council member VP Kenneth Meyers was absent.

Thank you was offered to the host club Land-O-Lakes Bowmen, by President of the MLA Mike Vines.

Minutes of the last regular MLA council meeting was read by Recording Secretary Floyd Wells.

Motion to accept: Mike Vines. Second: Brian Carpenter. Passed unanimously.

Membership Secretary's Report was given by Ken Scollick. Membership stands at 418 with 75 voting spouses. Ken explained how the membership voting actually works, especially in regard to the voting spouses.

Request must be made to add spouses to the voting roster. It is not automatically done when joining the organization.

A number of new members were at the Spring Shoot for the first time despite the rain

Motion to accept: Rob Kruko. Second: Thom Jorgenson. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report was given by Ken Scollick. The MLA account currently stands at \$17,530. There was a short discussion of bills yet to be paid. The portable MLA sign, other merchandise, and operating expenses were listed.

Sign	\$900
Hats	\$150
L-O-L Rental	\$500
Liability Insurance	\$600
Portable toilets	\$225
Ending balance of	\$15,900.

The membership was commended for their financial support to this part of our organization. With only two money-making activities each year we desperately need substantial membership support.

Motion to accept: Ken Scollick. Second: Nick Viau. Passed unanimously.

STICKTALK Report was given by editor, Caroline Wells. Request was made for the material for the summer edition of *STICKTALK* to be e-mailed to sticktalkeditor@yahoo.com by June 1st. Explanation was made of the steps being taken at this time to improve the transition of information from one ST editor to another. The new MLA *STICKTALK* computer has been purchased and its use was discussed. Kudos were also given to Peter Collins for his help in proofreading the copy before it is sent to the printer. Membership was commended for their efforts in making *STICKTALK* a major part of the MLA experience. The constituency was urged to continue sending in pictures and articles for publication in the quarterly newsletter.

Motion to accept: Gary Summers Second: Denise Van Passed unanimously.

Website Report was given by new webmaster Chris Gault. Chris reviewed his current project of revamping the entire MLA website to bring it to a more updated, user friendly experience. The new website will include a members only area, interviews, FAQ segment, *STICK-*

TALK, MLA history, and Council page. Also big/small game award applications as well as membership applications and merchandise purchasing. There are plans for music, links, video and photos so that the MLA website will be a revolving center of information for the MLA member and those seeking information about the longbow lifestyle.

Motion to accept: Carl Johns Second: Kim Summers Passed unanimously.

Exiting council members Ken Meyer, Rob Kruko, Matt Cowie, Brain Carpenter, Denny Every, were recognized for their contributions. 3 seats were even (E)-2yr terms and 2 seats were odd (O)-1yr terms.

New council members Chris Gault and Matt Beard were introduced as new Council members having filed their intentions via *STICKTALK* biographies. Volunteers were then taken from the membership and a ballot vote was held to fill the vacant seats. Todd Greenwald (E) 2-yr, Rob Jones (O) 1-yr, John McIntosh (O) 1-yr.

The Election of Officers was held through nomination and passed by the constituency with a unanimous vote:

Mike Vines – President

Nick Viau – Vice President

Ken Scollick – Membership Secretary/Treasurer

Floyd Wells – Recording Secretary

OLD BUSINESS

Activities Report was given by the Council. Brian Carpenter spoke about the Kalamazoo Expo. Denny Every spoke about the MLA Winter Banquet and shoot demonstrations.

NEW BUSINESS

By-law change for the Webmaster position was proposed by Ken Scollick which would make the webmaster a paid position on the MLA Council. \$125 per quarter would be paid to the webmaster just the same as it is to the *STICKTALK* Editor and the Treasurer.

Motion: Ken Scollick. Second: Rob Jones. Passed unanimously.

2014 GLLI was discussed. A plea was again made for help at the MLA booth during the stress times when more manpower can be used. More help was asked for at the specialty shoot venues as well as at the kid shooting area.

John McIntosh gave a report about Camp Wilderness and praised the MLA for its support, both physically and financially. The MLA sends two young people to the camp (\$100 each) per year and provides staff when called upon to do so. The camp will be held July 11-13, 2014 at School Section Lake in Mecosta.

Denny Every announced the winner of the 2014 Chili Cook off: Matt Cowie.

Denny Every also gave an explanation for the absence of our MLA friends from PA.

John Vasos reported on Camp Cuervo Archery Club and the progress that has been made over the last 10 years. The MLA was thanked for its support, and its latest donation of t-shirts.

Jerry Keck was not present to discuss the National Archery in the Schools program but the Mike Vines reported on the program's positive and negative impact in relationship to the MLA.

John McIntosh discussed his idea of a cast-iron cook off to be held at the GLLI this year.

Motion to adjourn made by Gary Summers. Second: Greg Denny. Passed unanimously.









From Spark to Flame

by Nick Viau

I'll never forget the day I was presented with my first bow. I was in elementary school at the time, it was the 80s, and I wanted to be Rambo in the worst way. My Uncle Jim hunted with a compound from time-to-time and gave me his old Bear Whitetail Hunter to see if I would catch the bug. It had a black magnesium riser, laminated wood limbs, a flipper rest to keep the arrow in place, and the smallest wheels I'd ever seen on each end. It was taller than I was at the time and I'm sure watching me drag it around the farm was quite entertaining to him and my grandparents when my brothers and I would come over on Saturdays mornings.

To his credit, he didn't give me any arrows, which was probably a good move, considering the damage we were doing to ourselves and to the property with whatever natural ammunition was abundant at the time. We were Michigan kids and we threw whatever we could find at each other, from chestnuts and corncobs to green apples. Not that it would've matter much. At 30 pounds, it would be at least a year before I could fully draw the bow, but I had a

lot of fun trying. I would draw, hold it back until my arms would shake, and then let down as slowly as the jerky action would allow. By the time I was able to scrounge up enough strength to repeat the process without issue, I'd accumulated a hodge-podge of aluminum arrows from my grandfather's garage and was itching to send them into orbit.

Doing so wouldn't be without difficulty or pain. I had no shooting glove and nothing to keep the heavy compound cable from tearing up my forearms. I didn't know of such things. In fact, had my father not noticed me shooting in the yard one evening while he fed our dogs, I would've probably given up completely. After taking one look at my arms and fingers he disappeared into the garage and returned with leather finger stalls, one of my old soccer shinguards, and a bale of hay. He slid the shinguard over my forearm, buckled the oversized stalls on my shooting hand, and leaned the bale against an old horseshoe back-stop about 10 yards away. Satisfied, he drew a line in the sand, literally and figuratively.

"Nick, don't EVER shoot with your little brothers around and don't point that thing ANYWHERE but at that target!" He said sternly. I acknowledged with several jittery nods. He responded with one of his own and with an "okay, have fun!" went back to work.

