

Jack O'Connor

2013 Newsletter 2nd Quarter

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT CARD



By MARK YOCHUM, CO-CHAIRMAN

If you had the opportunity to read the last Newsletter you would see that I spoke at length on the importance of being informed when it comes time for you to make decisions. At our last Board meeting we discussed taking a stand on issues that threaten our way of life. I was preparing to write another "windy" but hopefully informative narration on gun control legislation and constitutional rights and had asked for input from our fellow board members.

As I was looking from face to face seeking additional viewpoints one of our founding board members Buck Buckner who was attending through the

electronic wizardry of conference calling spoke up and said it has already been done and I could do it no better. Buck, who is accepted as the personal biographer and was a friend of Jack O'Connor, said "Jack already did it most eloquently back in '69' and I have a copy I will send you."

My life just got a bit easier this issue as I am sure you will enjoy Jack O'Connor's summary and take on the 1968 gun legislation that came in the aftermath of the hysteria surrounding the assassinations of Jack and Bobby Kennedy as well as that of Martin Luther King Jr. It seems history does repeat itself and there is always a passion to re-invent the wheel. So, "Thank you Jack for telling it like it was and how it now is" and "Thank you Buck for bringing it to my attention."

About the Co-Chair: Mark Yochum is currently the co-chairman of the JOCHHEC. He is a Life member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Safari Club International, an NRA member and a supporter of Ducks Unlimited and The National Wild Turkey Federation. He is a United States Army veteran, lives in Lewiston, Idaho and works as a Real Estate Broker.

From the Director's Chair



By MIKE BUTLER, DIRECTOR

I always love it when spring rolls around. After working on indoor projects all winter I am ready to get out and enjoy the warmer springtime weather. Being an avid turkey hunter, the warm weather coaxes me outdoors to do some scouting and picture taking. March is the month the local Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show occurs in Spokane, Washington. We participated in the show by having a booth and meeting and greeting folks that have an interest in all things O'Connor. That is also a good time to see the nice trophy mounts that have been recently bagged by area/regional sportsmen and women. It is great opportunity to visit with outfitters and guides and to handle new

equipment that is arriving on the outdoor scene. Most folks like me that attend such exhibitions are like kids in a candy store. Like a good gun show, it is a tradition for me to go to these shows, do my thing, hang out, handle the wares, and gather information.

This year I am sensing a lot of hysteria and real concern from our hunting and shooting brethren that attended the show. All of the recent gun control talk has folks really uptight. My advice to them is to lighten up and relax, but keep your eye on the ball.

I sometimes think I watch too much television in the evenings when I am puttering around in my gun room (yes, there is a TV in there mainly for watching the Outdoor Channel and western reruns) or leisurely reclining in my favorite chair. Surfing the channels and watching the same talking heads sputtering the same negative scare tactics reminds me that "we" the people can be our own worst enemies. My better judgment tells me to be informed but not to fall victim to an over-zealous media, hell bent on creating societal chaos or hate mongering.

Once I get my fill of that stuff I know it is time to jump in the truck and head out to my favorite hunting and fishing spot to ponder and digest the more important things in my life such as how much I love and care about my wife and kids, how are my sons doing now that they are on their own, are my buddies okay, and what I can personally do to make the world a better place.

I specifically remember doing something similar when I returned home from Iraq in 2004 after serving as a civilian logistics specialist. One evening, my wife, Shari, asked me to take the recyclables out to the bins and sort them. I remember holding a milk jug in my hand and saying to myself why sort tin cans and plastics when the rest of the world seemed so screwed up. After about 10 minutes of pondering that question, I had an epiphany. At that very moment I truly understood that all good things in this world must begin with me and that milk jug, for without me making a wise decision to recycle the milk jug I cannot make a positive change in the world for the betterment of mankind at that particular place in time.

For all of us that hunt and shoot, we all should be standing by the recycle bin and pondering similar questions, asking ourselves what we can do to make the world a better place, how we can take personal action to assure our outdoor traditions carry forward into the future. We should all be so lucky to have our own epiphany for action and take a child hunting and fishing. It is the best thing we can do for ourselves, our country, and maybe for the whole wide world at this particular place in time.

Good Hunting.....

MB

About the Director: Mike Butler started his wildlife career in 1975 with the Missouri Department of Conservation. He is an Endowment member of the NRA, a Life member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, a supporter of Ducks Unlimited and The National Wild Turkey Federation and is also an NRA certified Range Officer. He is an avid turkey and elk hunter, and enjoys Alaska salmon fishing at least once a year.

