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Fifth Annual
MONGOL
DERBY



Photo by Ben Shanson

The World's Longest Horse Race

by
Carol Lueder

“**I**t was the hardest thing I have ever done,” said Lynne Gilbert of Raphine, Virginia. “I’ve been riding in endurance races for many years, but nothing compared to this.” Gilbert was referring to the mentally and physically grueling Mongol Derby, certified by *The Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest horse race in the world: 650 miles with 25 checkpoints and 26 crazy, half-wild

Mongolian horses crossing over swamps, valleys, mountains, rivers, sand dunes, moguls and two high passes. There is no marked trail. The race is loosely based on Genghis Khan’s ancient postal system. Each competitor (and there were 31 from all over the world) receives a set of paper satellite maps and uses a GPS to locate the checkpoints. The riders have 10 days to complete the race.

Gilbert is no stranger to endurance races on horseback. She has logged close to 5,000 miles of competitive riding. A member of two Pan-American Endurance teams and winner of numerous 100-mile races, she had ridden in one other international race. Sheik Zayad Al Nahyan from Abu Dhabi was at the 2001 Old Dominion 100 Mile Ride in Front Royal, Virginia, and offered the winner a spot in

Gilbert and Fretellier riding across the vast Mongolian plains using only their GPS for direction. (Photo by Richard Dunwoody)





Base camp with the Mongolian horse remuda in the distance (Photo by Thomas Burke)

Satellite map provided to riders showing checkpoints. Riders used their GPS as there was no marked trail.



the President's Cup in Abu Dhabi. Gilbert was the winner of the Old Dominion. The sheik sent his plane for Gilbert, her horse and her husband. Gilbert finished in nine hours with her best 100-mile time ever, albeit not among the winners.

Let's go back a couple of years when Gilbert, a lifelong runner and rider, got up one day and suddenly collapsed. She was diagnosed with a congenital hole in her heart. It had never bothered her before. She set out to prove to herself that

this condition would not limit her activities. She applied to Adventurists, a group that puts together tough races around the world. Gilbert said, "This race was something I really wanted to do if they would accept me." At 55, she was the oldest competitor in the race.

After her doctor cleared her to compete, Gilbert trained and ran the Richmond Marathon. Not only would this mentally prepare her for the horse race; she knew that if she were bucked off her horse she would need the endurance to run to the next checkpoint. Three years of preparation paid off when Gilbert was selected to be one of 31 riders for the 2013 race. Each participant had to raise \$1,500 to donate to charity. A worldwide charity, Cool Earth, was selected by Adventurists. The other charity was the rider's choice. Gilbert chose the Wounded Warriors Equestrian Program in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The first leg of her journey was a 22-hour flight to Mongolia by way of Seoul and finally to Ulaanbaatar. Mongolia has three million residents and five million horses. Gilbert arrived two days early to acclimate and promptly got food poisoning. (Must have been *airaq*, fermented mare's milk, the national drink of choice!) There was a training day consisting of classroom instruction where competitors were introduced to the GPS system, medics, veterinarians and fellow riders, followed by a dinner. The next morning riders were bussed to the staging area, mounted up and were taken on a six-hour training ride to make sure all participants knew how to activate and work the GPS and could stay on their mounts. The GPS riders also had a spot tracker that was monitored at headquarters. Friends and family could watch a rider's red dot online through the spot tracking. Riders could not leave a checkpoint before 7:00 a.m. or ride past 8:30 p.m. without incurring penalty points.

Mongolian horses are not schooled like gentrified horses. They are half-wild, hard to mount and dismount and

hate any kind of flapping, such as in putting on a raincoat or reaching into a saddlebag. Gilbert said, "The horses neck-reined, sort of, but were prone to run away with bucking fits for any kind of unusual movement or noise." Riders wore a hydration pack and were limited to five kilograms of weight. Most of Lynn's weight was in a sleeping bag, pants, socks, emergency supplies, baby wipes and batteries for her GPS. South African saddles were issued to all riders although riders could bring their own stirrups and leathers. Competitors were issued bridles that they used on all 26 horses and were allowed to keep as a souvenir, along with a colorful Mongolian coat or *deei*.

The race began with riders sprinting away. Gilbert quickly learned that trotting was the way to keep her horse in optimal condition. Riders who galloped could receive penalty points for excessive heart rates. Speed counts, but so does the condition of the horse. Competitors have to meet strictly controlled veterinary checks along the race trail. Horses cannot become lame, develop hydration issues or have excessive heart rates. Time is important but condition is everything.

The trail was grueling with every type of terrain. High mountain passes looked impossible but the little Mongolian horses with unshod hooves climbed like mountain goats. Prairies were fraught with marmot holes. Mongolian horses are experienced with these and automatically shift their weight to three legs to avoid getting stuck or falling. Gilbert said, "It was scary, exhilarating, dangerous and fun – all at once!" Since trails were not flagged, there were choices as the GPS units and satellite maps did not provide a distinct trail but only an end destination at the next checkpoint. Riders had to make decisions by intuition and luck.

From the start of the race, Gilbert rode with Sandra Fretelliere of France, who had lived in New York and spoke English fluently. The women knew each other only casually; however, they established a lasting



Lynne Gilbert, racing at the ground-eating, choppy Mongol horse trot
(Photo by Sandra Fretelliere)



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Twenty-nine of the 31 riders from all over the world who competed in the fifth Mongol Derby, 2013

Each rider was awarded a deeii as a souvenir of the race. (Photos by Lynne Gilbert)



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friendship as both riders stayed together, helping each other. Gilbert got the 24-hour flu on day four, which slowed them down, but Fretelliere stayed with Gilbert to cheer her up. Gilbert and Fretelliere had to make up the time lost while Gilbert was sick, so there were four 75-mile days and an exhausting 100-mile day.

Competitors stayed in *gers* (Mongolian felt tents) provided by local residents. Gilbert explained, "We were told it was dangerous to spend evenings alone

on the trail because of wolves – that we should always locate a *ger* to be safe." Locals provided food, which usually consisted of some sort of mutton or goat, noodles, bread and butter and, of course, the tasty (not!) fermented mare's milk. Naturally, there were no showers for all the time on the trail. At checkpoint nine, Gilbert and Fretelliere spotted a lake and decided to take a quick dip in the freezing water.

Each day held its own challenges,

pitfalls and exhilarating moments. All the riders seemed to have something to prove – emotionally, physically or mentally. The other Americans competing were from Texas, Rhode Island and California. A rider from Fort Worth injured his shoulder in a friendly wrestling match with a Mongol herder during the introductory party. Although he tried to work through the pain, he had to quit after three days. There were two Americans among the 18 finishers. Devan Horn of Houston won the race but her horse was assessed penalty points for an excessive heart rate, thus dropping her to second place. Lara Prior-Palmer of Britain was declared the winner when her horse passed the final vet check.

It took Gilbert and Fretelliere nine days (out of 10 allowable) to complete the 650 miles. "I don't know if I could have finished the race on my own," said Gilbert. The women decided that if they finished, they would do so together in a tie instead of trying to outsprint each other at the finish. They had one time penalty and finished seventh out of 18. "Besides crossing the finish line, the most memorable moment," said Gilbert, "was winning the Best Team Award. Sandra has become a great friend."

Three weeks after returning to the United States, Gilbert competed in a 50-mile endurance race at Biltmore estate in Asheville, North Carolina. Her horse's feet slipped and they went down, shattering Lynne's ankle. "It's so ironic, that I go around the world and ride dozens of half-wild horses and get injured on my own tried-and-true mount. I can't wait to be back riding and competing again."

Carol Lueder worked in Chicago advertising agencies as a writer until she founded her own company, Fair Chase, which specializes in hunting, shooting and equestrian books and sporting antiques. Lueder has been published in *Shooting Sportsman* as well as various Midwestern magazines.



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Bill Kurz competes in the Urbanna Cup Regatta held on Urbanna Creek in May 2013. (Photo by Micki Clay)

Cocktail Boats

by Larry S. Chowning

Since the days of sail-powered schooners hauling freight or sloops used by watermen to dredge oysters, racing to market or to homeport has been a part of the competitive nature of seafarers on the Chesapeake Bay for generations. Organized sailboat racing grew from this competitive nature and was often a part of annual community celebrations.

Along about 1890, gasoline inboard engines were introduced into boats and this marked the beginning of an era of inboard boat racing. When gasoline-powered outboard motors were introduced in 1903, this marked yet another high-water mark in the history of boat racing on the Bay.