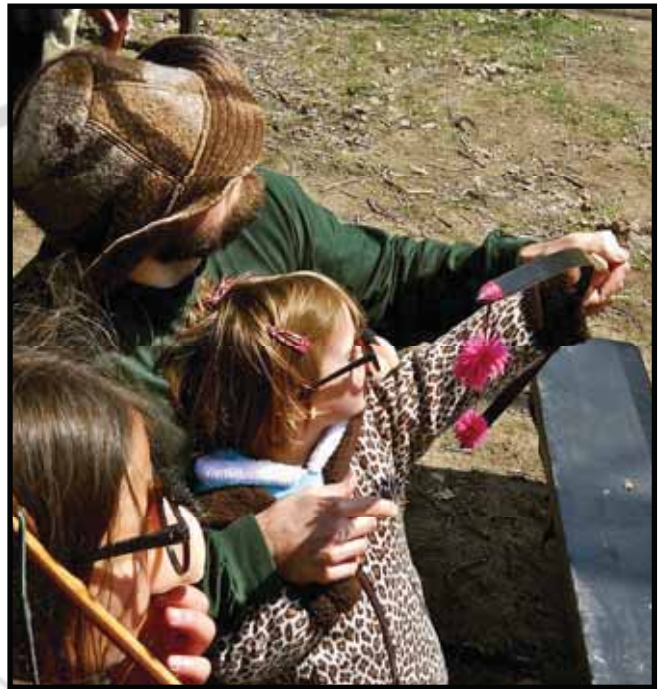
I'll admit that some instruction would've been nice, but my Dad wasn't a bowhunter and never claimed to be. He'd shot a recurve on a handful of occasions and knew little more about the weapon than I did. He was a muzzleloader man who bought into the Fred Bear "two season hunter" pitch and didn't have the desire or time to stick with it. A bow was just another way into the woods and not something he could afford to work at enough to be proficient. I find this hilarious now considering how brightly his passion for archery burns and how much time he spends shooting his longbow. If only it had stuck.

My fingers and forearms were now protected. I was ready to start shooting and commenced to do so without further delay. It was a solid effort, but nowhere near "good". I didn't hit the target for at least an hour, but it was an unbelievable feeling when I did. My young mind wandered into the middle ages and wound through every Robin Hood story I'd absorbed up to that point. I was defending castle keeps and shooting knights off of horseback with every shot until I eventually grew tired and the enemy began to overtake me.

I read somewhere that the beginning archer should never shoot more than 20 arrows at a time and I can tell you I was *well* beyond that plus another dozen. The fuzzy exterior of my shinguard bracer was all but shaved to the white plastic shield beneath and the riser was slippery in my hand. Disaster and misfortune ran amuck downrange and within minutes, I'd lost every arrow I'd taken so long to acquire.

I returned to the house in the sorriest of states. Dad was shocked I'd lost all my arrows, but returned the favor when he announced he had more. "I've got a box of old wood arrows in the garage." He said. "Not sure if they're any good. I bought them years ago! Help yourself, but be careful." I hopped off like a rabbit, wading through dusty boxes and crates until I found my promised prize – a box of "Bear Archery" inscribed arrows with blue cresting and yellow fletching. They were indeed in rough shape. Some had broadheads, others had field points, and a few were tipped with blunts. Most had bent or warped with time, but I didn't know how to check, or if that even mattered. I was just happy to have something to shoot.

I snatched up the heirlooms and headed back into the yard to continue my session. It went about as well as you might expect and I'd reduced the bulk of the stash to firewood within minutes. I called it "quits" with the remaining few I had, put them back into the box as if nothing had happened, and hung my accomplice on a hook in the garage where it remained until it delaminated 20 years later. I



kept the riser for giggles and discovered that Dad resurrected those old Bear arrows for similar reasons. They sit on a shelf back home.

I'm a grown man now, with a family of my own and a thirst for archery that is impossible to quench. Today, the world beyond the riser looks every bit as fresh and new as it did back then. I only wish I'd discovered it sooner. Had I pressed my father to teach me about the bow, he might have learned more about it himself, and my head would be full of archery-infused memories. Alas, it wasn't meant to be and I'm convinced that picking it up when I did provided a unique perspective I can now share with future archers – kids especially. Something truly special happens when you hand a child a longbow. Their eyes light up in a way that is wondrous to behold. If properly cultivated that exuberance can transform into something more powerful than our adult minds can fathom; and this will ensure our preservation.

In my brief but exciting MLA Council tenure I've heard the phrase "Longbows Forever" echoed frequently throughout our ranks, but hadn't given it much thought until our recent workings with the youth at West Kelloggsville Elementary School. We put 240 kids behind the longbow and the impact was undeniable. I've never seen so many smiles. The message is now clear to me and ever-present. We are blessed with a wonderful pastime. Share it with the children in your life and don't wait another day to do it.

Should you have an opportunity to promote the longbow in your community and need council assistance in doing so, please contact Nick Viau at viaunick@hotmail.com.



Tools - Left to right: Tilling String, Bow stringer, File Card, Cabinet Scraper, 4-in-1 Rasp, Single/Double Cut Two-sided Flat File, Semi-Course Rasp (Nicholson 49), Tape Measure, Straight-edge 7-8" long, Pencil, Notched Tilling Stick.



Building a Selfbow: Part VI

By: Matt Wirwicki

In the previous issue of STICKTALK we ended with a developed stave or bow-blank, as we call it. It looks like a bow only the limb portions are not tillered. The limb sections are rather stiff but should be thin enough to start bending if force is applied. Tilling again, is simply defined as getting the bow limbs to bend evenly. We accomplish a good tiller by strategically removing wood in areas that aren't bending. It's a gradual process removing wood a little at a time until an optimum arc is accomplished. Also, the limbs must bend with even resistance to each other. One way to think of it is, a 50 pound bow will have a 25 pound upper and 25 pound lower limb. I would recommend, reading this entire installment prior to tillering your bow. Though most of it is in a logical chronological sequence, there are some concurrent, if/then, conditions that must be understood prior to jumping whole hog into it.

