It is sobering to realize that I’ve been coming to the SHOT Show since 1997. That makes this the 16th such gathering that I’ve attended… and 11 of those 16 SHOTs have been in Vegas. Nice.

Let’s jump right in with the Freedom Arms group of companies. At center stage of their impressive offerings is the new Remington Model 700. Big Green is doing a limited run of special edition rifles to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this venerable old standby. I especially like the timing, as it was just a little over a year ago that the infamous CNBC program “Remington Under Fire etc.” program aired, casting serious aspersions on the design and use of the early-year models.

This anniversary edition is based on the on the original 1962 Model 700 BDL. The classic look, a satin-finished “B” grade American walnut stock with right-hand-choked piece, is enhanced with cut fleur-de-lis-style checkering and supplemented with period-style, white-line spacers on the black fore-end and pistol-grip caps. The barrel is 24-inch carbon steel, riflesighted, and has a very pretty satin-blued finish. The 7mm Remington Magnum is the chambering, selected because the cartridge was introduced in 1962 along with the Model 700.

Over at Weatherby they were showing off their new recently introduced Vanguard Series 2 rifles, upping the ante that the original Vanguard line established. Notable features include the 3-position safety, and the “Gripzone” (really, no kidding; and it’s actually pretty effective) pistol grip and forend inserts for ease of handling, further enhanced by the palm swell. And they guarantee less-than-MOA shot placement using Weatherby factory or premium ammo. The line includes more than a half-dozen variants, so pretty much any rifle-toting shooter can find something of interest.

Some nice new shotguns from CZ-USA, like the Top Cross Bolt and bottom lock for superior action. MP15 addition, in 300 Whisper. As you’d expect, the company is ensuring the quality of the product line in this new one: 16-inch barrel (in 4140 chrome/moly steel), forged 7075 aluminum upper and lower receivers, 1 in 7.5 twist, and more. Add in the usual MP15 features like collapsible stock, chrome/moly steel), forged 7075 aluminum upper and lower receivers, 1 in 7.5 twist, and more. Add in the usual MP15 features like collapsible stock, dust cover, etc., and it’s a winner.

Here’s one that I found myself talking about for weeks after show, brought to Vegas by Nature Blinds. Dotted if it isn’t the most realistic hunting blind I’ve ever seen… the Tree Blind, aptly named indeed, is currently superior design and execution. The Stevens streamers exist on an esthetic plane that others could only rarely approach. Not that the others were inept, but that Carrie was that good.”

Carrie Stevens, any arguments about her method of tying.

“Carrie was a completely self-taught fly-tier, having never before seen anyone tie any, when she started to tie for herself at age 38. Rather than secure the hook in a fly-tying vise the way others do, she held the hook in her hand. As a result she devised her own revolutionary method of tying.

One of her admirers remarked, “When examples of her contemporaries’ tying efforts are laid beside those of Carrie Stevens, any arguments about her consistently superior design and execution rapidly dissolve. The Stevens streamers exist on an esthetic plane that others could only rarely approach. Not that the others were inept, but that Carrie was that good.”

Carrie employed a unique marketing strategy to go along with the struc- tural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for natural perfection of her flies… she capitalized on the vanity of the anglers for...
COUNTY FEDERATION OF SPORTSMEN'S CLUBS INFORMATION DIRECTORY

**County** | **Meeting Date & Time** | **Location** | **Contact** | **Phone Number**
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Atlantic | 2nd Thursday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | Germania Gun Club, Moss Mill Rd., Egg Harbor, NJ | Eric Gaupp | 609-513-8542
Bergen | 3rd Thursday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | Bergen County Communities Service Bldg., Rm 29, 327 Ridgewood Ave., Paramus, NJ | Frank Dara | 973-523-2640
Burlington | 2nd Thursday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August | The American Legion, 39 Pemberton-Julistown Rd., Pemberton, NJ | Bill Schultz | 856-235-3344
Camden | 3rd Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August | Square Circle Sportsmen Club, 97 Clementon Rd., Gibbstown, NJ | Bob Russell | 856-327-2197
Cumberland | 2nd Thursday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August | Menanico Gun Club, Union Rd., Maurice River Twp., NJ | Bob Russell | 856-327-2197
Essex | 2nd Thursday of month, 7:15 PM except July and August | Bloomfield Civic Center, 84 Broad St., Bloomfield, NJ | Carmine Minichini | 908-964-7117
Gloucester | 2nd Tuesday of month, 7:45 PM except July and August | George Ruch Building, 14 St. and Highland Ave., Willingboro, NJ | Thomas Weese | 856-629-9465
Hunterdon | 2nd Thursday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | Northern District Office of Fish & Wildlife RT 173, Clinton, NJ | Loren Robinson | 908-782-1076
Mercer | 3rd Monday of month, 7:00 PM except July and August | Sportsmen's Center, US Highway 130 N., Bordentown, NJ | Rick Moore | 609-882-2202
Middlesex | 1st Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August | Polish American Citizen's Club, 66 Adirondack Ave., Spotswood, NJ | John Messeroll | 732-882-8543
Monmouth | 4th Wednesday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | 4 P's Gun Club, Burke Rd., Freehold, NJ | Ken Ganson | 732-566-0841
Morris | 1st Tuesday of month, 8:00 PM | Mine Hill American Legion Post 391, Mine Hill, NJ | John Rogalo | 973-691-9355
Ocean | 3rd Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM | Park & Rod Club, Rt. 70, Lakewood, NJ (2 miles east of Rt 539) | Billy Cooper | 732-657-2259
Passaic | Last Monday of month, 7:30 PM except June and July | The Wayne Civic Center, Room 3, 1006 Hamburg Tpk., Wayne, NJ | Richard Weber | 973-697-1814
Salem | Tuesday after 3rd Friday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August | Salem County Sportsmen Clubs, RT 40, Carneys Pt., NJ | George Shively | 856-423-2421
Somerset | 2nd Wednesday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | Somerset Fish & Game Protective Assoc., 445 Milltown Rd., Bridgewater, NJ | Joe Griglak | 908-526-9026
Sussex | 2nd Wednesday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | Sparta Ambulance Building, 14 Sparta Ave., Sparta, NJ | Dick Strobel | 973-697-3989
Union | 1st Monday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August | Union County Complex Building, 300 North Ave. East, Westfield, NJ | Ray Szpond | 908-403-5789
Warren | 4th Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August | Pequest Trout Hatchery, RT 46, Liberty Twp., NJ | Bill Engelhardt | 908-625-9699