Tech Corner

Four Days at the 2013 SHOT Show and Rivera Gun Show

By BRUCE YOUNG

It has been more than ten years since I've attended a SHOT Show (Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show). This is the show to attend for anyone interested in firearms or accessories. It

is closed to the general public and is designed for the foreign and domestic firearm, ammunition and accessory manufacturers, Sales Rep's, dealers, Law Enforcement and the firearm related press to view existing and new products. You can't purchase firearms at this show but you can place orders if you're a dealer. This is not a Military Exhibition but I saw several military personnel in uniform from the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, England, Taiwan, Germany, Israel and Eastern Europe attending.

I had the opportunity to attend this year's show in Las Vegas, NV. I would not have thought it could grow any more, but it has. Instead of the Las Vegas Convention Center, it is held in the Sands Convention and Expo Center and extended into the adjoining Valencia Hotel ball rooms where there is additional floor space.

Some of the trends I saw were more Modern Sporting Rifles (MSR's) and any conceivable accessory for them. MSR's are semi-automatic rifles and carbines based on AR 15 or AK 47 frames and not necessarily chambered for military rounds. The number of accessories includes: stocks, sighting equipment, grips, magazines, lights and many more items. Some are designed for home defense and others are dedicated for hunting.

There were more foreign and domestic rifles, shotguns and handguns introduced this year. Most of these were high end grade firearms. Another trend this year follows from last year with several domestic firearm manufacturers introducing lower price point rifles and shotguns as an addition to their

traditional lines. Some of these include Mossberg, Savage Arms, Thompson / Center (now owned by Smith & Wesson), Remington, Weatherby, and Winchester.

One item I didn't expect to see was Winchester Firearms had the Custom Tribute Jack O'Connor rifle prominently displayed at their booth. This was introduced last year but was prominently displayed in its own section again this year. It still drew an interested crowd when I was there each day.

The area dedicated to Law Enforcement has doubled or tripled since I last attended. This included firearms as well as handcuffs, helmets, Tasers, tear gas, bullet proof vests as well as any other items a street or SWAT officer might need or use.

Another interesting show was held at the same time ... the annual Rivera Hotel Gun Show which was about a mile from the SHOT Show. This was not your average gun show if you're from the Lewiston area. There were several custom gun and knife makers in attendance as well as Griffin and Howe, Angelo Bee (a noted Belgian engraver now residing in the United States), with a few English gun makers as well exhibiting double rifles and shotguns. I was pleasantly surprised as there were high end firearms and knives but some there were very reasonably priced.

The show was divided into separate rooms with the largest dedicated to firearm manufacturers and dealers. A large, but smaller room held custom knife makers selling their wares and knife making supplies. The remainder of the room (about ¼) held the overflow of

late entry firearm dealers. There were three smaller rooms each dedicated to antique firearms (1400's to 1800's), legal ivory from North America and Africa, and firearms related art.

One Item that fascinated me was a boxed experimental 30 Carbine pistol developed at Aberdeen Proving Grounds during WWII as a replacement for the M1A1 Carbine with a folding stock designed for paratroopers. The M1A1 Carbine fit into a canvas case and was strapped along the side of the paratrooper's leg when he jumped. The folded carbine could sometime break his leg if the man landed in under less than ideal conditions. This shorter pistol was a possible solution that never saw the light of day other than as a tool room sample with all its accessories. It was interesting none the less.

The custom rifles, shotguns and handguns were a sight to behold. The artistry on newer fire arms was impeccable, as at the SHOT Show, but just as interesting on old Colts, Winchesters, Sharps, Smith & Wesson, Parkers, Ithacas, Fox, Lefevers and some of the foreign firearms.

Along the way, I was able to see old friends from Montana and Arizona as well as some friends that were suppliers or competitors at one time.

These were long days but most enjoyable for anyone interested in firearms and hunting. I would encourage anyone to attend if they ever have the opportunity. You'll never be bored or regret it.

About the Author: Bruce Young is a retired engineer from Blount Corporation

and now volunteers on a regular basis at the Jack O'Connor Center, Idaho Fish and Game, and the Kelly Creek Fly Casters. Bruce enjoys gun shows, shooting, and fly tying as well as training kids in the outdoors.

Growing Up O'Connor



“Play of Words”

By CAROLINE O'CONNOR

My father loved to play with language. Words. He loved words. Almost everyone had "kidlets." "Kidlets" were divided into "boybles" and "girbles." My parents had four kidlets -- two boybles and two girbles. Eventually, we ate "watering mellion."