Tools:

I usually start out with some tools needed. It's a good place to begin because if you're like me, I get frustrated if I begin a project only to find that I need to set it all aside for a run to the hardware store. In the real old days, tools used were made of stone, bits of metal, wagon wheel banding and basically anything that would accomplish the task at hand. For this instructional, with some creativity and a bunch of patience, you could conceivably turn

your bow-blank into a functional bow with merely a pocket knife and a string. I say this because I am basically cheap. If I don't have to buy it, and can get by with what I have laying around, I will. I should mention that many of my tools were picked up at rummage sales, antique stores, and flea markets. I also said previously that I prefer the old, American-made tools. Likely there's plenty of life left in them; enough to exceed that of brand new, foreign-made tools found today at the big box

A tillering string is a long bow string with only one loop. 80-inches should be a minimum length for any bow up to about 72" long. You can twist your own. There are plenty of tutorials on the internet for making flemish-twist strings. Remember only to make one loop. My tillering stick is made of a 1x3 piece of pine, because I had it lying around. I cut a notch in the bottom of the stick to receive the bow handle. Also, I cut notches every inch into one edge of the stick between 1/2" and 3/4" deep. The notches only need to be wide enough to hold the tillering string without slipping out. I start at 8-inches from the handle recess and have seen no reason to extend any notches beyond 24-inches. I don't think I've ever used any notch passed 20-inches. My first tillering stick was made from a scrap of osage. It was discarded while cutting a rough bow from a 1/4 split stave. 20 years later; I still have it. Finally, my straight edge is from an inferior hickory bow backing. Not good enough for a bow, but sufficient as a tool. Again, just something I had lying around.

Floor Tillering:

Probably first before anything, have a number in mind; a desired draw weight. This will come in handy later. As in the picture below, grasp the bow handle with your left hand rested firmly against your thigh. Steady the upper limb with your right hand and firmly set the lower tip to the floor. Bending your knee, shift your weight forward applying forward pressure to the bow. Initiate a bend in the lower limb. **DO NOT BEND THE BOW BACKWARDS... EVER!** Your position should allow your eyes an overhead view to see the profile of the bending lower limb. Don't apply too much force, as your bow limb is not ready enough for a full-draw bend. Note locations in the limb that may be stiff. Is it flat at mid-limb? Is it bending only at the tip; just outside the handle riser section? Picture in your mind's eye what an even, elliptical bend should look like. Next, swap ends and do the same for the other limb. Note again, where areas of the limb might be stiff or not bending.

Observe also, which limb provides the most resistance. It is currently your strongest limb and where we will begin to make tillering adjustments. After identifying your strongest limb, floor tiller again. Study again where you see flat or stiff areas and mark them on the belly side with your pencil. These marked, stiff areas are where we will begin removing wood. Removing wood in the stiff areas will eventually allow these non-bending areas of the limb to flex. When satisfied that you've marked the stiff spots with your pencil, place the bow belly-side up in a vice or firmly on your lap and rasp away the pencil marks. Rasp off the pencil marks then check the limb again by flexing it on the floor. Remove **JUST** the pencil marks and go no deeper. Smooth out the rasp marks using your cabinet scraper. All throughout the tillering stage, it is easy to

remove too much wood. It is okay to be shy about it. Remind yourself that you can't put the wood back on, once it is gone. Like painting, several thin coats are better than one thick coat. In bow building, several small adjustments are better than one large, hurried adjustment.



IF this is your first selfbow, **THEN** it is helpful not to mark every stiff spot you see in one cycle. Too many marks can run into each other and be distracting. Choose the section with the greatest non-bending area, mark it and work on it. Check it again; remove a little wood, over and over until your satisfied that your efforts are causing a nice bend to form. You'll find that making corrections in one spot will often remedy other subtleties you observed in your initial evaluation. If necessary, move on to the next stiff area and work on it.

IF in your initial floor bending observation you noticed a portion that is bending excessively in comparison to the rest of the limb **THEN** a potential "hinge" is forming. To correct a hinge, it is necessary to remove wood on both sides of it. I write "No!" in my hinge areas. "No" means no. Don't touch. Don't remove wood there, as it will only become weaker. To fix a hinge, mark and remove wood on both sides of the hinge. By removing wood on both sides of the hinge, it spreads the stress area outwards in both directions. It allows a greater area of the limb to do the work. This thereby remedies the hinge. Work on hinges first, before any non-bending areas.

Floor tillering is the first gradual step in the tillering process. Avoid aiming for the "perfect" tiller during this phase. We will be more detailed later. Work towards an even bend without being too critical. When your limb looks similar to the one in my previous picture, call it good enough. Undoubtedly, this limb (once the stronger of the two) has lost some weight. Floor tiller again, both limbs. Which limb is now the stronger of the two? Make a mark on the limb if you'd like. Mark maybe, an "S" for "Strong" or a "W" for weak. That way you won't forget.

Now it is time to eye up the condition of the bend on the other limb, originally the weaker. Repeat the floor tillering process on this other limb until a decent arc is again accomplished. Once more, reevaluate the strength of both limbs and re-identify if necessary. Even up the limb strength if one feels obviously stronger than the other. To weaken the stronger of the two, remove wood in even passes through the entire length of the limb so as not to affect the arc you've worked patiently to achieve. This is where a cabinet scraper does nicely. You may develop a system such as, 20 even scrapes then check. 20 more; check. 10 more; check. Another might be, rough up with a fine file, scrape smooth then check. Rough again, scrape then re-check. When the nicely bending limbs feel about even in strength, the floor tillering process is finished. Again, don't overdo it during this phase. Your goal is for an even strength general arc on both limbs. Remember that desired draw weight? It is most often in the floor tillering step that many beginning bowyers whittle themselves into a kid's bow, before realizing it.

String Nocks:

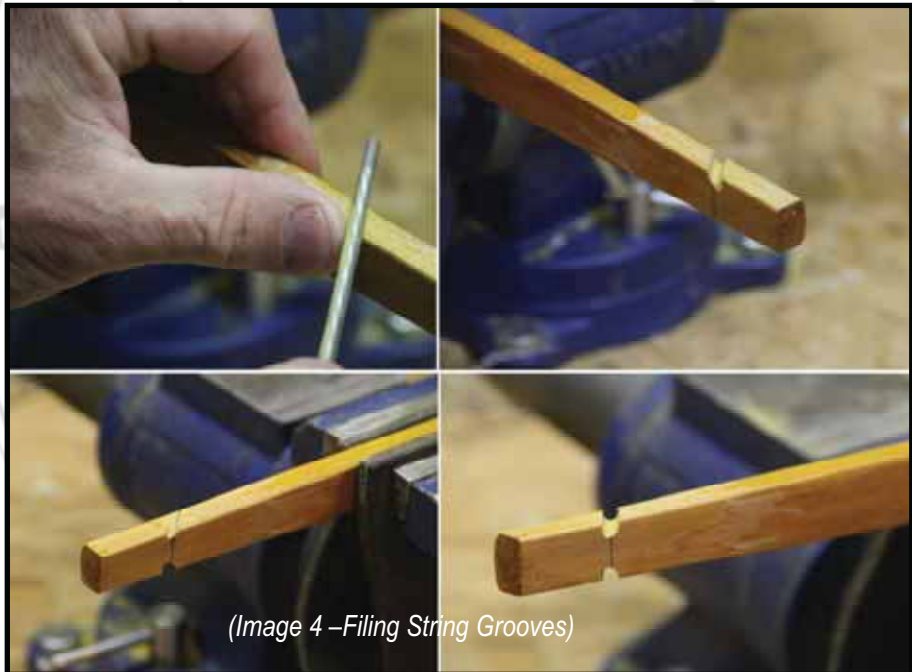
Now that we're satisfied with the general arc and even weight of both limbs from the floor tillering process, it is time to file in string grooves. Taking into consideration the limb cups on my bow string, I measure 1-1/8" from the extreme tip of the limb and make a mark perpendicular to the longitudinal centerline of the bow on the back of the limb. Next, make marks on the sides of the bow at 45 degrees from the perpendicular mark that was made on the back. See the next image for clarification.