Over the years, the sport of racing boats has been an important part of Chesapeake Bay culture. One of the latest surges in racing is cocktail boat (hydroplane) racing. The Cocktail Class Wooden Boat Racing Association (CCW-BRA) was founded in 2010 to encourage and organize racing of eight-foot Cocktail Class runabouts. These boats are based on an eight-foot-long outboard plywood hydroplane that was designed in 1939 by Charles MacGregor. The design was originally published in *Rudder* magazine and named SKUA.

The origin of these boat races goes back to 2010 when the first Cocktail Class

races were held on the Corrotoman River in Lancaster County, Virginia. The popularity of the boats has grown quickly, and they are now being raced in 33 states and seven countries. A national meet was held in Rock Hall, Maryland, in August.

In May, the Urbanna Cup Regatta was held on Urbanna Creek. The creek and the town of Urbanna have a long history of organized boat racing. In 1939, the Urbanna Yacht Club, which is today's Fishing Bay Yacht Club in Deltaville, started organized sailboat races on Urbanna Creek and the Rappahannock River.

The Urbanna Labor Day Regatta featured inboard and outboard races from



These 75- to 95-pound cocktail hydroplanes, powered by 6- and 8-horsepower outboard motors, flashed past boats and shoreline full of spectators at the races in May. (Photo by Tom Chillemi)

about 1940 until 1966. In 1965, the creek was deemed unsafe for large inboard powered boats. The last outboard races were held on the creek in 1966 – until this year. The Urbanna Cup Regatta had 33 boats entered, the most ever at a CCWBRA race, said National Fleet Captain Frank Stauss, who came from New Jersey to race in the Urbanna event. It was also the largest number of drivers and the largest spectator crowd for a race in the series.

The home-built boats are made of fiberglass and Acume plywood, a tough plywood that holds up under extreme pounding. Each boat has to measure about eight feet long and weigh between 75 and 95 pounds. There are two engine classes, 6- and 8-horsepower, and all must be two-stroke engines. The 6-horsepower category is broken down into two classes because old and new 6-horsepower Evinrude and Johnson engines are not rated at the same horsepower.

Newer 6-horsepower motors have a slight power advantage over older ones (called classic motors). The CCWBRA divided the 6-horsepower class into newer and older classic motors. With a 6-horsepower motor, boats skim across the water at about 18 miles per hour and move up to 26 mph. with an 8-horsepower.

Several people in Urbanna started building the boats together when they were provided an indoor building site on Virginia Street in clear view of people walking up and down the streets of the town. This seemed to spark even more interest.

Bill Kurz, a retired Navy captain and airline pilot, saw the activity going on through the windows and got the bug to build one for himself. He bought a pre-cut kit and built a SKUA in his garage at his home just outside of town.

"I had always wanted to build a boat with my grandkids and they did help a bit," he said. "But most of what they did was sit in the boat as it was being built and ride in it when it was finished. A wonderful part of the overall experience is building the boat



The last outboard hydroplane races held on Urbanna Creek were in 1966 at the final Urbanna Labor Day Boat Races, a traditional event that started in 1939. The Urbanna Cup Regatta in May brought back that long tradition of outboard motor racing on Urbanna Creek. (Photo by T.G. McMurtrie, Jr.)

yourself," he said.

"Also, you have to be fairly fit and in good shape to race these boats. You must be able to kneel the whole time and move your body weight around to get the boats to plane quickly and maneuver around corners.

"And there is not just one race –

there is a series of races (three heats) that get you into the two final races," he said. "So there are at least five races in each class and most guys have two motors and compete in two different classes. So if you are doing well it could mean competing in 10 races."

The race classes are also established by driver weight. The two men classes represent men of 200 pounds or ballast up, or 165 pounds or ballast up. The only women's division is 130 pounds or ballast up. The ballast can be either bags of sand or gallons of water to bring the weight in the

Kurz made his 8-foot hydroplane from a pre-cut kit that he built in his garage with some help from his grandchildren. The blue and gold colors on the *Fuzzy Naval* symbolize Kurz's 25 years of service in the United States Navy. (Photos by Bill Kurz)





During the races, drivers kneel the whole time and move their body weight around to get the boats to plane quickly and maneuver around turns.
(Photo by Tom Chillemi)

boat up to the proper poundage.

Kurz said he had as much fun building the boat as racing it. "I counted my time and it took about 40 hours to construct the boat and about three additional weeks (part time) to paint and rig it.

"The project was very rewarding throughout the build-and-paint process. The fit and finish of the kit pieces were exceptional and a person with very basic woodworking skills can build it. The construction manual is very complete and flows nicely," he said.

Although size and weight of boats are regulated, there is a lot of room for personalized customization with paint and graphics in the final stages of the build that make each boat unique. All the boats have to be named after a cocktail drink as part of organization rules. Kurz named his boat *Fuzzy Naval*, as a Navy-man's play on the word Navy. "Everyone names their boats for a different drink," he said. "I was in the

Navy for 25 years and thought *Fuzzy Naval* spoke to my life and career."

He also painted the boat blue and gold for Navy colors. "Some of the boats were car-finished and look like glass," he said. Some were rolled and flipped with a brush and came out beautifully.

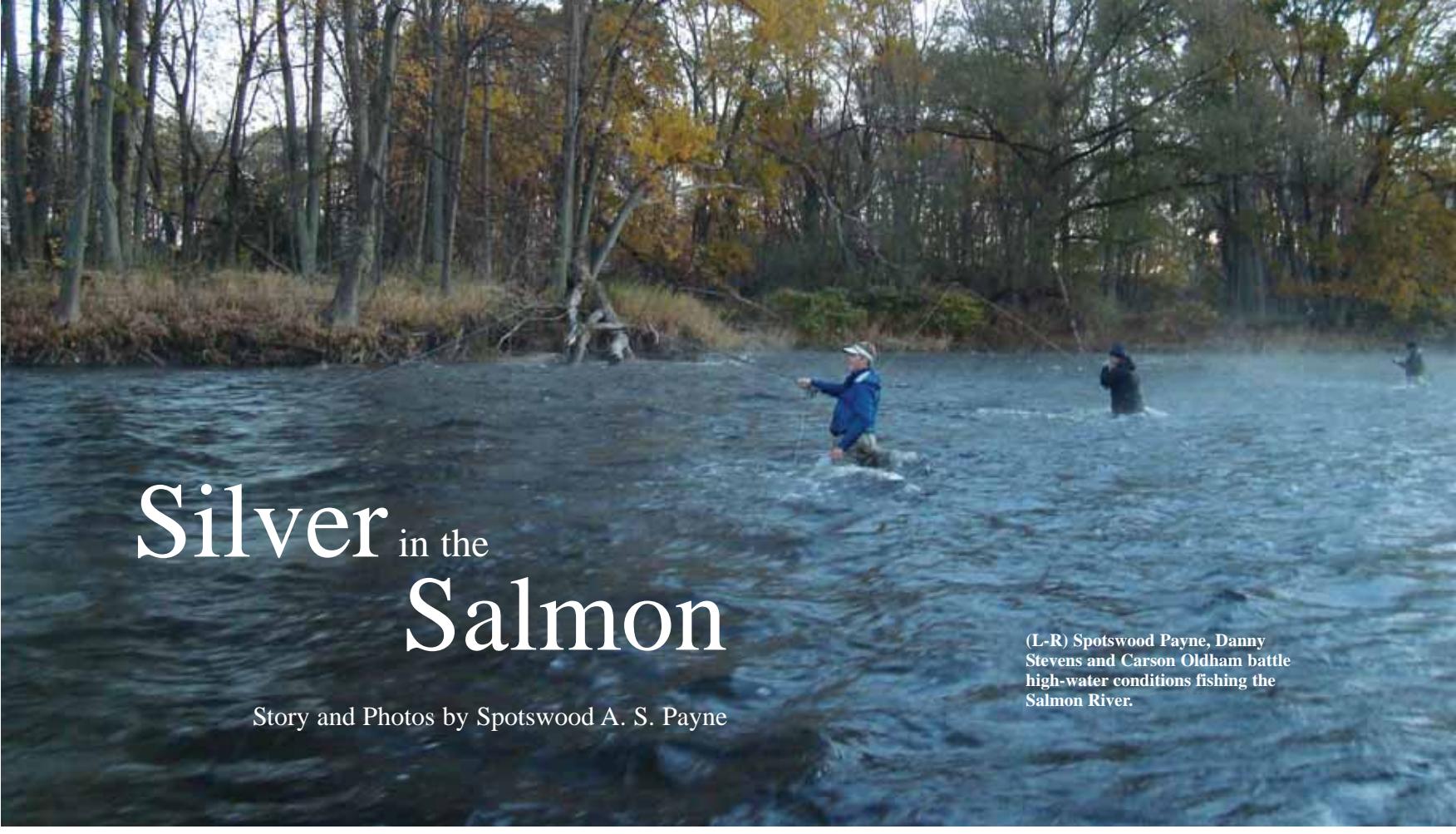
Kurz also made a personal statement with the paddle that he made for his boat. The handle is shaped and painted like a yellow lime and the paddle portion like a green lime. On the handle of the paddle four stripes are painted, symbolic of a Navy captain. The stripes are in honor of Navy captain George Mills, a longtime friend of Kurz who died in 2003 of cancer. Mills was an Urbanna native who introduced Kurz and his wife Pam to the community.