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

may be sent by U.S. Mail (to 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, NJ 07039), or email (olshapiro@yahoo.com). Please include your town of residence, and club or organization affiliation (if any).
AT THE OUTSET:

The Power of a Word

NJFSR reader Rich Cotugno raised a matter of great interest to me in a recent message (see Letters, below). In his letter, Rich expresses the concern that describing the decisive action of a hunting activity as “kill” rather than “harvest,” or any of a number of other word choices, has problems associated with it.

The issue of a word’s power is well-known to everyone who is literate. We’re all familiar with the old Bulwer-Lytton saw that “the pen is mightier than the sword,” and its truth remains unchallenged. And I agree with Rich, in that the word “kill” has overtones and shades that are intrinsically more violent, final, and yes perhaps negative and unpleasant.

I seem to recall reading, some years ago, one anti-hunting advocate remarking about written reports or articles on hunting that kept using these “substitute” words. He went on to claim that this was clear evidence that hunters are ashamed of the fact that they are taking the life of their quarry. This was evident, the person argued, because written material describing hunting often shied away from the word “kill” out of a sense of embarrassment or the like.

Clearly, anybody who hunts, or knows people who hunt, is well aware that this is patently untrue. So why avoid the use of this very simple and direct word? Some people may believe that there is the political element at play, that we might be using words to sell a violent-sounding word in order to sidestep anti-hunting backlashes. And perhaps that may be true of some hunting writers or editors.

Far more important, however, is the realization that “kill” by itself is largely devoid of any context. Depending on that context and can be good or bad. It can be good (whether you like it or not) when a microbial infection is eradicated using proper medication. On the other hand, it can be bad when a loved one succumbs to an illness or when a family dog has an untimely encounter with an automobile. It depends on the context.

“Harvest” provides that context. Hunters, contrary to what some anti-hunt advocates may believe, do not simply sally forth to take another being’s life willy-nilly. Hunters are engaging in a much larger process, which involves cycle-of-life matters, feeding of some one’s family, participating in modern wildlife management, and much more.

“Kill” doesn’t even come close to capturing any of this.

Having said all this, I would nevertheless argue that “kill,” like any other word, is one that we should not fear. Even though words like “harvest” are in fact more accurate in describing the final act of taking a game animal’s life, the fact remains that by doing so we do in fact have to kill it. It is worth reminding ourselves of that word, for two reasons. The first is to make it clear to ourselves and the rest of the world that we know exactly what we are doing and have no shame in it. Nor should we.

The other reason is not to lose sight of the finality of the act, and the significant moral and ethical responsibility it involves. In fact, I would argue that we hunters have taken upon ourselves a greater ethical responsibility than any other segment of the population. We have taken personal ownership and accountability for any meat that we consume. People who eat meat but do not hunt have delegated this responsibility to other unnamed people (in effect hiring a “hit man”), and

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Great Picture; Wondering About “Kill”
Dear Oliver,

As a member of the NJFSF and reader of its news publication, it was a terrific experience to see the picture I submitted with my recent hunting success. Thank you for considering and publishing it... it made my day!

It was quite funny how my family and friends actually noticed it. This being an unusually busy time of the year for me, I had temporarily forgot about submitting the picture and the January copy of the news wound up on the living room coffee table. As it turned out, other periodicals waiting for my review during space days. Days gone by and my son came over to make plans for us to go hunting. He was anxious to try filling his muzzle-loader buck permit.

During this visit he picked up the NJFSF newspaper and eventually blurted out “hey dad, you’re picture is in the paper!” This made it even more of an excitement and I thank you again. By the way, my son did wind up filling his ML buck with a first time ever 3-pointer. This stand has been a very fortunate year for us.

By the way, I should like to ask you two questions. How can I go about acquiring five more copies of the newspaper? And why do our game hunters don’t refer to the taking of our quarry in the term “harvest” all the time, avoiding the term “kill?”