Mark the limb edges at 45 degree angles towards the belly side, starting from the line drawn on the back of the bow. File one groove, turn bow over and file the next.



(Image 3 – Marking For String Grooves)

Align a chainsaw file over top your first pencil mark and file a groove. The first groove is always the easiest. Aligning the second groove to match the first is a bit trickier. Though the lines match, centering the file exactly as the first one is not always that simple. For the second groove, score one corner of the opposite edge to match the first groove. Then, score the opposite corner directly in line with the other side. When satisfied that both corners match up with the first groove, continue filing the flat of the bow edge to match that of the first groove. Constantly, eye up the original groove as you progress through the second groove to be certain they are going to match up. As you progress, it is possible to cheat the file over a bit if necessary. There's nothing more noticeable than uneven, lopsided string nocks on a bow. Take your time; do a nice job.



(Image 4 –Filing String Grooves)

The depth of your nocks should completely contain a bow string loop. The edge of the loop should not protrude past bow's edge.



(Image 5 –Testing For Fit with A String Loop)



(Image 6 –Tying the Timber Hitch)

Timber Hitch Knot:

The timber hitch or “Bowyer’s Knot” is a type of slip knot that is utilized on the non-looped end of the tillering string. The image below shows the steps in tying the knot. I utilized a solid color string to make it easier to view the steps.

The Long String

Because the bow isn’t ready to be braced, a long string is tied. Affix the loop end to one nock then tie the timber hitch in a location on the tillering string which will yield no brace or flex in the bow. When affixed to the other limb, the appropriate string length when pulled taught should lie an inch or two above the handle section. See the next images.



(Image 7 –The Timber Hitch Tied to the Nock)



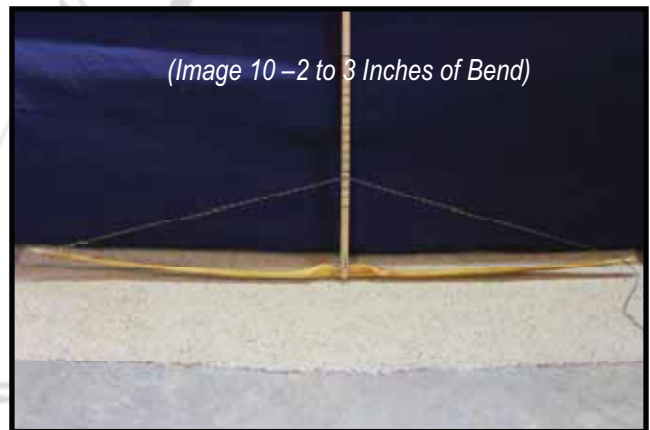
(Image 8 –The Long String)

The Tillering Stick

Brace the bow onto the tillering stick as shown in the photo below. Brace up to your 12-inch notch. Depending on the length of your “long string,” the bow should have some bend. 2-3 inches of bend is a good place to start.



(Image 9 –Bracing On the Tillering Stick)



(Image 10 –2 to 3 Inches of Bend)

Now that the bow is semi-braced, a better idea of how each limb differs in strength is easy to see. In image 11, one limb bends about 3-1/2 inches from the floor and the other limb is bending only 2 inches. That is a 1-1/2 inch difference between the two. Make a note of it. Like in the floor tillering stage, scrutinize the stronger limb first, in this case, the limb that is only 2 inches from the floor. At this point we’re assuming that the weaker (3-1/2”) limb is perfectly tillered, though likely it is not. We’ll save any work on the weaker limb for later. Hold with a simultaneous grip around the bow handle and tillering stick, so that it doesn’t slip out of its position. Raise the bow to be vertical such that strongest limb is eye level.



(Image 11 Measuring Limb Strength from Floor)

Using the straight edge, place the edge of the tool on the belly side of the bow. Start from the handle section and

slide the tool up towards the tips. Run the tool up and down a couple of times to get an idea where there are gaps between straight edge and the bow limb. The gaps indicate where the limb is bending. No gaps indicate where the limb is not bending.



(Image 12 Using the Straight Edge)



(Image 13 Marking the Stiff Areas of the Limb)

Mark the limb in areas where they are not bending, again as in the floor tillering process. It is the marked, non-bending areas that we need to get bending.

After you've marked the limbs, remove wood only in those areas. As before, remove only the pencil marks then recheck with the straight edge. Eventually, stiff spots will begin to bend. When a nice, elliptical arc throughout the entire limb is achieved it is time to stop. It is desirable for the limb area close to the tips remains a bit stiff. Stiffer tips yield a quicker arrow in the end and prevent what is called being "whip-ended." Also, where the handle fades out to the limb there will be an inevitable gap that should be ignored and not adjusted at this time. "No" areas are where the limbs are bending and should be identified, especially if in excess. Hinges are treated the same as in the floor tillering process; remove wood on either side of the hinge. Smooth out the rasp marks with a finer file or the cabinet scraper.



(Image 14 Removing Wood at the Markings)



(Image 15 Smoothing the Rasp Marks)

String up the bow again on the tillering stick. Make note of any changes in the balance of the limbs. Undoubtedly, the wood removal just performed will weaken that limb. Instead of a 1-1/2 inch difference between the two, perhaps now only a 1-inch difference; more or less. Any wood removal performed on one limb will affect the other limb. It's that Newton's Physics thing, "For every action there is an *equal* and *opposite* reaction." Whereas, the weaker limb was 3-1/2 inches from the floor, it now might be 3-inches from the floor since the limb we just worked on now is less resistant to bend.

This is also that, "Lather – rinse – repeat" or "if at first you don't succeed" thing. Mark again the stiff spots. Analyze changes to any hinges. Remark and remove more wood if necessary. As the limb gets closer to a nice even arc shape, less aggressive wood removal may be what's needed. There comes a point where only scraper shavings are enough to get the desired arc. If the limb you've been working strings up and is still stronger than the previously determined "weaker" limb, remove wood with long scrapings along the length of the entire limb to balance them out.