Kurz did not fare well in the competition in the Urbanna races, as he did not place in the 6-horsepower class, and in the 8-horsepower class his emergency engine cut-off wire was accidentally pulled

out during the race. "You live and learn," he said. "I'll come back next year, though. You watch and see! But the best part of all this is not the racing but the fun of being a part of the boats and people who have built their own boats. Honestly, when I get in my boat it makes me feel like a boy again!"

The regatta will be held on May 17 at Urbanna Creek in 2014.

Larry Chowning is a reporter with the *Southside Sentinel* in Urbanna, Virginia. Chowning is the author of nine books including *Images of America - Urbanna, Signatures In Time - A Living History of Middlesex County, Virginia* and to be released in April, *Images of America - Deltaville*. He has won many Virginia Press Association writing awards.



Silver in the Salmon

Story and Photos by Spotswood A. S. Payne

Every fall the Albemarle Angler, an outdoor outfitter and Orvis shop in Charlottesville, Virginia, conducts destination trips to the Douglaston Salmon Run (DSR) section of the Salmon River in Pulaski, New York. This is a sanctuary for some of the East Coast's most prized game fish, including the king salmon, but most importantly the Great Lakes steelhead. These silver bullets, prized for their display of sheer speed and acrobatics, are what we would be pursuing during their fall run.

Steelhead are a rainbow trout which live in very large bodies of water, such as the Great Lakes or even the Pacific Ocean. Like salmon, these fish return to small freshwater rivers to spawn in the exact waters where they were born. There are two runs of steelhead: the summer run between May and October and the winter run, between November and April. After roughly three years in open waters, the winter-run steelhead mature sexually and push into to these rivers in large pods. It is at this stage of their journey that they are

most available to an angler with a fly rod.

The DSR is on a large private estate that straddles the lower section of the Salmon River. The Barclay family decided to open the estate as a sport fisherman's paradise in 1989. Their land was first settled in 1708 by Colonel Rufus Price, from whom the Barclay family is directly descended, and served as a camp for General Washington's army during the Revolutionary War.

This private section of pristine waters allows up to 300 day-pass anglers. Guest anglers who book one of the seven private cabins are provided fishing access for the duration of their stay. They are also allowed guest-only parking and access points to the river a few minute's drive from each cabin.

On a Monday morning in November at 5:30 a.m., four anglers—Carson Oldham, Jeff Frye, Danny Stevens and I—loaded into Oldham's car and began the seven-hour drive to Pulaski. Oldham is the owner of Albemarle Angler and Frye

(L-R) Spotswood Payne, Danny Stevens and Carson Oldham battle high-water conditions fishing the Salmon River.

and I guide for him; Stevens is a friend who joined us for the trip. It was I-81 all the way and we made good time, settling into our DSR rented cabin by mid-afternoon. The cabin was fully furnished, nicely decorated and equipped with all the modern conveniences. This would be our home base for the next three days. Rolling fields behind the cabin lead to the tree-lined river a few hundred yards from our back door.

A few miles above the DSR section of the Salmon is a lake created by a hydroelectric dam which controls the flow of the river. Each morning, Oldham would religiously check the river's flow rate on the U.S. Geological Survey's website, which collects hydraulic data from rivers all over the country. Prime water conditions would be 750 cubic feet per second (cfs), a decent and fishable flow. On the day we arrived, the water was running at nearly 1,400 cfs! High water means more weight, so we would be adding numerous pieces of split shot to our leaders to place our flies deep in the water column and within the



Oldham helps to net and land the author's first fish of the trip. (Photo by Jeff Frye)

Oldham holds a very impressive buck steelhead, the biggest of the trip.



steelhead's strike zone.

As soon as we stowed our gear, we hurried to the guest-angler parking area to squeeze in a couple hours of fishing before sundown. Three of us poured out of the car like kids after a long summer drive to the beach. Oldham, on the other hand, was calm and collected. This was not his first trip to the DSR. We made our way to the Meadows Hole and Oldham placed us in a line parallel to the main channel of the run. The main channel is the deepest part of the river and where the pushing fish will be found. Frye, Stevens and I must have been a sight as we lobbed our lines heavy with the split-shot needed to combat the rushing water.

Oldham is a seasoned steelhead veteran, but the three of us were brook trout pros and a jump from a four-weight rod floating an Adams dry fly to a seven-weight rod throwing multiple split shot that resembled Civil War miniballs was a pretty significant change. It took a little while, but eventually we caught on to what Oldham was doing, casting 45 degrees upstream and allowing his fly to sink down to the rocky river bed, feeling the tick-tick-tick of the split shot as it moved downstream across the rocks, waiting for the pause that could mean...

Fish on! Frye hooked the first fish of the trip and his first-ever steelhead. I watched as his line was pulled further and further down stream. Oldham instructed Frye to play the fish downstream, keeping his rod tip pointed towards the far river bank to keep his hook set deeply in the fish's jaw. After a few hectic minutes with Frye battling the steelhead through multiple currents and channels, Oldham approached him from behind, and carefully raised the net from beneath the struggling fish. She was a beautiful brilliant silver hen, clearly fresh, not long out of the lake. As steelhead spend more time in the streams, they begin to gain color much more reminiscent of residential rainbow trout. It is commonly believed among steelhead anglers that they

begin to lose some of their fight as well. But that was not true of Frye's first fish!

Moments later, Stevens set the hook on what we can only imagine was a monster steelhead—it instantly snapped the eight-weight rod like a twig. It could have been a rock, but the possibility that it could have been a Moby steelhead led us to quicken our fishing pace.

Not long after Stevens' polebuster, I drifted my gaudy, chartreuse stonefly nymph-like concoction through what I hoped was the center of the main channel. Just at the end of the line's swing, when the line comes taught and the water pressure causes the fly to seemingly emerge towards the surface of the river, the line came tight and my rod tip dove to the water. A silver flash erupted from a swirl of white water. Completely awestruck and pumped with adrenaline by the fish's explosive first run, I clamped down hard on my fly line and the fish popped off in a heartbeat. It was gone and I was left with only a dangling fly line.

Oldham called from upstream, "Can't play these fish with your hands." What he meant was that these fish were far too strong and fast to rely on my hands to apply the tension needed to fight these fish. Once the hook is set anglers have to rely on the drag systems of their reels.

Early next morning, as we sat on the bank waiting for sunrise, small bobbing orbs, flashlights and headlamps of other anglers finding their spots on the river's edge, lined up along the shore across the river. As soon as the sun was up, Stevens hooked and almost landed a spunky little steelhead. It looked like it might have been a five- or six-pound fish. Not much later Oldham landed a beautiful fish, followed by Stevens landing a spawned-out king salmon that looked as if it came out of a monster movie. With such success right off the bat, we were convinced this would be one of those 20-netted-fish days. But that was not to be. The water was too high and the flow too strong for Stevens, Frye and me to put our flies in places the fish might be.



The Salmon River seen from the guest angler parking lot

That evening we found out that even more water would be released the next day, driving the flow up to 1,600 cfs. This was alarming news, considering the difficulty we had encountered at 1,400 cfs. Oldham suggested that we should get out well before sunrise and set up on the more user-friendly Lower Clay Hole, where there is a defined choke-point created at the head of the hole. The river is shallower there until it drops off into the main channel. This would allow us to present our flies at a much closer distance.

Early Wednesday, we moved out by flashlight and headlamp. We rounded a bend in the river, and to our surprise, we found the Lower Clay Hole vacant. We felt like prospectors laying claim to a potential silver mine, hoping that if we continued to sift, we'd strike the motherlode.

We worked methodically, sweeping the ticking split shot along the bottom like sonar. Once that ledge causing the choke point in the stream bed was found, so were the fish. Oldham struck first. He hooked a steelhead and calmly began stepping back toward dry land. He slowly

moved downstream along the bank as the powerful fish continued to jump, shaking its head and trying to throw the hook from its jaw. As the fish began to tire, I grabbed the net and slipped in from behind and collected Oldham's prize, an impressively large male steelhead.