I’m not a fan of political correctness and deny as much as I can because of strong convictions, but I do cringe a little when I read positive hunting articles that use the term kill as opposed to harvest. After all, we catch fish. If we referred to it as killing fish, the range is open for public use among others

Rich Cherry
White House Station, NJ

Dear Oliver,

I am also working on the NWTF’s “Kids’ Fishing Derby” (form wtiteup this weekend for the Pequest hatchery; I will send this in later with pictures. Also, our Chapter completed the Wheelin’ Sportsmen Handicapped 3-Day Hunt in Hunterdon County; I will send you what has been written up in the papers or will write up something.

Rich Cherry
White House Station, NJ

Letters to the editor are welcomed but must be submitted in typewritten form. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for length and content. Letters must include the name of the writer, their address, and telephone number.

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March 20 marks the first day of spring, and with it the season opens for winter flounder.

Yes, it’s hard to believe that winter’s virtuoso performance is coming to an end, but you can dispute that it’s been pretty mild. A mild winter augurs well for the winter flounder, as they’re more likely to venture into coastal bays and estuaries in search of a meal. Then too, they’ve got the important task of spawning, a vital consideration.

A useful tool for hunters is knowing how to search for, making irregular movements within their particular area, often dictated by water temperatures, and ultimately heading seaward. This may take just a couple of weeks, or extend to a couple of months. I have known of a case where some rivers actually had resident populations of winter flounder all 12 months of the year.

As they head seaward they’ll make at a leisurely pace to the offshore grounds, where the bulk of the population will spend the summer in the depths far from shore. Faced with their normal pattern of behavior, and considering that recreational anglers are only permitted a two-fish bag limit, the question becomes whether they could achieve and it should proceed.

In years past, with no limits, most deer hunters would do well to take a close look. Although concealed carry is not a realistic option for most of us here in New Jersey, an item we saw just had to be a design that includes a hidden holster compartment to conceal a handgun. They’ll begin moving about as they do during late winter, and just three days later the season, as have many of the docks and bridges spanning the Shrewsbury and Navesink Rivers.

Most of these areas have rather swift tidal currents, causing the winter flounder to feed off an hour before and after slack, at either high or low tide. Historically, most successful fishermen try to start fishing during the “tides” during the afternoon, as it’s remarkable how several hours of bright sun can increase the water temperatures just a few degrees, which turns on the flounder bite.

With the flounder populations deplet ed (as the regulators claim), it’s important that you maximize your efforts by employing successful tactics as you set up shop. There’s no question in my mind that using chum is the way to go. If you’re not inclined to purchase ground bunker or clam chum, an option is to just use some black mussels, skimmer cliffs, or surf clams. Use a hammer to crush the shells, resulting in the meat being crushed and oozing from, but still attached to, the shell. Use several whole fresh brined herring into the water, and importantly, place your cast so it deposits your bottom rig in the nook where you deposited the crushed clams. As the current carries the scent of the crushed clams and mussels, it in turn will attract the flattish, which we hope will quickly scurry along the bottom to pick up your baited hook.

I often use a pair of hooks on a flounder spreader, set down, I’ve often seen a sinker, but I’ve let it get a feel like it’s practically a milted to landing in Jersey.

As I flip back to review the last half-dozen or so trips that I’ve made off the Jersey coast, I see that on each party boat trip, aboard boats such as the Dauntless, Jamaica II, Voyager, and Gambler, anywhere from two to three or a dozen to even more winter flounder (two to three per) are caught, either targeting the codfish and ling. With the season closed during the fall and winter, they’re not caught during the spring. I can vividly recall times on those trips when I would be receiving subtle hits (not the typical short, sharp pulls), and not being able to hook them, but also noticing that some of the fish had not have been the case were bargels behind the bight, which can strip a bait in an hour. This is when I would try a counter flounder which just couldn’t get the big clam bait on the big hook in their mouth, much to my dismay. Sometimes when I see me fishing for codfish and ling on a party boat this spring, you’ll notice I’m employing the same type of gear. I have noticed over the years when the famed Block Island grounds, with their own brine and small strip of clam meat, the hook will be a 6/0 Gamakatsu with half a surf clam, which I have found very effective. The price has increased and the rewards will be a two-flounder bag limit in addition to a cooler of codfish and ling. Join me in this experiment… it’s worth a try.

from SHOT, p. 1

something that most turkey, predator, or deer hunters would call a “happy accident.” Looking at the world like, well, a tree, it affords plenty of space with a few branches. By choosing to wait, then, waiting for their target to come close enough. The thing has great features: six weights available from any hook that you turn your eye at. And booth had no shortage of other nice items from the Browning’s booth for today, this one from the eponymous product line themselves. New in sporting arms from this designer was a true gem, they boast of the newest to their Ultra-Light line, this one in 28-gauge. The company calls it the “lightest autoloadable shotgun in the world,” at a nearly-lighter-than-air five pounds. Besides its lightweight and ergonomic design, two attractants that should interest a customer or three are like things a two-piece blued alloy receiver. 26-inch Crux barrel with strong and light vent rib, two-bead system (middle and front-red), gel recoil pad, and adjustable comb. Many of the users believe it“The Savage Arms is no stranger to long gun fans, and they were showing plenty of new firearms to covet, with over a dozen new firearms adorning their “new for 2012” display. The one that really got to me (and a number of other show attendees, so I’m told) was the Model 11/111 Lady Hunter. This is a very attractive bolt-action rifle, obviously designed for the smaller-framed shooter (shortened length of pull, ribbed comb, soft rubber pads) and smaller grille fore end, pared-down front weight, but it had an unusually natural and comfortable feel to it. (And to be sure it wasn’t just me, I asked my son - who has a stockier and burlier build than I do - to try it out also, and he concurred.) It comes in two or three calibers, weighs a mere six pounds (except in 270 WIN and 30-06, where it’s up to a whopping 6.5 pounds) were accidentally caught while fishing for codfish and ling. The high-low rig I used those many moons ago when on the famed Block Island grounds, with their own brine and small strip of clam meat, the hook will be a 6/0 Gamakatsu with half a surf clam, which I have found very effective. The price has increased and the rewards will be a two-flounder bag limit in addition to a cooler of codfish and ling. Join me in this experiment… it’s worth a try.