When we first moved to Lewiston, Idaho, we heard of the Lewiston Orchards, where one could find the best produce. It wasn't incorporated into the city at that time, and was made up mostly of orchards and plots of fruits and vegetables. Old-fashioned truck farming, I would say. I can find nothing today like the plump beefsteak tomatoes and just-picked corn on the cob and ripe peaches dripping with delicious juices we could find there. Nothing ever tasted better than a ripe tomato eaten on the sly like an apple, with salt

sprinkled over it. Mother made fresh peach ice cream from those peaches, and we all took turns churning it in the old fashioned ice cream maker behind the house. One Sunday that first summer my parents and their kidlets drove up to the Orchards, where the farmers sold their produce in open air stands. My parents were hungering for the best water melon. Dad found a great, good specimen by sniffing and thumping. He took it up to the proprietor and roared, "I'll take this WATERING MELLION." The farmer, speechless, stared at him in alarm, then asked him what he meant. My dad again loudly voiced that he want to buy this WATERING MELLION, which only stunned the farmer further. My dad then burst forth with one of his famous prolonged, wheezing cackles. My long-suffering mother looked away in pain. The rest of us were holding our sides. Somehow the transaction was accomplished. From that time on we ate "watering mellion" in the hot Lewiston summers, spitting the seeds out into the grass, where little watering mellion shoots tried to find a foothold before the whirling blades of our push mower cut them down.

My father was a wonderful photographer. We were surely one of the best photographed families ever. My father always had an arsenal of expensive photographic equipment at the ready -- good stuff, and he knew

how to use it. He had a keen interest in fine photography. His photographic magazines were strewn all over the house. He adored his family and wanted to preserve images of how wonderful we were. (We were a contentious lot and not wonderful at all, but nothing could ever sway his opinion.) Family picnics amidst prickly pear cactuses and poisonous snakes, hunting trips to Patagonia, visits with my grandmother in Tempe, baby baths, birthdays -- nothing seemed beyond his curiosity and the reach of his lenses.

The kidlets, of course, were all photographed in the buff, or worse. No one was safe. My unsuspecting mother, on a hunting trip, was caught as she sashayed out to the bush with a roll of toilet paper. That photograph is still in one of the family photo albums I inherited. If she only knew. Of course, all of his hunts were documented with both stills and his old 8mm movie camera. Sadly, he was almost always the photographer and rarely visible.

But the best of all was the process of watching my father develop the photos that he had taken. In Tucson, his dark room had been in a blacked-out area of the garage, and I never went there because someone had burst in upon a critical processing moment and all hell broke loose. It also was crawling with black widow spiders, or so my father warned, probably to keep us out. In the colonial-style house in Lewiston we moved to in 1948, a little preserve cellar in the basement made do. My dad

painted the tiny window opaque black. He set up his equipment on a bench on one side: the enlarger, trays and tongs for the developer, a line to hang negatives and prints on, stacks of photographic paper, etc. My mother seldom ventured down to the basement, except to do the laundry. Therefore, the quart-size Mason jars of plums and cherries that had been put up years before by a Mrs. Peterson continued to sit gathering dust and looking poisonous on the shelves opposite his photography bench for years. They seemed an odd accompaniment to the creative endeavor going on in that small space.

Anyway, the process was long, tedious and absolutely fascinating: from film to negative to a real image emerging in the red light, bathed in the pan of developing fluid. I loved being there with him. He eventually trusted that I wouldn't bolt and open the door to the light, and I loved to watch and watch and watch. His hunting photos were less interesting to me because I wasn't a hunter, but the process itself was magical. The developing fluid had a faint scent of cider vinegar, or so I thought. My father's features looked plump and distorted by the reddish light. "Look, look, look!" he'd whisper as an image would begin to form -- first as the palest suggestion, then a gradual darkening, and then magic! There it was! A piece of his life had miraculously been retrieved, a treasure. My dad was so creative in every way; I'm sure this process gave him many intense rushes of pleasure and satisfaction. I do not

know why it was my brother Brad who became the photographer (and a very good one), as it was I who spent so many hours with my father and the jars of rotting fruit in that little dark room at 725 Prospect Avenue.

About the Author: Caroline O'Connor McCullam, Jack O'Connor's youngest

child, lives on Mercer Island, Washington, and works in Seattle as a registered nurse. She has 3 sons, all of whom live in the area, and 8 grandchildren. Her hobbies are traveling, doing watercolors (badly), learning languages, cooking, music, and reading good stuff.

Guest Writer

“Last Chances in the Chugach”



By

Chet Fitzgerald

“You two better make this count, you might not get another chance” drawled our Southern pilot as he tossed me the last pack from the Cessna. “Thanks, we’ll do our best” I replied, trying to

sound as positive as possible, “I just hope you put us in a place with some sheep, I didn’t see a single one on the flight”. “There here somewhere” he said, “you’ve just got to find ‘em”. Then, with a tip of his hat, he climbed into the cockpit, signaled for me to shove him off and taxied away.



Within a couple of minutes we heard the roar of the 185’s engine bouncing off the sheer granite walls that surrounded the lake and we knew we were about to be very alone.

We had just been dropped on a remote sky-blue lake at the head of a box canyon, deep in Alaska's eastern Chugach Mountains. It was two days before the 2007 Alaska sheep season was set to open.