Not long after, I felt the slightest hesitation in my line and lifted my rod to set the hook. Remembering my follies from the previous days, I began backing toward the bank and fed the fish line as he began his momentous first run. Line screamed off my reel as the fish made run after blistering run. After a long 10 minutes of the most exhilarating fight that I'd ever known, I landed my first steelhead and let the world know. The chrome-silver beauty was as long as my arm and most definitely a double-digit, a 10- pound or heavier fish. The steelhead was hooked and so was I.

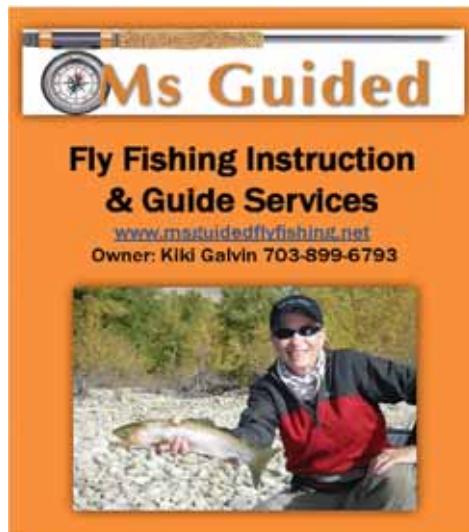
That Wednesday turned into one of those days of fishing that an angler will never forget and maybe never again experience. The afternoon was filled with screaming reels, whistling lines and leaping fish. Each of us had figured out the fish, the

hole and the presentation. The next day was much the same. Before the evening was up, Frye landed a monster brown trout that would rival the beasts from Down Under. The gargantuan was every bit of 28 inches. That day we landed a dozen fish and hooked who knows how many others. I was even lucky enough to land a king salmon hen that dragged me three football fields downstream.

While packing, I kept trying to come up with excuses to stay another day, but it was time to head back down I-81. It's not certain that I will ever again have the luck with steelhead I'd had on the trip, landing 10 or more, but what is certain is that next fall the steelhead will push again and I will be there to meet them.

The Albemarle Angler hosts trips to the DSR twice a year, among many other destination fly fishing trips. Please contact the shop at (434) 977-6882 or by email at albemarleangler@gmail.com.

Spotswood A. S. Payne is a native Virginian. Growing up chasing trout on the fly in the Blue Ridge fostered a true passion for all facets of the sport. He is a guide with the Albemarle Angler.



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Metzger mouth-calling a turkey for Eli

A Young Man's First Turkey Hunt

Story and Photos
by Anthony Sakowski

"Granddad, what do you think about going turkey hunting?" asked my 12-year-old grandson, Eli. It's hard to turn down the first of my grandsons to ask that question, much less the first to show any interest at all in getting out into the woods with me. So it was very easy for me to say, "Let's do it."

I had previously attended John Metzger's lecture on fall deer hunting and spring turkey hunting, and had already thought about spending a day in the woods with him. I was impressed with his 30-plus years of guiding and taxidermy experience in southwest Virginia. However, I knew that a day hunting with Metzger would be even better if Eli were there, and in fact he would be the only one carrying a gun. I've been a bird hunter for many years but had

limited experience with spring turkey hunting, so time spent with Metzger would most likely benefit both of us.

Arrangements were made to meet after Eli finished school on a Friday afternoon at Metzger's home in Vesuvius, a small town in southwestern Virginia. The two hours-plus drive from Richmond went by quickly in my 4Runner, as Eli and I practiced with our mouth calls. Who knew? He might be given the chance to help call in a turkey.

Metzger met us at the hunting lodge, and said that we needed to find our way to the shooting range quickly. Daylight was fading and Eli needed to get accustomed to using a 12-gauge turkey shotgun equipped with a scope.

At the shooting range, Metzger

had set up turkey targets. Eli listened intently to Metzger's instruction on how to handle the unfamiliar shotgun, and soon was putting a load of pellets in the target's vital area. "Granddad, this scope is pretty neat for zeroing in on a turkey," he exclaimed.

As darkness closed in, Metzger gave us a tour of his well-designed hunting lodge, with its walls displaying mounts of trophy deer, turkeys, coyotes, geese and other waterfowl and even a bear. Most had been mounted by Metzger himself. Eli was dazzled by all the animals looking down from the surrounding walls.

After we put our gear away, we enjoyed a dinner prepared by Laura, Metzger's wife—scrumptious BBQ chicken, mashed potatoes and salad were matched by the best baked beans in molasses that I had ever enjoyed. Metzger had already clued us in that they might be that good—and they were. Eli enjoyed the main meal but saved plenty of room for hot apple pie and vanilla ice cream.

After dinner Metzger gave us a preview of the next day's hunt. Eli listened attentively as the master told his two students about how we would approach the hunting area, make contact with a bird and set up for a shot. He also demonstrated the types of calls he would use in the morning, and noted that morning would be coming soon. "We want to get to bed early as we will leave the lodge at 5 a.m." I was usually up at that hour, but I knew this was not the typical wake-up time for a 12-year-old. In fact, Eli was known to be the latest sleeper of all my grandchildren. I could hardly believe it when he was the one who awoke me the next morning at 4 a.m.

We drove through the pre-dawn darkness and parked within walking distance of a roosting area that Metzger had described as "the bedroom for turkeys." Before we began our trek, he reminded us, "Don't talk and walk quietly." We followed Metzger's footsteps single-file up and around a small mountain, hardly able to see



At left, Metzger explains where the shot must impact the turkey. Eli getting familiar, center, with Metzger's scoped 12-gauge turkey gun. At right, the hunters use the mouth and box calls.



two feet in front of us. We seemed to walk forever in the pitch-black woodland, sometimes slipping on the moist rocks. I was silently proud of Eli; he never said a word.

Finally we arrived at the “bedroom,” the site where we would wait for Metzger to begin calling Ol’ Mr. Tom. As the dawn broke we found ourselves on a plateau where we could have a good view of an incoming tom. A few hen turkey decoys were deployed within shotgun range, Eli was positioned alongside Metzger at the base of a tree, and I did my best to stay back and out of the way. He whispered to Eli, “Don’t move any more than you must; aim for the neck when he

extends it.”

We heard very few gobblers respond that spring day, even though Metzger’s repertoire of mouth, box, slate and voice calls seemed limitless. The cool morning morphed into a comfortable day, and we peeled off layers of clothing. We changed locations but toms were scarce or they were already occupied with the ladies. Whatever the reason, the hope of bagging a turkey began to fade. Finally, at 11 a.m., Metzger declared that it was time to head for home.

So what did Eli learn from such a morning in the Virginia woods? For sure he learned that he could traverse a path up a

mountain in the dark of night. He learned to be on what’s been called “God’s front porch,” when the day begins to awaken, experiencing the sounds and smells of the forest as they slowly evolve while dawn unfolds. Eli witnessed a real expert at work, doing what he loves and in turn, passing knowledge on to the next generation. He heard stories of previous hunts, with a few thrown in by his grandfather, and now would have a few himself to tell.

No, we didn’t bring home a turkey, which in some respects would have made this narration complete. But that “failure” was of minor importance compared to what Eli gained in the anticipation, the planning,

A BBQ chicken dinner with Mrs. Metzger’s outstanding baked beans



Mounts in the clubhouse, all done by Metzger



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and his journey through territory that most folks will never experience. A harvested turkey would have been great, but that's only a small part of the value of such a trip with grandfather and guide. The turkeys won the first round, but we will be back as the years progress. And perhaps, with more luck and perseverance, Eli will bag his first Virginia gobbler.

For information on guide service

and taxidermy, contact John Metzger at (540) 460 1096, jrmetzger71@gmail.com.

Dr. Anthony D. (Tony) Sakowski founded the Virginia Eye Institute and practiced eye surgery for 37 years. His present interests include sailing the Chesapeake, training two hunting dogs and hunting turkeys, grouse, pheasant and quail wherever he can.

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Malta's old capital, Mdina

Malta The Knights' Fortress

Story and Photos by Louay Habib

Of the 50 European countries, few can match Malta's cultural diversity and rich history. Malta is one of the world's smallest nations but arguably it has a history that few other nation can match.