Voyager, and
When most bass anglers walk into a tackle shop, their eyes are immediately drawn to rows of crankbaits, spinnerbaits, and soft plastic lures which reflect a broad palette of colors and styles. Only after they’ve perused these items do they turn their attention to the aisles containing sinkers, hooks, and other terminal tackle. This may be a mistake. Terminal tackle isn’t necessarily sexy, but it’s a critical part of any serious fisherman’s tackle planning. A lot of times, it can pay off to keep abreast of the latest trends and developments if you want to put more fish in the boat.

Over the past decade or so, terminal tackle has seen something of a rebirth, with tungsten weights and sticky-sharp hooks leading the way, but in 2012 anglers also began to access to certain specialty items that deserve a second look. The following are five such innovative products.

Eco Pro Tungsten Wacky Weights. Thick tungsten and other soft plastic chunks have become an essential part of bass anglers’ arsenal over the past decade. Fished weighted, either swept through, they can be deadly. But there are times when a faster fall or a deeper presentation is necessary. A Texas rig can strip utilize a small bullet sinker, but the need to weight wacky-rigged Senkos has plagued fishermen who have experimented with all sorts of nail weights and split shot with uneven results.

Eco Pro has introduced a weight that looks like the offspring of a small tungsten hook and a plastic clip. By mounting the eye of the clip into your soft plastic, the “puck” sits flush against its bottom. The hook of your choice goes through the eye. Not only does this allow you to add between 1/32 and 3/16 ounce of weight, but it positions your hook precisely.

Owner JigRig Weighted Hook. Owner has turned the traditional Texas rig on its head, which combined with one of the wider-gap wacko hooks with a light cylindrical weight, connected by split rings. The cylindrical weight replaces the more standard bullet sinker, and Owner claims that this benefits the angler in two ways. First, in heavy vegetation, the weight plunges first and pulls the angler in two ways. First, in heavy vegetation, the weight plunges first and pulls the fish along the bottom, the second, when dragged along the bottom, the weight will pivot separately, adding action to the affixed soft plastic lure.

Tactical, and four Hunting) and can be manufactured over the past decade. Fished with a Texas rig or Carolina rig, the Senko and other soft stickbaits have drawn to rows of crankbaits, spinnerbaits, and “Stainless steel bedding blocks inserted (patent pending) for secure bedding;… feel free to stop me at any time…”

VISIT THE FEDERATION ON THE INTERNET AT www.njsfsc.org

NEW JERSEY FEDERATED SPORTSMEN NEWS

Carrie Gertrude Stevens holding the record-breaking brook trout she caught with a streamer fly she created and tied herself as “The Gray Ghost.” Photo courtesy Grady Hillard.

Carrie Gertrude Stevens held the record-breaking brook trout she caught with a streamer fly she created and tied herself as “The Gray Ghost.” Photo courtesy Grady Hillard.

Lake Fork Tackle Frog Tail Hook. The hollow-bodied frog has also seen a surge in popularity over the past half-decade, and while it’s an exciting way to fish, the missed strikes often frustrate anglers as much as their catches excite them. Most of these baits have a double hook with the points flush against either side of the body for weedlessness. When you’re not fishing super-heavy cover, and fish are missing your bait, you can add Lake Fork Tackle’s stinger hook. It has eyelets that drape over the two factory hook shanks to hold a single upturned hook in place and ready to snag short-strike bass.

As noted above, terminal tackle doesn’t necessarily get anglers’ blood pumping like a realistically painted hard bait or a new style of soft plastic, but it’s the lifeblood of angling success. None of these five products is by itself a game-changer, but they tweak existing presentations enough to substantially increase your catch over the course of a year.

Cover that’s just too dense for them to get through. Enter the “Nose Job,” a concave piece of clear plastic that can be put in front of any hook-and-plastic combination to form a truly weedless vibrating bait. Not only is it weedless, but it is fully customizable in terms of weight. Use a heavier weight to get your bait down near the bottom, or with virtually no weight at all you can turn fluke-style baits into weedless topwater baits, too.
Don't Spoil Your Catch

by Vin T. Sparano

There's one sure way to ruin a good fish dinner, and that's to toss your fish in the bottom of a boat and let it lie there in the sun. It's important to remember that fish spoil rapidly unless they are kept alive or quickly killed and put on ice. If you want to make sure your fish stay fresh until you get home, water down a little sawdust, learning how to take care of them from the moment they come out of the water. Use a little rubber bait to get a fresh-caught fish from the water to the table without changing its original texture and flavor.