(Image 16 Lather)

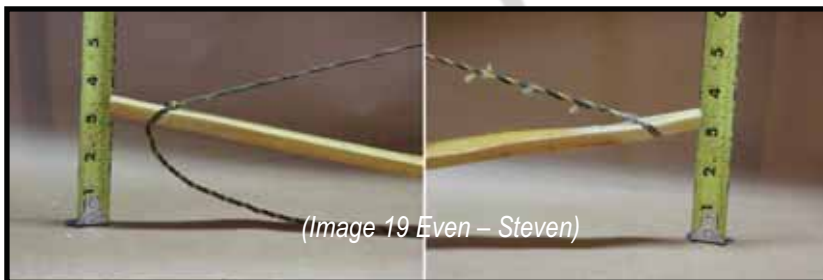


(Image 17 Rinse)



(Image 18 Repeat)

It is now time to move to the other limb and make necessary adjustments to tiller by strategically removing wood where necessary to end up with an even arc. Once accomplished, balance both limbs with long smooth scraper movements on the stronger limb. Stop when they are even in strength.



(Image 19 Even – Steven)

Raising the Brace on the Tillering Stick

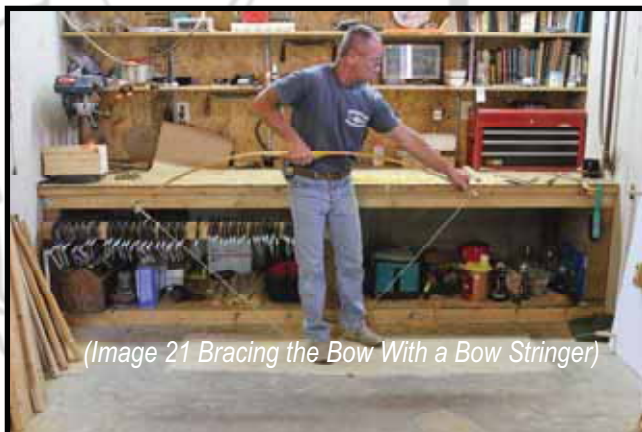
At the beginning of the tillering stick exercise, we braced the bow to 12 inches. Raise the brace to 13 inches and check the tiller again with the straight edge. If the tiller still looks good, raise to 14 inches. Progress up the tillering stick making necessary wood removal adjustments until the limb tips are 6 inches off the floor. See the following image. Both limbs have about 6-inches of bend and are bending at a nice, elliptical arc.



(Image 20 Six Inches of Brace on the Long String)

Bracing the Bow

It is now time to shorten the sting via the bowyers knot. Shorten the string enough to brace the bow to about 6 or 7 inches measured from the backside of the handle to the string. Use a bow stringer to brace the bow. Flex the bow a bit (not too much) to get a feel for its current, early draw weight.



(Image 21 Bracing the Bow With a Bow Stringer)

The Wall

Construct a contraption like in the following picture. At eye level, affix a block of wood which will serve to hold the bow horizontally at the handle. From the middle of the bow string, hang a bow scale tied to a rope brought through a pulley system anchored to the base board of the wall. On the other end of the rope, tie a sturdy handle. The handle, pulley, rope and scale system will be used

to flex the bow and to measure draw weight. A yard stick on the wall beginning at the same level as the bow back will indicate draw length. Marks at every inch on the wall will also serve the purpose.



(Image 22 The Wall)

Identification of the Upper Limb

Two factors identify which will be the bow's upper limb. First, eye down the string and determine which side of the bow the string favors. If you are a right-handed shooter, it is preferable that you choose the upper limb as the one where the string favors the shooting hand side of the bow. This will yield less "archer's paradox" of the arrow when the string is released from the bow at full draw. If while holding the bow with the shooting hand the string favors the opposite side, turn the bow 180 degrees and make what was the bottom limb, now the upper limb. Second, once the string orientation to the handle is determined, the upper limb should be a bit weaker than the lower. If it is not, adjustments will need to be made to the upper limb to weaken it. One way to see this is to measure where it is deepest from the bow belly to the string. Do this for both limbs. See next images.



(Image 23 Chosen Upper Limb)



(Image 24 Lower Limb)

Notice that the lower limb at 6-3/4" is weaker than the upper at 6-1/2". The upper limb in its current state will have to be weakened. Ideally, the upper limb should be between 1/8 and 3/16" weaker than the lower. *Note: Our bow design puts the shooting hand at the center of bow. A slightly weaker upper limb compensates for the "above center-shot" arrow placement.* At this time, unbrace the bow and use the cabinet scraper to remove wood on the upper limb until it is slightly weaker. Exercise the bow by flexing 10-20 times after any wood removal. This "trains" the wood. Changes due to wood removal don't always become noticeable until after the wood is stressed by flexing. Be frugal about wood removal, constantly re-bracing and checking the results with a tape measure. Do not overdraw the bow while exercising the limbs. At this point, the tiller may not be satisfactory enough to come to full draw.

After satisfied that the correction was made in the upper/lower limb relationship re-brace and put the bow back on the wall. Hook the scale to the center of the string. Draw the bow by pulling the handle towards yourself with the pulley mechanism. Keep an eye on how the bow is flexing and at the scale for draw weight. Flex and unflex the bow to between 0-16 inches. Observe for any stiff, non bending areas. Do not exceed your intended finished draw weight. See next picture.



(Image 25 Bow Flexed On the Wall)

In the picture above, the limb on the right is the chosen upper limb. After the first attempt to make the upper limb weaker you can see by the flexed profile that the upper limb is still bending less than that of the lower limb, on the left. However, it does have a nice arc. With that being the case, wood removal will be with smooth even strokes of a cabinet scraper along the entire length of the limb. **REMEMBER – BELLY SIDE ONLY FOR ANY WOOD REMOVAL ADJUSTMENTS FOR TILLER!** *Note: It may be difficult to see but the scale is reading 25.4 pounds at 17-inches.*

After the wood removal exercise the bow, re-brace and place back on the wall. Flex again, analyzing the bend for each limb and for both limbs. Look also at your scale



(Image 26 Mark and Remove Wood along Entire Length of Upper Limb)



(Image 27 Exercise the Bow After All Wood Removal)