The pilot was right about this likely being our only chance to hunt this piece of country as in 2008 this area was slated to become a limited draw unit. The odds of drawing a limited entry sheep tag in Alaska's Chugach Range are generally slim, often in the 1%-3% range. Since I have notoriously poor luck at drawing limited tags, it was a very real possibility that I would never hunt in the Chugach again. This was a bit of a disappointment for me, as I had moved to Alaska the year before fueled with dreams of hunting heavy horned Chugach Dall rams in all of the classic places. Place names like Metal Creek, Friday Creek and Carpenter Creek, all well known in the sheep hunting world were soon to be off limits to all but a lucky few.

While this season was the last of its kind in one regard, it was a definite first in others. It was the first time I had hunted

Dall sheep, the first time I had hunted completely unguided in Alaska and the first time my partner Jeff, a wiry engineer from Minnesota, had hunted in the mountains. It would also be the first time Jeff and I had hunted together as we had only met a few months previously. Fortunately, there is really no better way to get to know someone than spending a week or two in a hunting camp.

Our base camp consisted of a small four-man dome tent perched atop an old wooden wall tent floor that had undoubtedly been packed in by the outfitter that used to guide in the area around the lake in years past. It was weathered and had a marked tilt to it, but it was a lot better than the jumbled glacial rocks that were our second option. Once we had the base tent erected, we brought our frame packs, rifles and duffle bag from the lakeshore where the float plane had left them and proceeded to make ourselves "comfortable". We rolled out our lightweight down bags so they could loft and then grabbed a small daypack, our spotting scope and one of the rifles, just in case we were to get into a scrape with a grizzly, and headed out to do some scouting.

As we looked around the head of the drainage it appeared that we had been dropped into some pretty good sheep country, at least to our neophyte sheep hunters' eyes. The drainage was about ten miles long and two miles wide with the typical U-shape that is often found in

heavily glaciated country. The head of the canyon was surrounded by sheer granite cliffs marked by several glaciers of various sizes.

The late summer afternoon was warm and glaciers were melting in the direct subarctic sun, feeding many small streams and waterfalls that plunged in turbulent white ribbons down the cliffs. As we scouted, we found that there were two lakes at the head of the drainage. The "upper" lake collected the runoff from the aforementioned glaciers and was separated by a thin natural rock "dam" from the lower lake. The lower lake was much larger, extending nearly a mile down the valley and had a narrow point at its center, giving it an "hourglass" appearance.

At the northern end of the lake, near our base camp, it spilled into a milky blue river which meandered through the emerald green of the alder and birch choked bottom for several miles before joining with the Copper River. On both sides, the river was paralleled by steep mountains that quickly rose above timberline into grass and lichen covered slopes, cut in several places by high hanging tundra basins.

After a long day of scouting in the warm August weather, we made it back to base camp just as the sun was setting. The peaks were bathed in alpenglow, which turned their long snowfields dazzling shades of pink and gold. We busied ourselves taking pictures and soaking up the sights before we got too engrossed in the hunting to notice. Our

pilot had instructed us to hunt downstream and to the west of the river, so we settled in for the short northern night with a plan to pack our "spike-camp" about four miles down the valley the next day.

It was raining the next morning and windy. The mountains were shrouded in clouds and fog and visibility along the slopes was a few yards at best. Since we didn't know where we were going and had planned to learn the country as we went, we decided to wait until visibility improved. It didn't happen that day, so we spent another night at base camp and hoped for the best.

Opening morning of the 2007 Alaska sheep season dawned clear and cold with a little frost on the tent fly when we stumbled out to prepare our packs. We were soon on our way down the valley, fighting our way through the soaking-wet brush until we could clear the tree line. It was one of those beautiful crystalline Alaskan mornings. In the valley below us, a cow moose was casually browsing willows along the river while a pair of ravens called noisily from the top of a spruce snag.

After a couple of miles, we came to the edge of a gorge created by a large stream that fed into the main river from the west. It was far too steep to cross, so we had to divert our path and climb uphill about half a mile to find a suitable crossing. Here we removed our boots and socks, donned our "wading shoes" which we had brought for just this purpose, and waded across.

The water was like liquid ice, and by the time I made it across, I am sure you could have amputated one of my toes with a butter knife and I would not have felt it. After drying our feet and filling our water containers, we continued down the valley eventually reaching the point we had spotted from the head of the canyon. It was about noon, so we ate a quick snack and pitched our small two-man tent near a tiny spring that bubbled out of the side of the mountain.

While we were preparing our pack frames for an assault on the mountain above us, we noticed a brown spot that seemed out of place in the river below us. A quick look through the spotting scope revealed two mountain grizzlies fighting on a gravel bar in the middle of the river. They circled around with hackles raised, then rose on their hind legs, roaring and swatting at one another with powerful blows. These were what Alaskans refer to as "Toklat" grizzlies, having beautiful blonde bodies with dark chocolate colored legs. The spectacle went on for about five minutes, then, as quickly as they had appeared, they dropped to all fours and melted back into the tall willows.