Situated in the center of the Mediterranean, 50 miles south of Sicily and 175 miles east of Tunisia, Malta is the southernmost nation of Europe. It has a hot, arid climate from April to September and

the surrounding sea is noted for its extreme clarity due to a lack of heavy industry. Maltese is the national language and is considered to be an Arabic Semitic dialect but it contains influences of French, Italian, English, Portuguese and Greek. It is the only Semitic language written in the Latin script in its standard form, as well as the only Semitic language written and read from left to right. Maltese words like Ta' Xbiex, Mdina, Mgarr may seem

unpronounceable to visitors, but it's not a problem since the vast majority of the population speaks English. Malta was under British rule from 1800 and although Malta became independent in 1964, close ties with Great Britain remain.

To describe Malta as fascinating would be an understatement. Today, the country of Malta and its people are a rich blend of its past and a fusion of cultures unlike anywhere else in the world.



Start of the Rolex Middle Sea Race from the Saluting Battery on the bastions surrounding the Grand Harbour, Valletta (Photo by Kurt Arrigo, courtesy of Rolex)

Mdina



Valletta, the Capital

The capital city of Malta dates back to the 16th century and is renowned for its stunning baroque architecture. The Knights of St. John, who came to Malta in 1530, founded Valletta and their influence is very strong today. Funded by the Catholic monarchs of Europe, the Knights of St. John built impregnable battlements, which formed the front line for Europe against the invading Turks of the Ottoman Empire. The battlements are over 30 meters high and are still intact, forming a stunning backdrop to the Grand Harbour next to the capital.

Valletta, also a World Heritage site, is nothing short of an open-air museum. It is a living experience of baroque architecture initiated by the Knights of St. John nearly five centuries ago. Through the years, Valletta has welcomed emperors, heads of state, artists and poets. Dotted with quaint cafés and wine bars, the city is today one of Malta's main tourist attractions, pulsating with life both day and night.

Malta's strategic position at the southernmost tip of Europe cannot be

underestimated. While Malta held firm, Catholic Europe was safe from the East, and its important strategic position echoes through history, including the Second World War. In 1942, Malta was the most heavily bombed place on earth. The Maltese refused to surrender and their heroic actions were recognized by King George VI, who awarded the St. George Cross to the people of Malta. It is the only country to have been awarded the highest military honor by a British monarch.

The original purpose of the Knights of St. John was to care for sick and injured pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Crusades. But after being banished to Malta, their role was to defend the island from the East. The knights maintained control of the island for more than 200 years. No trip to Malta would be complete without visiting St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta. Compared to the intricate and lavish baroque buildings of Valletta, the cathedral looks like a military fortress from the outside but inside it is extremely ornate.

The knights were lively, extroverted characters and their gravestones covering most of the cathedral floor reflect their eccentric lifestyle. Colorful mosaics depicting skeletons, mythological beasts and personal slogans adorn the tombstones. The designs bring to mind intricate tattoos or the designs on the leather jackets of the Hells Angels biker clan.

The internal walls of the cathedral were decorated by Mattia Preti, the Calabrian artist and knight. Preti designed the intricately carved stone walls and painted the vaulted ceiling and side altars with scenes from the life of St. John. The important works of the Italian artist Caravaggio hang in the cathedral, including The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist. It is the only work by Caravaggio to bear his signature, which he placed in the blood spilling from the saint's cut throat. Caravaggio's use of light to emphasise meaning and his accurate depiction of human anatomy influenced other famous

artists including Rubens, Jusepe de Ribera, Bernini and Rembrandt. Caravaggio was an extraordinary man and, typical of the knights, he led a tumultuous life. He was notorious for brawling and was often jailed for his behavior.

For a spectacular view from Valletta, the Saluting Battery, high above the bastions surrounding the Grand Harbour, offers an awe-inspiring vista. A gun is still fired daily at noon, as has been done for centuries. Historically the battery was a major defensive position and there are several others along the bastions. Today, the cannons are discharged for ceremonial purposes and are also used to start Malta's biggest international sporting event.

The Rolex Middle Sea Race has become one of the most famous yacht races in the world. The 600-mile course around Sicily and outlying islands starts and finishes in Malta. Since 1968 the contest has attracted an international field of the world's most prestigious racing yachts. The Royal Malta Yacht Club hosts the race. It is a private club located at Ta' Xbiex Seafront, but there is a delightful restaurant within the club that is open to the public. The Guze Brasserie serves a Mediterranean lunch and evening menu, including fresh pasta, superb pizzas and a variety of fish and meat dishes, such as pan-seared Barbary duck breast in Calvados sauce and rabbit ravioli.

Mdina, the Silent City

Just half an hour's drive from Valletta is the walled city of Mdina, which is known by locals as the silent city. Modern-day Malta is heavily populated but urban rush evaporates inside Mdina's walls. Only 300 residents live inside the walls and there are virtually no cars permitted. Narrow sandstone streets and passageways give Mdina a cool and fresh atmosphere and its elevated position gives stunning views across the island.

In peak season, Mdina can be very busy with tourists, but at night the souvenir shops close and peace returns. The city has



St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta



The Silent City of Mdina at night

a good selection of quality restaurants and one of the best is the Medina Restaurant. Set in a narrow passageway, the restaurant has a romantic charm. The main restaurant

is a small covered courtyard with vines growing around the sandstone pillars. The food is exceptional, with a selection of typical Maltese appetizers such as bigilla, a



Azure Window, Gozo (Photo courtesy of Gozo Tourism Association)

spicy broad-bean dip and a wide variety of main courses including excellent rib-eye steak, locally caught fish and fenkata – rabbit fried with wine and garlic. The Medina

Restaurant has an extensive wine list and tempting homemade desserts. As with many Maltese restaurants, value for money is outstanding.

Gozo, the Second Island

The country of Malta is actually an archipelago. Gozo is the second largest and is far less populated than the main island of Malta. There is frequent ferry service to Gozo for cars and foot passengers, which takes just a few minutes. Gozo is verdant with a picturesque countryside. One of its outstanding natural features is the Azure Window, a limestone arch which has been noted as one of the wonders of Europe. However, the arch is crumbling away and is expected to totally collapse in the next few years. This has not stopped cliff-divers from illegally using the arch as a jumping spot for their extreme sport. There are several good beaches on Gozo. Xlendi Bay is one of the prettiest places on the island. The skyline is dominated by high cliffs and the bay has crystal-clear blue water. Gozo is considered one of the top diving destinations in the Mediterranean with reefs, dropoffs and caves, as well as many sunken ships. It is a world-class destination for scuba divers, whether they are beginners or more experienced.

The Maltese are so multicultural that they have developed their own singular identity. Incredibly patriotic and hard working, the Maltese take a commendable approach to life. From the taxi driver to the well-heeled descendants of the Knights, the people of Malta welcome tourists with open arms and thoroughly enjoy making sure all visitors enjoy the delights of this captivating country.

Additional information:

Visit Malta - The official tourism site for Malta, Gozo and Comino
www.visitmalta.com

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Mdina 7, Holy Cross Street, Mdina, Malta.
<http://www.mol.net.mt/medina/index.htm>