First, the decision to kill a fish or keep it alive depends on conditions. If you're out on the water and you have no ice, you will have to keep that fish alive. This is easy if you have a constantly aerating baitwell. If you don't have a baitwell, you may have to resort to a stropper, which is not the best solution. The safety-pin type stringers are best, and be sure to put your fish on it as quickly as possible. Run the wire up through the thin membrane just behind the fish's lower lip, which will enable your fish to swim freely and recover from the shock of being caught and any minor injury. This will also allow you to release it at the end of the day, should you decide to do so.

Never run the stringer under the gill plate out the mouth. This will damage the gills and will surely kill the fish. And avoid those cord stringers, where all the fish are hunched up at the end of the line. If you're trolling slowly, you can keep the stringer in the water. If you have a big boat, it's a good idea to take the stringer into the boat for those long runs. Wet the fish down occasionally, and never tow a fish at high speed, as you'll drown them.

When a fish has been deeply hooked and is dying slowly, your best bet is to kill it, gut it, and put it on ice or at least keep it as cool as possible. Dispatching a fish quickly is easy; you can impale it between the eyes with a fish knife or rap it on the top of the head with a heavy stick. It's important to do so quickly, to slow down the meat's deterioration.

If you're a stream fisherman, it's wise to carry your catch in a canvas or wicker creel. The canvas creel works fine, but remember to occasionally dip it in water. The traditional wicker creel will work just as well, but it should be lined with ferns, leaves, or wet newspaper.

Surf fishermen can bury their catch in damp sand. A burlap sack doused in the surf also makes a practical fish bag. It's critical that fish should be kept cool and out of the sun. Prior to any of these various ways to keep fish cool, they should be cleaned properly. With trout and any other species that cannot be filleted easily, the entire job should not take more than one minute. Take a sharp knife and insert it in the anal opening on the underside of the fish. Slit the skin forward from there to the point of the V-shaped area where the forward part of the belly is attached to the gills. Put your fingers into the gills and around that V-shaped area, and pull sharply to the rear. One good tug should remove the gill and almost all the entrails. Next, put your thumb into the body cavity at the anal opening and press your thumbnail up against the backbone. Run your thumb forward to the head, removing the dark blood from the sac along the backbone. Rinse out the fish and you're done.

On a recent trip to Alaska, Scott Ranney (my guide at the Oca Adventure Lodge in Cordova) filleted our salmon easily by simply slicing away two boneless fillets from the sides of the salmon. The fillets were then vacuum packed, frozen, and ready for the trip from Alaska to New Jersey. Packed tightly with no ice in a waxed fish box, the fillets were still frozen when I unpacked them. Scott's simple process of filleting and vacuum packing guarantees your fish will be in good shape.

I do all my own filleting when fishing in Florida, and I always keep a bucket of crushed ice and saltwater next to me. The brine mixture will keep the fillets firm until I can vacuum pack them.

More good fish are ruined during the drive home than during any other point in the trip from water to the plate. Don't pack the fish in direct contact with ice. The ice is sure to melt, so instead, try freezing in water, which will deteriorate and become soft and mushy. It's much better to put the fish in plastic water tight bags and put the bags on ice. The fish will stay cold and dry until you get home.

If you haven't thought about buying a vacuum packaging machine, such as FoodSaver (foodsaver.com), do it now. This system makes it possible for sportsmen to vacuum pack fish and game for years without any loss of flavor. Freezer burn is virtually eliminated because there is no contact with oxygen. Vacuum-packed fish fillets can be stored for up to two years.

Good fishing this spring, and bon appetit.

Cast-Netting Basket for Striped Bass and Fluke

Throwing a cast net was once an art form, but has now become a household chore. A cast net is an investment, although it can pay for itself through increased catches and money saved on bait purchases.

The sense of gratification which comes from landing a cast-offs or doon-doak on a personally caught bait will surely please both you and your wallet.

The months of May and June provide excellent striped bass action in the waterways surrounding New Jersey and New York. These fish average 20 to 45 pounds and move through many nets. For a detailed demonstration, visit Calusa.com for a detailed demonstration video. The key ingredient to consistently throwing a good net, however, is practice. Put in the time perfecting your net-throwing skills in the

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If you’re a grouse hunter, there’s no need to explain the situation in New Jersey as if you were as a student. To sum it up succinctly, it’s sad. We all heard the stories, and I’ve also spun my share. And most of what you hear is not exaggeration. Decades ago I had my own experience of the lumber industry in the state, so I could practice my own personal brand of conserva- tion, in that my wingshooting skills, espe- cially as they applied to grouse, left some- thing to be desired. I think I averaged about one and, on a great day, perhaps two grousers per box on a 20-gauge number 8s.

But the scenario gets even sadder. There are, according to this armchair biol- ogist, multiple reasons for the drastic decline in grouse populations in the Garden State: But the primary, or basic, reasons can be boiled down to two. One is the widespread disappearance of habitat conducive to the reproduction of grouse. It’s gone. Never to be recovered, because it is now covered with backyard barbecues, in-ground pools, decked-over backyards, and even more. Castles built on any parcel of land larger than a quarter acre. Overkill, with a vengeance.

The second reason may at least offer some hint of hope, and that is our forested areas, primarily those located in hardwoods, are not managed in a manner ben- eificial to the survival of grouse; particular- ly young grouse or hatchlings. And here is where it gets, well, really sad.