We were painfully aware of the sedentary nature of our chosen professions when we finally topped out on the ridge an hour or so later. We discovered a lot of sheep sign on the way up. Some of the slopes looked and smelled as if a herd of domestic sheep had been pastured there all summer. However, all the sign was old, a week

at the very least. Having expended a lot of effort in getting here, we decided to take advantage of our hard earned elevation by glassing the surrounding mountains. To the west of us the Chugach Range extended over 100 miles in what appeared to be an endless series of ridges reaching to the horizon. To the north, there were a couple of lower, more gentle ridges that eventually gave way to the Copper Basin and to the east we could only see the long mountain that made up the opposite side of our little river valley.

We soon started to see sheep. Just a few at first, but as our eyes became attuned to the task we began to pick them out in several places on the long, low ridge to the north. In all, we spotted over 100 on that ridge, but not a single one of them was a legal ram.

After a while, we turned our attention to the mountain on the opposite side of the river. We started from the south and glassed our way north, looking in each little basin until we came to the second to the last rib of the mountain. At that moment we spotted two sheep, but oddly enough they were running downhill, nearly to the tree-line. One of them looked quite a bit larger than the other so we assumed we were looking at a ewe with a lamb. When I finally got the spotting scope focused on them, it became clear that they were actually rams.

We were much too far away to be able to determine their size, but since they were the only promising rams we had

seen, we decided they warranted a closer look. We returned to spike camp and watched the rams until they climbed back up the ridge to bed.

The next morning we loaded up and set out for the other side of the valley. This required us to dive back into the alder belt, and after about an hour of bushwhacking we found ourselves at the edge of the river. The river, about halfway down the valley from the lake, was much more formidable than it was at the lake outlet. Several more streams had joined the river by this point and it was about 50 yards wide and chest deep. Fortunately, having spotted the rams the previous day, we had pretty much lost all of our good judgment. Having few alternatives, we strapped our pants and boots to our packs, and slowly waded across the river.

I found myself thinking fondly of the previous day, when it was only my feet that froze. Upon reaching the opposite bank, we dried off and decided that if we were going to get at the sheep in a hurry, we would need to lighten our load. We took the tent fly, some food, our rifles, pack-frames and our sleeping bags and headed up the mountain to clear the brush belt.

We crossed another stream and found ourselves on a rocky bench that we felt would take us directly to the bottom of the ridge where the sheep should be bedded. With any luck, we would wait for the sheep to jog down the ridge to feed, and could harvest them at our leisure.

The plan worked perfectly until we arrived at the end of the bench, crawled out to the edge under the cover of some low-growing birches, and spotted the rams.....on the next mountain to the north. Apparently, while we were making our way down the bench, they had decided they liked the look of the grass on the other side of their basin and had moved a mile or so further away. There was nothing we could do with night coming on, so we dropped into the creek bottom before us and made our "fly camp".

Our fly camp consisted of a space blanket spread on the ground with our sleeping bags on top, all covered with the tent fly. It was on the only piece of nearly flat ground we could find, which was in the middle of a patch of cow-parsnip. It was not the most comfortable camp, but we managed to catch a little shut-eye between the evening rain showers.

The next day dawned gray and overcast. It wasn't raining, but it looked as if it might. We made our way, now with just our rifles, pack frames and rain gear to the top of the ridge. The rams were there all right, and were still feeding in the same area as the night before. They were about halfway down the slope from the ridge and about three quarters of a mile away. I figured they would move uphill to bed, so the only way to intercept them would be to get above them. This would require us to drop down to the toe of the ridge we were on, cross the creek that separated

us from the sheep, then come up the back side of their ridge.

We made it to the creek in about an hour. The gorge was deep and steep, but we slid down, splashed across in our boots and began the grueling climb up the rock-strewn north face of the knife edged ridge.



We had to climb about 3000 feet and it was a lot steeper than it had looked from our vantage point that morning. Every once in a while I would peek over the ridge to see if the rams were still there. They were visible for most of the morning until they finally disappeared behind a fold in the mountain. Now we were running blind, all we could hope for is that the rams would bed in the little saddle at the top of the ridge.

After another hour of climbing, we came to the base of an impassible cliff that blocked our path up the north face of the mountain. This unexpected obstacle left us with few options. Our only choice was to leave the pack frames and carefully pick our way across the slope directly toward the saddle where we expected the sheep to be bedded down. The wind was in our favor, but there was

very little cover on the slope. Stooping as low as possible and even crawling in some places, we slowly picked our way across the mountain using small folds, avalanche chutes and rockslides to cover our movement.