Official website of the Gozo Tourism
Association: <http://www.islandofgozo.org>

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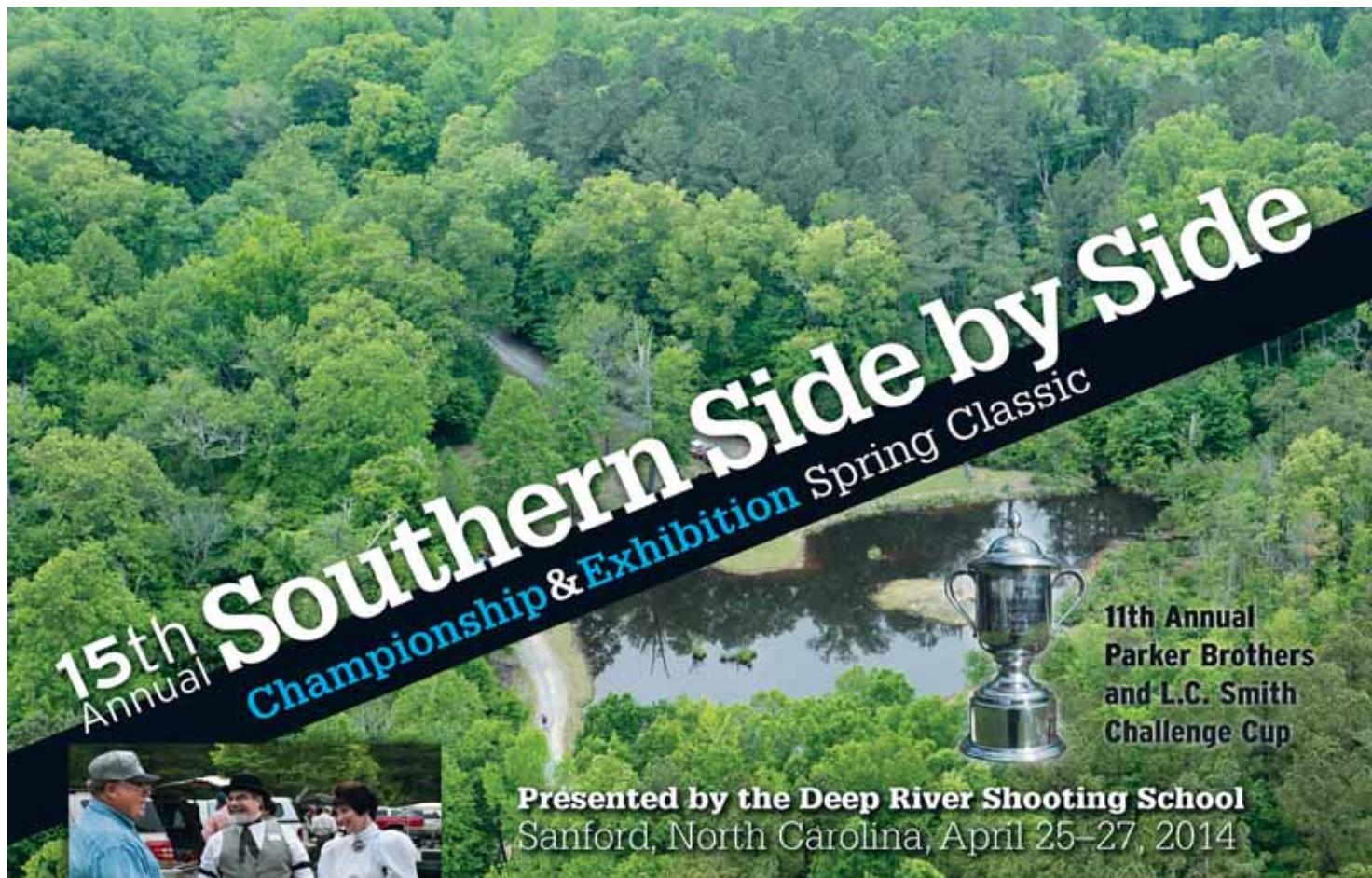
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Greg Kuhlman's Jaxson's Never Ending Fire flushing a pheasant (Photo by Kim Kuhlman)



Kim Kuhlman

The Versatile English Springer Spaniel

by Susan E. Quigley

A field-bred English Springer Spaniel is one of the most exciting flushing dogs you could ever hunt behind. Its brisk quartering, animated bustle while flushing, willingness to retrieve even in dense cover and boldness in its relentless pursuit of a running bird make the Springer a pleasure to work or watch. Their medium size and friendly disposition make them great house and family dogs.

I am presently working with a five-month-old English Springer Spaniel pup named Pepper, a recent import from England. It is this experience that has intrigued me — so much so that Pepper and I packed up last December and attended the

2013 English Springer Spaniel National Open Championship held in Cambridge, Maryland. We met some great characters and saw some fabulous dogs.

Ed Epp of Epp Spaniels in Tallahassee has been breeding and training spaniels his whole life. He learned by working with his father, Freddie Epp, a 1998 inductee into the Bird Dog Foundation's Field Trial Hall of Fame. Epp cautions bird hunters, "The most crucial thing is to choose from field-bred stock with no show lineage." Suffice it to say that a show dog is not bred for a desire to hunt. You do not want a show-bred dog for field work.

It can be confusing, however, for a novice searching for a working Springer to understand the difference between the titles found on show and field pedigrees. So here, a short primer: CH (Champion) before the name designates a show pedigree, while FC (Field Champion), AFC (Amateur Field Champion) or CFC (Canadian Field Champion) before the name designates a field-trial pedigree. The English Springer Spaniel Field Trial website is indispensable for providing information on and sources of 100-percent field-bred, flushing spaniels.

Though bred primarily to hunt and retrieve, Springers are excellent house dogs. Janie Haworth of Pheasant Feathers



Janie Haworth's 2008 Amateur Champion Drake with an enthusiastic retrieve typical of a Springer
(Photo by Julieann Wallace)

in southeast Pennsylvania has top-quality dogs, including Drake who won the 2008 Springer National Amateur Championship. She breeds for hunting ability and calmness. "My dogs play a big part in my life and they reside in the house," she says. "Since most hunters today want a gun dog that will be a great family dog, they should select a field breeder with very talented, yet calm and level-headed Springers."

Mike Wallace of Salmy Kennel in Kearneysville, West Virginia, agrees. "I breed for dogs that make good house pets as well as hunters. Springers are not only the most versatile dog in the gun world; they

make the best pets and even look after the children in their lives." Wallace, who has been training for more than 40 years, bred and handled Cliff, the 2012 National Open Field Champion, who has been known to double as a couch potato. Wallace is the president of the Central Virginia Field Trial Club and hosted a field trial in February this year at his Kearneysville location.

Paul McGagh, a living legend in the world of spaniels, is a professional trainer and handler with eight national championships to his credit, including the 2013 Open Championship with Diva. Wallace states, "Paul is probably the best



James Nelson's Diva, 2013 National Open Champion, trained and handled by Paul McGagh (Photo by Kim Kuhlman)

dog trainer I've ever been around. He is a true dog whisperer. He really understands a dog's mind. His seminars are unlike any other training seminar."

McGagh, a native of England, spent 10 years training spaniels in Virginia before establishing Glencoe Kennels in North Dakota. He is intensely proud of his lifelong passion and says, "I was introduced to working Springer Spaniels by a childhood friend, after a car accident rendered me housebound for a period of time that stretched into years. I read voraciously and what especially caught my young imagination were the stories of great British dogs that made the transatlantic crossing to compete in American trials."

McGagh's Glencoe Farm & Kennels is co-owned with Vicky Thomas. Thomas's much-acclaimed book, *In A More Perfect Manner*, written with Pat Bramwell, was recently published. It is an important and historic collection of articles and personal accounts by those instrumental in the development of the English Springer Spaniel field trial. All proceeds from the book will benefit the National Spaniel Championships.

Even though there is a dearth of wild birds in the mid-Atlantic area, we are fortunate to have a variety of activities within driving distance for the working dog and handler. There are also several spaniel clubs in the area whose members enjoy gathering for the camaraderie intrinsic in training for field trials, hunt tests and field work. Their events are often open to all flushing spaniel breeds. You can find a list of clubs at www.essft.com.

Popular with professional as well as amateur trainers, an AKC field trial is an action-packed competition of the highest level, with the purpose of improving the breed. "A field-trial dog is the cream of the crop of the working dog world," says Wallace, whose Salmy's Zorro was inducted into the Springer Hall of Fame. "Dogs with the best nose, endurance and retrieve come together at a field trial, and successful dogs

will be producers of the future top notch dogs—both field-trialers and hunting dogs.”

A hunt test is another option for those who enjoy training and working their dogs. The AKC created its first spaniel hunt test in the mid-1980s, with the purpose of assessing the competitors’ ability under actual hunting conditions, thus helping the hunter develop a useful gun dog. Participants are tested on land and water against a written standard and with various levels of competence.

For those who enjoy hunting, Springer are possibly the premier upland bird dog. They are naturally talented at flushing and retrieving and they love water. Wallace affirms, “I’ve hunted everything from quail and grouse to woodcock, wood ducks, mallards, geese, and of course, pheasant among other small game species like rabbits, and have never been disappointed in their success or enthusiasm.”

If you enjoy upland hunting and are searching for a reason to travel to warmer weather, you will find the Red Hills Cocker Trial to be a unique and challenging gundog event. Held in Tallahassee in late winter, this timed competition tests the gun-dog and handler, with classes for professionals down to kids, making it a true family event. Epp and his wife, Susan, have been instrumental in establishing this pure gun dog event which is open to all working spaniel breeds. Epp states, “I have successfully trained dogs for field trials, but the working dogs are my love.” This passion was evident at the 2013 Red Hills trial when the Epp family grand-slammed the Open class with Ed taking a second place with Boris, and sons Dillon and Wyatt taking first and third with Griz and Roscoe.

I find the field-bred English Springer Spaniel to be one of the most exciting, animated companions you could hunt behind. It will pursue a running pheasant until it is forced to burst into the air, giving the gun an exciting, quick shot—the kind



Frank Wiseman's 2012 National Open Field Champion Cliff, handled by Mike Wallace
(Photo by Kim Kuhlman)

of shot that, when successful, is burned into the memory to savor again and again. At five months old, Pepper has already impressed me with her desire to please, hunting instinct, intelligence, house manners and irresistible cuteness. What more could one ask of a hunting buddy?