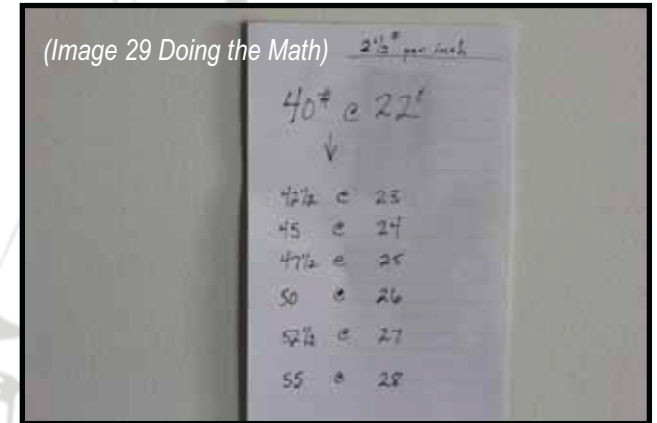
while flexing. Again, don't exceed your intended draw weight. The reason for this is if your desired bow weight is to land at 50 pounds, yanking the bow down to 60, 70 or more pounds is overstressing the wood. Excess stress on the wood in the bow-making stage is a big factor in string follow, when the bow is completed. If the finished bow will never see 70 pounds, why take it to that in the "training" stage—especially in the earlier stages when hinges will only worsen if tested. The tiller looks pretty good so I've decided to draw the bow to 22-inches. The scale reads 39.9 pounds; close enough to call it 40 pounds at 22.



(Image 28 Forty Pounds at 22 Inches of Draw)

Now, it's time for some math. On a piece of paper, jot down the current poundage and draw length. In this case, 40lbs @ 22-inches. Flex the bow and note the pounds at 20, then 21 and again at 22 inches. I observed that the

bow is gaining 2-1/2 pounds per inch of draw. The reading at 20 inches was 35 pounds. We've pulled the bow to 22 inches. For a 28 inch draw length we have another 6 inches to go. 6-inches multiplied by 2.5 pounds equals 15. Add the 15 pound result to the 40 at 22 and you can figure your maximum draw weight with no additional wood removal adjustments will be 55 pounds at 28 inches. I'm shooting for the upper 40-pound range at 28-inches. What this means is that I have at least five pounds of wood removal adjustments to spare. Always figure that you'll lose 1 or 2 pounds in final sanding and preparations for finish.



I made another even adjustment to the upper limb and returned to the wall. I'm now reading 36.7 pounds at my 22-inches. The limbs look to be in better balance. I decided to draw the bow to 26-inches and am reading 45.5 pounds. The tiller still looks pretty good, so I brought her to 28-inches. I noticed that at 28-inches, my lower limb appears to have still a bit too much bend coming right out of the handle. Thinking that my yardstick might be giving me an optical illusion, I removed it. My suspicions were correct and the bow limb looks better. At 28-inches, the scale reads 47.9 pounds at 28-inches of draw. My target weight of upper 40's is reached. "Is the tiller perfect", I ask myself? The answer being "no," nonetheless, it is close enough, so I stopped there. I'm calling it a bow.



(Image 30 After Yet Another Adjustment)



(Image 31 Let's Call it a Bow)



(Image 33 Away She Goes)



(Image 32 Now the Fun Part)



(Image 34 Success)

Finishing

At this time, it is a good idea to shoot 50-100 arrows through the bow. If any changes in tiller are to happen, it will happen during this breaking-in period. If there are, make small adjustments if necessary. To finish the bow, sand the entire bow beginning with 100 grit sandpaper. Move to 150 grit, then 220 grit, 320 then 400 grit. Finalize by rubbing the entire bow vigorously with a paper towel. This burnishes the wood and leaves it with an almost glossy appearance. You can use tung oil, polyurethane, spar urethane or any other suitable finish that will protect the bow from moisture and weather. Outfit with a double looped bow string. If desired, wrap the handle area with a leather grip.

This article marks the final installment in the "Building A Selfbow 101" series. This bow will be finished and

donated to the Michigan Longbow Association to be auctioned or raffled off at the 2014 Great Lakes Longbow Invitational.

When approached over a year ago by Floyd and Caroline about doing the series, I was excited to do it. I've thoroughly enjoyed writing this series for the MLA. For the members who were "on the fence" about building their own selfbow, I'm hoping that this series resolves any fear factors and provides the motivation to take the leap. My good friend Gary Davis said to me 20 years ago, "Nothing beats the feeling of entering the woods with a bow that you made yourself" and I must agree. A properly made selfbow is a formidable weapon that has taken game of all sizes. Words of warning – "It's Addictive." Have fun and shoot straight!

Matt



In Memory of.....

Each year at the Great Lakes Longbow Invitational it is with honor that we of the Michigan Longbow Association pay our respect to those who have gone on before. We will gather just as the mist begins to settle on the parade ground next to the Thornapple River. A list of those who have passed will be read while we reflect on those fond memories of family and friends who are no longer present

to share our love of archery. While their human bodies fail, their spirit lives on with each arrow loosed during this commemoration. Please join us for this celebration of life at the 21 arrow salute Saturday evening at the 2014 GLLI. Stop at the MLA booth to add the names of those loved ones who have passed anytime before the ceremony begins, and please share this beautiful ceremony with us.



The Last Day

by Donovan Watson

I signed up for a hog hunt at the Michigan Longbow Association's Winter Awards Banquet. Rick Butler, Doug Gilmore, Andrew Zwerk, Gary Swinton, Brad Boettcher, George Marlatt, and Thom Jorgenson were already committed to the trip. I had always wanted to hunt hogs and figured the glass backed longbow I had recently built might be the perfect medicine for a SC pig. Andrew Harper runs the "Wild Things" preserve, a 4000 acre ranch in Estill, SC. The scenic ranch runs for several miles along the Savannah River. There are no fences at "Wild Things" and hogs have been running wild there since the early explorers set them loose. There is also a lot of flint found on the property, a rarity in that area, making it a very important place for Indian tribes long ago.

After a long drive from Michigan, I set up for an evening hunt and brought out a light with a red lens to see how it would work if a hog were to come in after dark. Unfortunately the only thing I saw was a raccoon and the red lens did not seem to bother him, so I packed it in early thinking that "tomorrow is another day".

The next morning after coffee and breakfast, the group discussed where they were going to go to find some hogs for a spot and stalk style hunt. I decided to go back to where I had gone the day before as I had seen some good sign of hog action. Not to mention I had spread some corn

mixed with horse feed to hopefully draw the action back.

I did some more scouting and found another spot in the palm meadows with a decent amount of rooting going on so I marked the area with a GPS. A break for a bottle of water and a couple of oranges, then I was off again to do more scouting. I worked my way back to the truck to get some lunch and see how everyone else had done.