At last, we were about 100 yards from the saddle where we expected to find the rams. We slid cartridges into the chambers of our rifles, paused a moment to catch our breath and peeked over the edge of the little moraine which formed the last bit of cover. Not a sheep in sight. Our hearts sank. Had the sheep sighted us as we made our way towards them? If they had, where would they go? Less cautious now, we jumped up over the moraine, jogged our way up to the saddle and looked over the sharp ridgeline, still nothing. Then, off to my left something white caught my eye. The two rams were bedded side-by-side on the end of a little spur that ran to the north, perpendicular to the main ridge. I instantly dropped to the ground, with Jeff following suit. If the rams had seen me, they showed no indication of it. They continued to chew their cud and gaze contentedly out at the breathtaking expanse of country before them.

I quickly ranged the rams at 175 yards and began to inspect their heads. The larger of the two rams was breathtaking. His horns started with heavy bases before plunging low, below his jaw line, ending in a wide flare with perfect points. His horns did not quite make a full curl, as is common among many Chugach rams, but I was sure his depth

of curl would add a lot of horn length. However, not being full curl, I was obligated to count his horn annuli to determine that he was at least eight years old. The first time around I counted 11 rings, more than enough to be legal. The second ram was a more difficult proposition. He was much smaller and had a close curl. I could only positively count 7 rings on the smaller ram, so we decided to leave him for seed.

I laid the binoculars down in front of me and balanced the forearm of my rifle across them. I checked to make sure my barrel was not aligned with any of the rocks ahead of me and then located the rams in the scope. I needed the large ram to stand, as his body was partially hidden by the smaller ram, but we were in no hurry. We spent a few minutes mesmerized by the gravity of the moment, and of the beauty of the setting.

The two snow white rams were in stark contrast with the lush green Copper River Valley and the dark timbered slopes of the Wrangell Mountains that served as their backdrop. Then, as if on a prearranged cue, the big ram rocked forward, rose to his feet, and stood looking directly at me. He slowly rocked his head side to side and then stood motionless, as if he accepted his fate and knew this was his last day on the mountain. I paused at first, not wanting that moment to end. I then slid the crosshairs to the crease behind his right shoulder and pressed the trigger.

The old ram collapsed instantly and rolled onto his side. His younger counterpart jumped to his feet, stepped toward his fallen patriarch and stood, waiting for him to rise. When it was clear that the old ram was not coming, he hesitantly began to walk away, looking back every few steps. I am always bitten with a tinge of regret after killing such a noble animal. As we made our way to the ram there was little bravado, only quiet congratulations from Jeff.

After admiring the ram and snapping a few photos, we retrieved our pack frames and set about the task of caping and butchering the sheep. It turns out the old ram was 13 years old. Some of the horn annuli were close together in his later years and had not been visible through the scope.

With the ram loaded onto our packs, we set out for fly camp, groaning under the weight of our heavy loads. We had been climbing since six o'clock in the morning and it was now late in the day. We had run out of water about two hours previously, so we were parched and dead tired by the time we made it to the creek in the bottom of the basin. We were able to quench our thirst at the creek, but we were far too tired to negotiate more jumbled rocks and tangled birch in the dark. We weighed our options and reluctantly decided to make camp for the night.

All we had with us was our rain gear and one of those thin disposable space blankets. It was beginning to sprinkle again, so we donned our rain gear,

found a grassy spot by the creek and covered ourselves with the space blanket.

The air turned cold and most of the night I could hear Jeff shivering beside me. The next morning we were still pretty fatigued, so rather than head for camp immediately, I built a smoky willow fire and roasted some of our mutton for breakfast. Rejuvenated by the cheery fire and the first real food in days, we set out for fly camp. Progress was slow, but once there we grabbed the rest of our gear, roasted some additional meat, and headed for base camp.

It took most of the next day, but we finally crossed the mouth of the river near base camp at about 5 p.m. We were not due to be flown out for two more days, so I busied myself fleshing and salting the cape while Jeff fished the river below camp.

The sky was gray and windy the day we were to be picked up. The plane was late, and I was beginning to worry when we heard the buzz of the Cessna as it came through the pass from the west. In a few minutes, the pilot was inspecting the old ram's horns. "That is without a doubt the largest ram I have seen this year", he muttered, "how long is it?" "40 ½" inches with 14 ½" inch bases" I said. "My, my, there is no way I can take both of you with all of the gear and the sheep in this wind. One of you will have to wait for a couple of hours". "Okay", I said, "Jeff you go first and get the truck warmed up, I will stay here with the ram".

Well, he didn't come back that day and it was getting late the following morning when I again heard the plane as it dropped into the valley. "You're in luck." he said in his pleasant Carolina dialect. "How so?" I asked, looking hesitantly at the whitecaps on the lake. "The weather isn't any better, but I have a whole 'nuther day of experience since I last saw you". "Hand me your pack and those horns and we'll give it a try".