**Cliff, 2012
National Open
Champion, as
house dog (Photo
by Julieann
Wallace)**

**2013 Open Adult
Class (Lto R)
second place, Ed
Epp with Boris;
first place, Dillon
Epp with Griz;
and third place,
Wyatt Epp with
Roscoe (Photo by
Emily Holton)**



For more information on Springer see:
English Springer Spaniel Field Trial
www.essft.com
Red Hills Cocker Trial
www.redhillscocker.com
Epp Spaniels
www.eppspaniels.com
Pheasant Feathers English Springer Spaniels
www.pheasant-feathers.com
Salmy Acres Kennel
www.salmykennel.com
Glencoe Farm & Kennels
www.glencoekennels.net

Susan E. Quigley is a native of Pennsylvania who lives in Wilmington, North Carolina. She is passionate about shooting, gun dogs and her 20-gauge side-by-side shotguns. Her articles have appeared in *Shooting Sportsman* and *Field Trial Magazine*.

Snapshots for Straight Shooting

Henry Baskerville

For waterfowl, a faster wing beat means a faster flight speed.



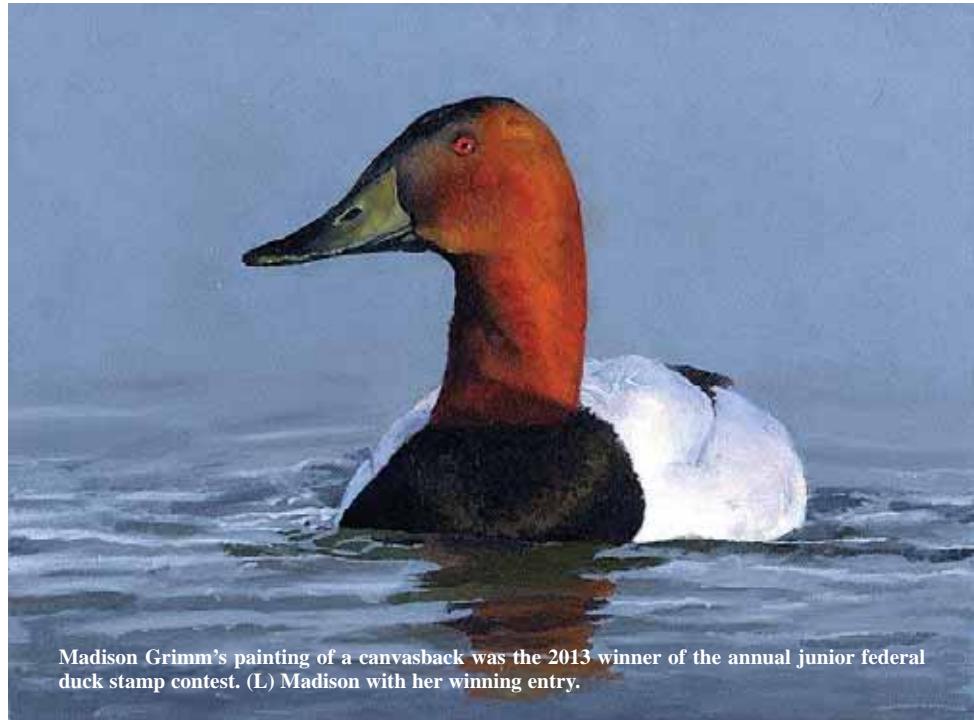
Having a potential maximum speed of 65 mph, this mallard could easily be traveling at least 55 mph. Each shooter perceives the necessary lead in a different fashion, depending on his or her individual shooting style; however, Erin Bragg, a talented shooter, demonstrates considerable lead (to the spot marked with a red X) on this fast-crossing mallard drake. She knows that this is a very fast moving duck because his wings are beating very rapidly. The clear, cloudless sky will often give the shooter the illusion that the duck is flying more slowly than he actually is; however, waterfowl wing beats do not lie.

This particular mallard drake has arrested his frantic wing beat and cupped his wings to slow down, lose altitude and land in the decoys. Accordingly, Bragg relaxes her lead (to the spot marked with a red X), a position slightly ahead of and slightly below the incoming mallard. She has to be alert to the disposition and the attitude of his wings in order to readily adjust for a sudden speed variance. This same duck could suddenly flare and greatly increase his speed with a burst of fast wing beats.

Coming in the June/July issue: How the flight speed of a pheasant does not follow the wing-beat rule.

Photography courtesy of Daniel Teetor.

Henry Baskerville is a NSCA- and NRA-certified shooting instructor and life member of the International Professional Hunters' Association. He is the director of Cavalier Sporting Clays near Richmond, Virginia. He can be reached at Henry@CavalierSportingClays.com or (804) 370-7565.



Madison Grimm's painting of a canvasback was the 2013 winner of the annual junior federal duck stamp contest. (L) Madison with her winning entry.

Madison Grimm Junior Duck Stamp Contest Winner

By Dail Willis

Talented family dynasties are magical – the inheritance of not only a gift but the desire to excel. Football has the Manning family – father Archie, sons Peyton and Eli. Jazz has the Marsalis family – father Ellis, sons Wynton and Branford. And the annual federal duck stamp contest has the Grimms – father Adam, daughter Madison.

Now a well-established wildlife artist and resident of Burbank, South Dakota, Adam Grimm remains the youngest person ever to win the federal duck stamp contest. He was only 20 when his oil painting of a mottled duck won in 1999. In 2013, he made history again: He won a second time with his oil painting of a pair of canvasbacks – and six-year-old Madison won the junior duck stamp contest with her oil painting, also of a canvasback. Like her father, she was the youngest

person ever to win – and like her father, she isn't finished competing. "I think I might enter again," Madison says. "It was fun creating that entry."

Her path to competition began with a casual remark a couple of years ago. "I'd like to do a painting like Daddy does," Madison, then five years old, told her mother.

A signed copy of the junior duck stamp with Madison's winning canvasback



Janet Grimm home-schools the three Grimm children – Madison and two younger siblings, Hannah and Jonas – so it was easy enough to add painting to the mix for Madison. Using one of her father's photographs of a canvasback, Madison set to work. "I talked with her about the process – how you roll the board, put in your dark colors, then the light, then in-between colors," her father recalls. "I told her to start on the body and save the head for last."

Madison worked on her painting for more than a year, setting it aside when she became frustrated and then returning when she was ready to try again.

"She had good color contrast but she struggled with some of the technical aspects," Grimm says. "She was really striving for a level of quality." Sometimes there were tears when she couldn't get it the



In addition to ducks, Madison paints other birds, an interest that stems from her father's work as a nationally recognized wildlife artist. Adam Grimm has won the adult duck stamp contest twice, including in 2013 when his daughter won the junior award.

way she wanted it and he told her not to hurry the process, Grimm recalls. He told her, "This is like a practice painting. So take a month or so off – take your time and do your best."

Madison followed her father's advice and the painting got better as she worked on it. "She picked it up pretty fast – I was impressed that she was able to do it. I told my wife she had a good chance of winning in her age group," Grimm says.

The painting was finished in time for her to enter the 2013 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest. The contest begins with state competitions and the winners of those contests then compete for the national

title. Grimm thought Madison's painting was good but that she wouldn't win because she was so young. The contest is open to students from kindergarten through grade 12. "I thought she might get an award in her age group and it would bolster her confidence," he says. "I told her she was going up against kids from high school. She was undeterred."

Madison's canvasback won best in show at the state level, qualifying her for the national competition. Grimm again explained to his daughter that she would be competing with teens from across the country, students who had been painting longer than she had. "I didn't imagine she could be

competitive at that level," he says. He didn't want her to feel the sting of losing, so he decided that the family wouldn't watch the competition. The junior contest was judged on Friday, April 19, and the judging was streamed online.

That day, his wife got a call from Grimm's sister, who had been watching. "She's in the top five!" the sister reported. "You'd better watch!" So Grimm turned on his computer. By then Madison's canvasback was in the top three – and then she won.

"She had no idea what it meant," her father says. "We'd never even talked about it." So her parents explained that Madison's painting would become a \$5 stamp. They spent a lot of time explaining to Madison that this was major news and what her obligations and responsibilities would be. She would have to shoulder additional work as part of winning. "We had a long talk with her about having to put 'her grown-up face on' since she would be filling the place that a typical child twice her age would," says Grimm.