Doug had seen hogs and said he got to put a stalk on several of them. He did well for about 20 minutes before getting busted. After lunch the temperatures rose to the upper 80s, which is just too hot for me. Some of the guys in camp took a nap before the evening hunt. A couple had their bicycles with them and went out for a ride looking for hogs. I stayed up and practiced shooting for a bit then relaxed on the couch until evening.

I decided to go back to the same place as the night before since my light was still set up for an evening hunt. The night started out pretty well with a turkey coming in then not much later a couple of deer showed. I was not sure it was a good idea to keep the deer around, so I chased them off. I thought if a hog were to come in, and the deer saw me move, the deer would spook the hog. About an hour later the deer were back, they really liked what was under the feeder. They brought along a possum so I shined the light on all of them and was happy



that the red light did not seem to bother either the deer or the opossum. I was confident that I was in good shape to harvest a hog should one come in after dark.

Another night with no piggies coming by, so on the way back to the truck I walked past another feeder and stopped to check it out. Like the stand I had been in, this one had not been hit either. I started to think that the hogs were moving either really late at night or very early in the morning. I thought that maybe I would skip breakfast and just head out early to the stand. That was the plan for the next morning.

It was the third day of the hunt and I had yet to see a hog, but walking out to the stand I passed the feeder and notice that there had been pig activity! There were tracks every where! One of the legs had even been kicked out on the feeder. So I made my way to the stand and sat for 2 hours but again saw nothing. I left the stand to scout and hope for a stalk. I checked out a couple of spots I had found earlier in the week but again, had no luck. On the way back to the truck I began to think about what I needed to do to be ready for an evening hunt. If I go back to the same stand there was not much to do, but hope.

When I returned to camp I checked with Andrew concerning a portable stand that I could hang in a different location. Andrew agreed to let me borrow the stand so after a nice long rest I headed out just before dark. The stand was only set 2 feet off the ground but the lights were

set and everything was ready to go by 8pm. Now there was nothing to do but wait.

As the sun set the woods and swamp came alive. All the different sounds made a music that at times was deafening. Time flew by with me turning my head left and right trying to figure out what was moving around me in the dark. Once I saw car lights drive by, my first thought was that Thom or Gary had shot a hog. At least somebody was seeing something, but it sure wasn't me. I had not seen anything and was starting to get tired. Every time I heard a noise I was ready to jump out of the low hung stand. I nocked my arrow twice during the night, with the only sighting being a possum. At 2:00 am I decided to pack it in.

I really wanted to see a hog, and was excited when I found out that Thom had hit one, but hadn't been able to find it. After breakfast I volunteered to go and help locate the animal. There was not much blood and a lot of tracks to choose from. We pulled Thom's stand and reset it for Gary for the last night of the hunt. For my last try I moved to a spot they called the Blue Lake stand. There was lots of sign and I hoped that this stand would produce.

I was in the stand by 5pm and a little after 6, I saw my first hog! This really got me pumped! As a matter of fact, it made my week! I told myself that whatever happened now, didn't matter because I had seen a hog. As I watched the sow come into the field a piglet soon followed. Immediately I knew she was not a shooter. She ended up going across the road and out of sight soon after.

At dark I turned on the light. The wind died down and the woods began to come alive. I had just started to light my Therna-cell, when a hog appeared. I could not yet see it in the dark, but I sure could hear it. The sounds indicated that it had found the corn mix I had put out and was sucking it up nonstop. Before long I spotted the hog through the pines and I started thinking that I should have trimmed between a couple more trees, but it was too late now. The pig fed closer but turned in the direction of the feeder. If it got to the feeder the shot would be too far for my longbow. I had an arrow nocked and was at full draw when the feather touched my nose I released. I didn't even remember letting loose of the string, but I can say



that the shot felt good. The hog let out a squeal then promptly ran across the water hole. I heard 2 more loud grunts before the hog took off in the direction of the road.

At the sound of branches breaking, I hoped that the hog was down. I mentally marked the tree where I had last seen the animal, and pulled out my phone to line up the compass. It was ENE and 52 degrees. I knew that after I got down from the stand all the trees would look the same. It had been about 25 minutes when I got down from the stand and headed for the truck. I flashed my headlamp at a passing vehicle and before long, Andrew, Brad, Doug and the camp hand Charlie were all there to help in the search.

I again pulled my phone and pointed the compass in the direction the hog had gone. In just minutes we were within 20 ft of where it had gone into the woods. It was at this spot that we found my arrow. About ten more yards we could see the brush pile the hog had gone through. The bad part there was no blood. We made it to the road with no sign. I found some fresh tracks through the mud and then about 15 yards further, we found blood. That was about the time Charlie said he heard something takeoff, he thought it was an Armadillo, but I didn't think so. We decided to pull out and get some dinner. We decided to postpone the recovery until morning.

We awoke bright and early the next morning, to the last day of the hunt. Thom and George said they would help with the track we had abandoned the night before. After searching for over 2 hours with no sign of the pig, we checked the road side then down a logging trail. Suddenly I heard large branches breaking that were just too big for an escaping squirrel. About this time rain began to fall so I headed for the truck and suggested to Thom and George that they take down their stands before the roads get to wet. I was determined going to check out the sound I heard in down the logging road.

As I approached the spot I heard branches breaking



again so I began to walk toward the sound. I saw something black moving between the trees and was certain it was a hog. At that moment however, I was unsure if the hog was the one I had shot the day before or another animal that I had simply happened upon. Working my way to within 50 yards, I waited anxiously for the pig to turn so I that I could get a good look at it's right side. The hog finally changed positions but there was no blood that I could see. I did notice that the hog was not putting any weight on it's right rear leg.

Quietly I stalked to within 18 yards as the hog entered an open field. I nocked an arrow as the adrenaline began to flow. I hit my anchor, release the string and send the arrow on it's way. Again the shot looked a bit far back but the hog quickly lay down. I backed away and sat on the side of the road, feeling exhausted but at the same time happy. I made my way back to the truck and honked the horn for help. Thom responded to my signal and together we approached the downed hog. It took two more arrows to seal the deal that included a stare down and growls that would make any bowhunter rethink his choice of game.



Donavan and his wife, Audrey, reside in Reading, Michigan with their son, Sam. Donovan enjoys numerous aspects of archery including building bows and designing custom leather arm guards.



Range Etiquette

by Floyd Wells

Some time ago we received a letter in the mail that contained a list of club rules and range etiquette. After a phone conversation with MLA member, Del Bradow, it was determined that *STICKTALK* should print an outline of proper etiquette for use on the archery range. While his accompanying list of rules did not apply fully to what we do with the MLA, we did do some research and came up with a number of points that should serve the purpose. Much of the inspiration for this material comes from Patrick Meitin, via "Peterson's Bowhunting Magazine." Please understand that at any given shoot, special circumstances may apply and this list is not exclusive or exhaustive. Please forgive us if we've missed anything.