During the last legislative session, state Senator Bob Smith (D-Middlesex) and Assemblyman John McKeon (D- Essex) authored sister bills (S-1095 and A- 4558) calling for proper, professional man- agement of the state’s forests. The plans call for a more thorough evaluation of the state’s forests, the plans call for a more thorough evaluation of the state’s forests, and thus feel that once these groups have our metaphorical cake, icing and all, they would turn to the management of the state’s forests, they will eventually sign on to the measure.

Among others opposing the measure are the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and the Sierra Club. Conversely, conservation groups like the New Jersey Outdoor Alliance, the New Jersey Audubon Society, and the New Jersey Division of American Foresters steadfastly favor the measure.

Speaking from his office, Don Donnelly said that by opposing the measure, the groups are, in essence, saying that the state doesn’t have the (fiscal) ability to manage all of the Garden State’s forests,” Donnelly said. Donnelly is correct that the status quo just isn’t working. But with the Smith-Donnelly bills in December 13 letter to state Senator Stephen Sweeney (D-3 Dist.), Rich Nieuwenhuis, president of the New Jersey Farm Bureau, urged Sweeney to support the measure. “The lack of management of public lands in New Jersey is a relatively recent phenomenon,” wrote Nieuwenhuis in his letter. “From the inception of the NJ Forest Service and the Division of Parks and Forests, and until the mid-1990s, State Parks, State Forests, and Wildlife Management Areas and other state lands were managed for multiple uses, including ecological services previously listed as well as for forest products. This stable supply of wood from sustainable forestry activities helped supply a small industry in New Jersey that provided 540 jobs with a payroll of $142 million, and annual forest- product shipments of over $106 million in 1979. These activities and the industry were largely responsible for the creation and maintenance of the highly valued forests that now occupy the landscape.”

While it may come as a surprise that some of the opposing groups took issue with a measure that would aid in develop- ing a plan to sustain the state’s forest lands and thus offer protection to species such as the ruffed grouse (as well as many others like wild turkey, pheasants, song birds, and so on), it may be a surprise that the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes the measure.

Jeff Tittel is the director of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. I don’t know Jeff Tittel. Never met him. But as a casual observer, and reader of the Sierra Club newsletters, it would seem that his primary func- tion is roaming the halls of the New Jersey statehouse. But Jeff, in one of his newsletter columns, would have to explain how he could lack for any lack of better things to do. Let’s imagine a fantasy conservation exercise, in which one could obtain one of those little red buttons as seen on TV ads for Staples in which the button is pushed and, voilà, all of your office needs and concerns are magically solved, we could install a similar button on some tree and the forests would magically regenerate to proper ecological balance.

I’m convinced that Tittel would demand a two-year impact statement before this mythical button could be attached to a tree. And if the courts find in favor of installing the button, he would oppose its installation anyway.

What the Smith and McKeon bills would do would be to simplify a bal- ance needed to promote new and edge growth to the benefit of all species. As it stands, and thanks to the efforts of the “hands-off, don’t harm any tree regardless of the reasons,” green groups thinkers, our forests are about as balanced as presiden- tial wannabe, Ron Paul (R-Texas) wearing combat boots while trying to walk a sag- ging rope strung across the Gulf of Hormuz. (Ok, forget the boots and the rope. They’re about as balanced as Ron Paul, period.)

The fact is, professional forestry is a difficult science. As was pointed out by George Blair in the February issue of the Federated Sportsmen News, foresters do not practice “shady science.” That’s exact- ly what institutions of higher learning offer courses in forestry, and it is no easy degree to earn. In addition to groups advocating professional forest management, there are currently nearly 40 individual scientists hire directly involved with forestry who signed onto the plan, and a few are forestry researchers from Pennsylvania colleges and universities.

Things change in the natural world, and sometimes they don’t change for the better. That’s why the state and even private timber and lumbering operations hire professional foresters. New Jersey should do nothing less, especially when we can have a metaphorical cake, icing it, and eat it, too.

And if you don’t believe things natu- rally can happen in a rapid turn for the worse, ask a dinosaur. The New Jersey legislature needs to approve S-1085 and A-4558.

Bob Brunisholz may be reached for com- ments or questions at robert- brunisholz@comcast.net.
hunting groups like the Audubon Society and Ducks Unlimited. For starters, the outside of the box can be painted or stained, but do not do so either the inside of the box, or woody hens will shy away from it.

When deciding on a place to locate the wood duck box, keep in mind that the wood duck is a exclusive bird, especially during the nesting season. In fact, if you are hunting for a natural place to nest such as a tree cavity, they prefer to locate their nests out of sight of other wood duck nests. Therefore, when placing the wood duck box built by you or your group, do not place two boxes close to one another. Preferably, multiple boxes should not be within sight of one another.

A little bit of Pennys advice can go a long way. If you are planning to place the box over water or on land. Boxes placed in the water, however, should be at least four feet above high water or on land. If you or your group is considering placing a box or two on ground, do not give in to the temptation to simply fasten a box to a tree. There is no way of effectively fitting a predator guard to a tree, and trees rarely guarantee easy access to the box by predators. Always use a post with a predator guard.