We taxied the plane south, toward the head of the box canyon. I could clearly see the downdrafts coming off the glaciers, whipping little strings of cloud and mist down the face of the granite cliffs. On the other side of the mountain was storm-tossed Prince William Sound and it was clear that a nasty gale was blowing up from the Gulf of Alaska. As we made our turn at the base of the cliffs, the swirling wind grabbed the starboard wing and lifted the plane onto one float before dropping it with a slap back to the water's surface. "Hang on", said the pilot as he pushed the throttle to full power, "We're only going to get one chance at this....."

Chet Fitzgerald Bio - After growing up on a large ranching operation in Northern Utah, Chet Fitzgerald earned a Master's Degree in Natural Resources Management from Utah State University in 1998. He has worked for the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service for the last fourteen years in Utah and Alaska. He enjoys fine rifles

and is an avid big game and waterfowl hunter, having hunted throughout Alaska, Canada and the Western U.S.

He currently lives on a small farm in Northern Utah with his wife Leslie and his little pack of English Foxhounds.

Out On the Trail

“Last Minute Buck”

By

JERRY ADAMIETZ



I have hunted the Clearwater for 30 years and have taken my share of game animals in the past. I enjoy the remoteness and ruggedness of the area, though the last 10 years animals have been far and in-between. After hunting 15 straight days in pouring rain for deer and elk, only seeing a few muley does coupled with all my water proof clothing soaked; I thought it might be time to give up. By the time I got home and dried all my gear it was well

into November. But then things changed on November 30th, I've was talking to a few friends who hunted the Priest lake area in north Idaho. They'd harvested two really nice mature white tail bucks and felt there still might chance for me to connect with a buck. Not very optimistic I left Spokane WA the next morning at 8 AM and headed to the Priest area with a friend who owns a rustic cabin in the heart of that region. I started hunting at 9:30 AM stopping for lunch at my friend's cabin at 1 PM. I Heading back out a 2 PM, after a while I found a nice view where I could see about 100 yards through the trees where several deer trails crisscrossed the area. Temperature was 28 degrees, six inches of snow coupled with blue skies and sunshine. I settled under a tree and figured I'd just enjoy a beautiful last day afternoon of deer season. After sitting for a bit, I checked my watch and had about 20 more minutes of hunting. But then things got exciting; a doe materialized about 75 yards in front of me. Right behind her appeared another

deer. For a second I thought; I'm dreaming, but quickly realized the second deer was a nice buck. I lifted my 300 WSM and put the cross hairs on it. At the report of my rifle, the deer turned and run up-hill. I then put my back pack on and slowly walked over to the place the deer was standing. Sure enough there was a good sign of blood. My friend heard the shot and showed up shortly after; we followed the blood trail and found a 5X5 buck. After field dressing the buck it was dark and we started dragging it back to his cabin. The only thing we had going for us is we were headed downhill. Other than that, we traveled through thick brush, over logs and down slippery rocks. Though I never complained once, because any hunter who gets a last minute buck knows how fortunate they really are!



Jerry's Last Minute Buck

"Taneum Buck" By JERRY ADAMIETZ

My partner and I hunt both Idaho and Washington. We decided to try a new elk area in the Taneum unit in central Washington during the 2012 season. We set up camp a few days before the elk opener to scout the area for elk during the deer season. The Taneum has a three point or better restriction for deer. The area we were hunting is steep and rugged, we prefer more level hunting with rolling hills but so do most other hunters. So we try to locate the harsher terrain to hunt for a more solitude experience. The last morning of the deer season I was about a mile down a ridge when I noticed a deer standing broadside 100 yards downhill. I jumped him out of his bed, but he made the mistake and stopped looking back. He was a legal buck and I dropped him in his tracks. I field dressed and skinned the buck, cut it into halves and placed them in game bags and proceeded back to camp to get my pack board. By the time I arrived in camp it was close to noon, my partner had just got there. We decided to cook breakfast before heading to pack out the meat. A successful last day of pre elk scouting and deer season in a new area; both of us looked forward to the next day elk opener.



Jerry's Taneum buck

About the Author: Jerry Adamietz was born in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. His family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah in 1959, then Edmonds, Washington in 1961, lastly to Spokane in 1968. He served in the United States Army from 1969-1972, and worked in the Civil Engineer field for DoD before retiring in 2010. He is the News Editor and outdoor writer for Back County Magazine in north Idaho. Jerry is a member of the NRA, a volunteer for Spokane's Community Oriented Policing Services, and a certified hunter

education instructor. He's also an avid deer and elk hunter, hasn't missed a season since 1972.