First and foremost, the sport we enjoy must be safe. Please keep this very important point in mind every time you shoot. While we recreate with bows and arrows they were and are formidable weapons. Kingdoms have conquered and fallen, battles won and lost, because of the bow and arrow. Never take the power of the weapon you carry for granted. Nor should you allow anyone shooting with you, whether young or old, to forget this simple fact.

Be Patient

Some archers take 3-D shoots more seriously than others. While it may be a simple game to you, it may be a much more serious exercise to them. The fact of the mat-

ter is: they will take more time attempting to shoot as perfect as they possibly can. Understand it and be patient.

Large Groups

"Family reunions" on the course can be slow and uncomfortable. Try to limit your group size to six or less. Larger groups take longer to shoot, especially when kids are involved. And—there can be a bunch of lost arrows and lots of scratching in the leaves. It can be very frustrating sometimes. Again be patient.

If you've ever played golf, you know that you can politely ask a slow group if you may play through. Remember, courtesy applies to all parties. If you are in one of those slow groups and see you're holding up the process make sure you allow faster groups to pass on by. If there is a reason that you must leave the course before the end, then do so by proceeding forward. Never retrace your steps as most courses place trails to and from the targets. You could walk into an active firing range.

Assign Jobs

A great way to avoid delays is by assigning particular members of your group to tasks such as keeping score and pulling arrows. Assign these tasks to group members and carry them out as efficiently as possible, so that you clear targets quickly. Tally scores, return arrows to quivers



and take drink breaks only when you're safely clear of the target, not while standing in front of them. Get in, get your job done, and get out of the way.

Pulling arrows can be a tenuous affair at best. Many archers prefer to pull their own arrows due to bending or breaking. ASK permission first, before you pull. And if designated as the arrow puller for your group make sure there is no one standing behind you as you remove the arrows. The most dangerous place on the course can be immediately behind the person pulling the arrows. Puncture wounds in all parts of the body can be terribly painful and could be life-changing if an eye is involved.

Most of the shoots we share in traditional archery are non-scoring affairs, so this is seldom an issue. If you do score, make sure the scorekeeper actually sees the arrows in the target **before** they are pulled. Make sure the ground rules are set **before** the round begins. If scoring for record then competition protocol must be followed. Foot against the stake, silence upon shooting, only one arrow, etc. If you are simply scoring for fun, then make sure everyone agrees to how the scoring will work. No hard feelings and the creation of some great memories will be the reward.

Scratching for lost arrows

When you miss a target, and you will miss targets now and then, limit the search for your arrow to the time it would take to score and pull. If you haven't found your arrow in that time, make a note of the target and return when the course is less crowded, or check for it in the lost-and-found barrel later.

Remember that when you're looking for a lost arrow **make sure** to post someone at the target or lean a bow against the front of the target so approaching archers know they will need to wait. If you are the first to shoot at any given target, always make sure the range is clear before you step to the stake. Never approach the stake while there are other archers still at the target. If there are sharp angles or obstructed views on a course then call out the

universal command "CLEAR", as you leave the target.

Don't be a distraction

Be aware of what's going on around you to avoid disturbing other shooters' concentration. If you approach a target and someone is in the shot process, keep conversation quiet, walk softly, and hang back until they have completed the shot. It always shows good manners to pause in your conversations when someone's actively shooting. While clowning around may be OK with your party, you may be a distraction to the party ahead or behind you. Be aware and be respectful.



The stakes are usually placed on the course by the home club. They best know what is safe on their course and what is not. It is never recommended to change the angle of the shot. If you must move away from the stake for any reason, you must be responsible for making sure a safe shot angle still exists. We see these things from time to time with obstructions vs height, or obstruction vs RH/LH shooters. If you see an unsafe shot report it immediately to the governing authorities. It is my opinion that it is never safe to shoot across a travel corridor, path or walkway, where archers are currently moving.

Be respectful and safe with everyone you meet and on the course. A little common sense goes a long way.



The Parting Shot

by Thom Jorgensen



Well I was feeling pretty confident going into turkey season this year, mostly because I found myself living in the middle of a pretty good-sized flock of toms last winter. Last year

was a really bad year for turkeys around here and I heard of more than a few guys going the whole season without seeing a legal bird. Luckily I had caught up with Floyd Wells and Ken Meyer during the banquet and talked about turkey diet and learned more than a little about why this year was so challenging for them with the depth of snow and the thick ice layer it covered.

All winter I had 17 toms that came in almost daily. As their food sources started to become inaccessible, I started feeding them a complex diet with some grit within the DNR guidelines. I had to stop feeding them before the ground was clear, but a small opening of green soon followed and at the beginning of spring I still had 17 boys running around the property. The girls started showing up and the numbers more than doubled overnight. A few days later the flocks started breaking apart, and then they reformed into many smaller groups that still frequented the plots and pastures.

About this time I had a nice bow and arrow setup, and my blind was already out in front of their main trail from the roosting trees to the fields. I had decoys and was well practiced with my calls.

Did I mention I was confident? I was too confident. I drew the first week of season this year so I had limited time to hunt, to make matters far worse I had a big rush of work that put me on the bench for the first 4 days of it!

Here is how my blind looked those first days of turkey season when I wasn't in there!



I went out for my first hunt and passed on a tom because I didn't like the angle of the shot. The next day I swore I'd shoot the first legal bird I saw. The following evening a really sweet little bearded hen walked in. She walked up to about 10 feet and started scratching and purring along with another hen. I couldn't do it, self-made promises and all, I couldn't do it. I watched those girls for the better part of an hour and just enjoyed the privilege of being in their company.

I walked into the house thinking about just hanging up my bow and calling it a season, then I got the word that a friend in the next town over had just seen a wounded tom wander onto his property. I grabbed my bow and my quiver and I went over and dispatched the wounded animal. It was a beautiful tom almost 20 pounds. The meat was delicious, and the wings and tail feathers have already been put into crafts.

The bird was a blessing to our household. I believe my willingness to tag this animal was a blessing to the conscientious landowner. I hope a very swift end was a blessing to the suffering creature.

Last issue I said I'd submit for a Turkey Award if I killed a bird; I can't follow through on that. I didn't observe this animal to learn its habits. I didn't use blinds/calls/decoys to tip the scales for me and my longbow. Frankly, I don't feel like I earned it. Since some folks who read *STICKTALK* also ate some of that turkey chili the next weekend at the Spring Shoot, I thought I'd better put this story down so everyone knew why there was no award to go with that chili!

Looking back at the entirety of the last several months with me and turkeys, everything seemed to work out in just the way it was supposed to. Now I can start looking forward to turkey season 2015 and doing it the right way!



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