Pennys boxes are designed for wood duck hatching to some critter. wood duck hatching to some critter. wood duck hatching to some critter.
Gunny... A Gentle Pal with a Hunter’s Heart

by Rick Methot

He had a tough act to follow; a puppy under pressure. One of his predecessors was a exemplary bird dog, born to hunt and even had his picture in The New York Times back when the paper was running a regular outdoors column. But the pup went on to surpass his predecessor and hold his own.

“Gunny” was born May 9, 1998 at Quail Hollow Kennels in Salem, the first hunting dog I ever bought from a breeder. He had a tough act to follow; a puppy “yips” came from the crate. I pulled the collar and old bell around his soft, white neck. He had a tiny bladder, and nestled him in the front seat for the ride to the kennel. When Gunny took a turn for the worse. My daughter, Melissa, came by from her apartment, part-time job, and school duties. She held the collar and old bell around his soft, white neck with gentle comfort behind his ears; he always knew what was keeping him alive. His heart was strong, and full of love.

It was a difficult time, since we were down in Georgia for a late holiday visit, when Gunny took a turn for the worse. My daughter was caring for him, terriﬁed that he would die on her watch, and often driving more miles a day in round trip to and from her apartment, part-time job, and back, to attend to Gunny. My wife flew back. I was driving, a day and a half behind. By that time my friend could no longer keep even water down, and his bodily functions had shut down.

My wife called me en route, saying she didn’t know what was keeping him alive. “He’s waiting for daddy to get home,” my daughter said. He was not a pleasant 850-mile drive north, knowing what I had to do when I got there. But Gunny was still there, and lifted his old head for a moment and tried to get up. I went to him instead.

It’s been a nearly a year since I last wrote about the precipitous decline in New Jersey’s ﬁsheries management capabilities, and the trend continues unabated. Last year it was a free registry that prompted many people to examine the ruinous underfunding of the Bureau of Marine Fisheries (BMF), and this year it is the closure of our river fowling industry.

According to “The Economic Contribution of Marine Angler Expenditures in the United States,” a report prepared by NOAA Fisheries for the US Department of Commerce, marine recreational fishing in New Jersey is an industry that generates sales of $1.6 billion, provides tax revenue of $242 million, and New Jersey tax revenue in excess of $100 million. In fact, ﬁshing supports 10,000 jobs and produces the highest state income, and employment of the Northeast region, as well as the highest tax revenue. Fishing also supports a tourism industry worth $16 billion.

Saltwater ﬁshing is not only a recre- ational and economic engine for New Jersey, anglers and their disposable income are the source of essential conservation initiatives. It is the BMF that is responsible for the administration of marine ﬁsheries management programs that include 127 miles of Atlantic coast and 83 miles of bayshore. The purpose of the bureau is to protect, conserve, and enhance marine ﬁsheries resources and their habitat.

There comes a time when old men and young dogs are a good match, longevi- ty-wise. Who picks whom from a litter of puppies? I went down to Quail Hollow with steely manly man resolve not to be suckered in by cuteness or baleful eyes. It was just after feeding time, and the fat lit- tle pups were sleeping off a kibble fest... all but one. He came bounding toward the fence (and me), with waggling bobbed tail, ears ﬂapping, and hopped up on his hind legs to lick my hand. Sold. So much for steady resolve.

He was plopped in the kennel in the back of my SUV for the ride home. That last-weather bird hunting. But one win- ter many years ago it was brutally below- zero nasty. I felt sorry and brought him inside, with a promise to my wife that he would stay in the basement. That lasted a day or two. Then it was the first ﬂoor only, then of course the run of the place and he was a house dog to stay. There’s an ongoing debate about keeping a hunting dog inside or out, but in my case he was out and out again. In the house they became attuned to your voice, your every movement and merriment. I believe this is a hunting dog thing.

How good was Gunny? Having four or ﬁve guys without dogs wanting to hunt behind him was an indication. They knew he had a nose keen for the head scent of pheasant and was an eager retriever. He had grit, but was a gentle dog. I never, in the 13 years and eight months of his life, heard him growl. Never. He only barked on the command “speak” for a treat or in the crate watching hunters assemble on frosty mornings around the truck. He wanted to get on with it, itching to hunt.

At home he would follow me from room to room, and until the end would slowly climb the stairs to my room to set- tle in for the night at the foot of the bed. He never complained nor whined about pain, but just a little whimper of frustration. It was not a pleasurable experience for Gunny to live, but last but not least, it was a joy to be his life.

Looking for new members

Author and Gunny after a bird hunt on the Theron Club property in Warren County. Rick Methot photo.
New Jersey Outdoor Show
I visited the New Jersey Outdoor Sports Expo in Raritan Center with fellow Sportsmen’s News editor George Blair. The show, held at the Raritan Center, had a large number of vendors and exhibits, and was well-attended by the general public.

Greatest Gadget Knife
Anyone who has read this column for a while knows I am a big fan of gadgets, near light flashlights and the solar-powered umbrella. But I can’t resist while I review the pricing and design. The last time I reviewed the latest crossbow price build, the greatest gadget of all time was the Swiss Army Knife, and that remains true. I have never been without one of these in my pocket since high school. While I currently have seven Swiss Army knives, my favorite has always been the Camper, outfitted with a good assortment of tools and blades as compact as the average ordinary pocketknife.