"Keeping up with the Gun Control Act of 1968"

By Jack O'Connor- September 1969

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The Gun Control Act of 1968 has now been the law of the land since the middle of December. Understanding of it has not come like a blinding flash of light. Now that a new hunting season is at hand, it seems appropriate to review the law in the light of the interpretations put upon it by the Alcohol, Tobacco and

Firearms Division of the Internal Revenue Service, whose job it is to enforce it. It's quite a document. Just as the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act were pushed through during the hysteria of World War I, this was rammed down the throats of the public...

To read more about the Gun Control Act of 1968 please refer to our Jack O'Connor Archives within our website location!!!!

About the Author: Jack O'Connor's first love, besides his family, was the outdoors and writing about hunting, firearms, and the natural history of big game animals. As the longtime firearms

editor for Outdoor Life magazine, O'Connor hunted and collected trophies throughout the world, and introduced millions of readers to hunting and firearms. He is still considered the undisputed dean of outdoor writing and journalism. Please visit our website at www.jack-oconnor.org to learn more about Jack, his family life, career, and conservation legacy.

Member Pictures

Madi's Bull



On October 21, 2012, a crisp clear morning in the beautiful high river breaks of north central Idaho's unit 13, Madison Casey set out with her dad, Rich Casey, with an either sex elk tag in her pocket and high hopes for the day. Turning 13 years old just a month earlier, and this being her first elk hunt, the goal was to have an opportunity to get a shot at an elk, bull or cow. After walking about a mile or so from our camp, I heard what sounded like a bull bugling and asked Madi if she could hear it. She says "yea I've heard that five or six times now". I'm thinking to myself, here it the third week of October, there is no way a bull is screaming like that, just then he fire's off again. At this point I am convinced that someone had just flown in from the East Coast and hit the hills with their new grunt tube in hand ready to call in some bulls, but after some quick glassing, there they were, those beautiful yellow dots across the drainage that every elk hunter loves to see. After putting together a quick plan, we worked our way up into the trees and down the ridge with hopes of

catching the elk out in the open before they bedded down for the day with the possibility of getting a shot.

Turning downhill toward an opening, we crested a small knob just as a cow stepped out of the trees directly below us. Madison immediately sat down so the elk couldn't see us, quietly chambered a round and extended the bi-pods on her rifle. As we moved forward to get into a shooting position, we could see that several other cows and calves had worked their way into the clearing, and there was a big, mature cow standing broadside to us. Madi lined the rifle up and flipped the safety switch forward, but just before she fired, I noticed some movement in the brush and the big bull stepped out of the trees. I touched her on the shoulder and whispered, "There's a nice bull to the left of that cow!" Without saying a word she looked up, moved her rifle over, got back into the scope, and squeezed the trigger. At the sound of the shot, I could see through my binoculars, she had hit him perfectly behind the shoulder. The bull took a few steps backward as Madison chambered another round and let it go, again hitting him squarely behind the shoulder, before she could cycle the bolt again he stumbled and fell to the ground. As we walked up to this beautiful animal, I couldn't have been more proud of my little girl. She stayed calm, made two near perfect shots and showed a huge amount of respect for the great bull she had just taken. That is definitely a day that will stay with us forever.

Miscellany

At the Jack O'Connor Hunting Heritage and Education Center:

- *A copy of Jack O'Connor's .375H&H rifle, currently on display as the 2013 raffle gun of the year, will be raffled off to some lucky individual. This rifle, made by Roger and Paula Biesen, is the 1st of three rifles to be built in the "African" series. The drawing will be held on June 1, 2013 at the Jack O'Connor Center. Be sure to come out on that day!*
- *The Winchester "Show and Shine" for 2013 is getting closer to finalization. Outdoor writers Wayne Van Zwoell, John Barsness and Bradford O'Connor will be attending and doing book signings. Anyone that has a Winchester or custom rifle or shotgun collection is encouraged to purchase a table and show off their favorites. If you have an interest, be sure to give us a call (208-743-5043), stop in, or visit the website for more information. We will get you on the list for the drawing/gun show and shine. Be sure to stop in on Saturday, June 1st 2013 and join in on all of the fun....!!!*
- *The Winchester Model 70 Jack O'Connor Tribute Rifles are on the street and only limited supplies are still available. If you are lucky enough to*

own one of these "limited run" rifles be sure to order your gun case from the Center. Please read the accompanying paperwork that came with your rifle for ordering details.

In our next newsletter:

- *Allan Jones, an O'Connor fan, will discuss one of his favorite topics in the next Tech Corner.*
- *"The Ambler Experience" by Jim Cox provides an interesting recount of a caribou hunt out of an Eskimo village near Ambler, Alaska.*
- *Long Range Shooting will be discussed by some experts. Is it ethical or just a temporary mania?*
- *Plus, another great article from the Jack O'Connor collection.*