While browsing the internet recently, however, I came across the Victorinox Swiss Army “Clumber” (official Swiss Army Knife). The “Clumber” is the name of the parent rifle, including the “Aircrash Breech Plug,” which is easily removed manually in three turns, making cleaning or extracting a load simple. The Clumber has a .22 ultra-light tapered barrel and a premium durable CeraKote finish on both barrel and frame. This weapon reduces the pistol’s weight while still retaining strength, structural integrity, and good balance. Other key features include 529 shotgun primer ignition and 360-degree barrel porting, which assists in reducing recoil and muzzle jump. The Vortek pistol is available stock in either select hardwood or Realtree camouflage, and comes drilled and tapped for a scope. The rifle weights in at 3.4 lbs, and the Clumber includes large and small blades, can and bottle opener, and two double-screwdrivers, punch/reamer, toothpick, tweezers, and a funny little knife for which I can discern no practical application, which is in keeping with the Victorinox tradition [Editor’s note: one website identifies it as “Multi-purpose Hook (Parcel Carrier)”].

Perhaps best of all is the price. The Victorinox Swiss Army “Clumber” (official Swiss Army Knife) has a $35 list price, is available from Amazon for a mere $16.88 plus shipping. It is one of those products I have been using for two weeks as of this writing, and I love it.

A Mauser Rifle Course
The Mauser rifle is not, strictly speaking, a black-powder powder. It is, however, the first Mauser and indeed a black-powder pusil and sporting cartridge rifles. The Mauser, in all its smokeless powder variants, from the Model 1889 through the Model 1898, is sure to interest military and sporting cartridge rifles. The Mauser, in all its smokeless powder variants, from the Model 1889 through the Model 1898 is sure to interest military and sporting cartridge rifles.

How well do you maintain your guns? Do you know what you are firing? More restrictions without any benefit to all guns and all forms of ammunition. At that point, it becomes another breach of the Second Amendment. The American Gunsmithing Institute (AGI) has developed a new course, the “Armorer’s Course,” available at www.americangunsmithing.com. The course focuses on all guns and all forms of ammunition.
Federal Judge Compares Firearm Ownership and Related Self Defense To Obscenity Regulation

According to a January release from The Outdoor Wire, Federal Judge William H. Walls, a Clintonton, dismissed a case filed by The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) and the Association of New Jersey Rifle and Pistol Clubs (ANJRPC), challenging New Jersey’s handgun carry laws which all but eliminate the right to self-defense with a firearm outside the home.

In upholding the New Jersey law, which effectively denies the right to carry a firearm outside the home for self-defense, Judge Walls wrote “the protection of citizens from potentially lethal force is compelling.” He did not address the fact that the legal use of deadly force in case of self-defense protects citizens from illegal lethal force.

In reaction, SAF founder and Executive Vice President Alan Gottlieb stated, “The Second Amendment Foundation and ANJRPC are prepared to take this case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where SAF has already won a landmark case defending the rights of gun owners.”

In answering the activist judge’s decision, ANJRPC President Scott Bach said, “The judge has it backwards. If he really cared about protecting citizens from lethal force, he wouldn’t be interfering with their constitutional right to defend themselves from violent criminals. Ironically, the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly said that the policies of no duty to protect individual citizens, so you’re on your own when you step outside your home. This decision wrongly demonizes those who want to take responsibility for their own safety and turns all but a privileged few into helpless victims.

Most disturbing is an especially obnoxious reference made by Judge Walls: “The Supreme Court has found limitations on the scope of a constitutional right outside the home in the First Amendment context, recognizing the right to privately possess obscene materials in the home but allowing the states broad power to regulate obscenity outside the home.”

How does obscenity enter the picture here? As Gottlieb stated “He appears to suggest the right to keep and bear arms is an obscenity. I wonder how that might square with Thomas Jefferson or James Madison.”

According to the dictionary I consulted, the term obscenity refers to something “of obscene quality or character, indecency.” Obscene means “Offensive to modesty or decency, indecent, lewd… abominable.”

Another question that needs to be answered is what planet does this judge come from? Does he equate legal firearm homeownership and those individuals who believe in self-defense with being obscene? Are shooting sportsmen, their legal firearms, and their law-abiding activities to be looked upon as, or compared to, obscene materials that need to be regulated? We’re talking about the Second Amendment here, and comparing this issue to other issues related to obscene materials and their regulation with regard to the First Amendment is a bogus comparison.

The judge has it backwards. If he really cared about protecting citizens from illegal lethal force, he wouldn’t be interfering with their constitutional right to defend themselves from violent criminals.

Over the years I have found that military-style packs with a shoulder strap, hand-held stretcher, aluminum splint or other splint material, Ace bandage, latex tourniquet, antiseptic solution and/or cleansing wipes/towelettes, eye wash solution, plastic airplane tube, bar soap, Band Aid-type adhesive strips, adhesive tape, pain reliever tablets, tweezers, hemostat, sterile oval eye pads, scissors, multi-purpose wound dressing, triangular bandage, safety pins, instant cold packs, burn ointment, lip balms, and sunburn preventives.

The kit should include a carrying pack or case and an instruction sheet on basic first aid procedures which should always be followed along with standard first aid measures.

For ordering information on first aid kits, one good source is Cheaper Than Dirt! at P.O. Box 162087, Fort Worth, TX 76161, CheaperThanDirt.com, 800-421-8047.
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March 2012

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