The win was not without its share of drama. Madison's win was briefly rescinded after questions about whether her technique violated the rules. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ultimately decided in Madison's favor, with an apology: "The Service's decision to reinstate Grimm's work was made in recognition of the fact that her work was judged the winner during a fair and open public contest. The Service respects the decision of the contest judges, and apologizes for any distress this process may have caused the top-placing artists and their families, teachers and friends."

The young artist took the temporary setback in stride, saying in a speech when the stamp was introduced that although she had suffered some hurt feelings, the contest "had definitely been a worthwhile experience."

The junior duck stamp is sold starting July 1 each year and the revenue from the \$5 cost of the stamp supports the competition's costs, scholarships and education. The winner of the adult contest

is not used for postage; instead, it is sold as a hunting license and entry pass to national wildlife refuges where admission is charged.

Both the junior and adult competitions are among the most successful conservation programs in the nation's history. The adult contest began in 1934 and the stamps were sold as federal licenses to hunt migratory waterfowl, a practice that continues today. The program has also become a highly effective tool for wetland conservation, with 98 cents of each dollar generated by stamp sales used for purchase or lease of wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge program. Since its inception, the program has generated more than \$800 million which has been used to acquire or lease more than six million acres of wetlands in the U.S. The program has also spread to the states. Many states issue their own duck stamps; some are sold as collectors' items and others, like the federal program, are used for hunting and conservation.

The junior program began in 1989. Proceeds from the sale of the junior stamps are used to fund environmental education programs, award scholarships to contest winners and market the program. The revenue from the junior program funds education in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and several U.S. territories. Each

year's winner of the national contest receives a \$5,000 scholarship.

Madison's stamp was introduced to the public on June 28 at the Bass Pro Shop in Ashland, Virginia. Madison and her family were on hand for the occasion, with Madison serving as an ambassador for the junior program by giving a short speech and signing hundreds of stamps and programs. She noted in her speech that her win had surprised her parents. "The looks on my parents' faces was priceless," she said.

"She's been a great ambassador," her father says with justifiable pride. "She signed easily 1,000 autographs. They had to build a special podium because she is so small. She's not real tall, but she's got a big brain." She also has big plans. "I want to be a biologist," she says. "I'm going to have a scholarship – I already have an account in the bank."

She also might have some competition if she enters year after next (winners are required to sit out for a year). Her sister Hannah, who turned five in November, "is bound and determined that she is going to beat Madison's record!" says Grimm.

Only time will tell if Adam Grimm can pull off a third win or if Hannah can indeed top her sister's substantial accomplishment. In the meantime, it seems clear that the Grimm family has established

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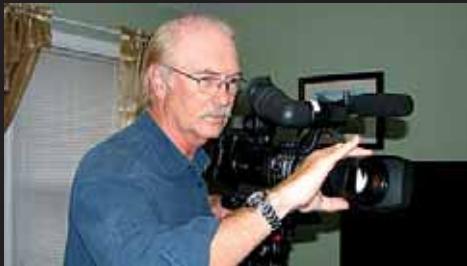
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a new generation of painters who are certainly contenders.

Dail Willis is a native of Orange County, Virginia. She has been a writer and editor for three decades, reporting and editing for newspapers, magazines and the Associated Press, and currently lives in North Carolina.

Two winners from Adam Grimm: The painting at left won the Ohio duck stamp contest in 2013 and will be that state's wetland-habitat stamp. At right, his painting of a pair of canvasbacks that won the federal contest will be the federal duck stamp in 2014-2015.





Dave Miller, the man behind the camera

Breathing Life into the Chesapeake

A Documentary of Hope by Dave Miller

Story by John Shtogren
Photos Courtesy of Dave Miller Productions of Virginia

There is good news about the Chesapeake Bay—finally! For three decades, we've heard nothing but gloom and doom about the Bay, its tainted water no longer able to sustain a once-fecund ecology, the deterioration of the seafood industry and the loss of the waterman's way of life. In the 1980s the Bay's most precious commodity, oysters, was wiped out and 75 percent of the watermen, people who drew their livelihood from the Bay's bounty lost their jobs.

Today it's a different story, an uplifting story with the resurgence of oysters at its heart. The story is told in David Miller's new documentary, *Breathing Life into the Chesapeake: Of Oysters, Boats and Men*. And the story is told by those who



Tonging for oysters the traditional way takes a strong back.

know it best, by watermen whose families have worked the Bay for generations.

Miller was able to marry his two great loves, making documentaries and the

Bay itself, in his *Breathing Life into the Chesapeake*. Until early 2012, when he took an early retirement to start his own production company, Miller, 60, was a TV director and producer for NBC's affiliate in Richmond and established Henrico County's video production facilities. Throughout his career he enjoyed making documentaries in which real people were given airtime to tell their stories while the cameras roll. At the same time he enjoyed a second home in Fletton, where the Great Wicomico River empties into the Bay. There he gained a keen appreciation for the water-based way of life that has carried on for generations.

Miller had wanted to make a documentary about the Chesapeake waterman's way of life for some time. "These guys go out on the water every morning not knowing if they are going to catch a thing or make a dime that day. And they have

James "Crow" Smith and Little Ernie Harding sort through "a good lick of oysters."



families to feed. They're living the same lives here in 2014 that their fathers and grandfathers did." He wanted to document the waterman's way of life through the eyes of the men who were living it. At first he thought he would capture the watermen's story through their efforts to harvest "beautiful swimmers," the Atlantic blue crab, which had been the watermen's mainstay after the oyster crash in the '80s. That all changed one day last April with a phone call from a waterman and duck hunting buddy, Ernie Harding.

"Ernie called and told me to grab my camera and come over to Penny Creek and film the *Delvin K*, the last working buy boat on the Bay." A buy boat takes loads of oysters off smaller crafts and carries them to market. "The *Delvin K* was loading up three million spat and taking them to Maryland to seed their beds." (Spat are free-swimming oyster larvae.) Miller was taken by all the activity as the buy boat took on her load. "While filming everything that was going on and seeing what the resurgence of oysters was doing, my idea for a documentary took a major turn. It would be about watermen and oystering, not crabbing."

Making a documentary is an act of both faith and courage. There is no script, no carefully crafted dialogue, no seasoned actors. You ask real people to tell their stories and roll the cameras, and hope when it's all said and done their words will ring true for your audience. As Miller's fellow film maker Brenda Hughes summed up, "Making a documentary is not for the faint of heart. Especially in these economic times when people and companies aren't so eager to open their wallets and checkbooks." It takes faith and courage for a filmmaker and the film's backers as well.

"The hardest part of making a documentary is funding," said Miller. Trying to get people to invest in a who-knows-how-it-will-turn-out documentary is no easy task. Miller used Kickstarter to get his project up and running. Kickstarter is



Oysters were once so plentiful in the Bay that watermen could work side by side and fill their boats.

Captain Big Ernie Harding, Little Ernie's father, was well-known up and down the Bay.
(Photos courtesy of the Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia)

the world's largest funding platform for creative projects, and follows the age-old model in which artists go directly to the audience to fund their work. Over a two-month period, 40 like-minded individuals donated \$5,000 to the project in amounts ranging from \$5 to \$1,000. Miller was straightforward in his funding request: He needed money to buy gas for the production truck and boat as well as bulbs, batteries, DVDs, jump drives, SD cards and the like. As the project moved forward, five corporate sponsors joined in to support production: Green Top Hunting and Fishing, The Virginia Marine Products Board, the Digital Video Group, The Mariner's Museum and *The Virginia Sportsman* magazine.

The project officially got under way in April with Miller's first interview with a waterman, his fellow duck hunter, Ernie Harding. Little Ernie is a waterman through and through. His father, Captain Big Ernie Harding, and grandfather, Captain Garnett Belfield, were well-known on the Bay from Baltimore to Newport News. Today, Harding dredges oysters in the Great Wicomico River on grounds left to him by his father. And he loves to tell stories, whether wistfully reminiscing about growing up on the Bay among larger-than-life men, or when his barely contained enthusiasm gets caught up in a story about the Tangier Islander's accent.

After Miller's initial interview with Harding, nine others followed in a by-word-of-mouth sort of way. One waterman after another said to Miller, "You need to talk to so-and-so; I'll give him a call for you." In the tight-knit and insular community of watermen, such personal connections and introductions are invaluable.



The *Delvin K* is the last working buy boat on the Bay. A buy boat takes loads of oysters off smaller boats and carries them to market.

The stories that emerged from Miller's interviews were rich and varied. The documentary's subtitle became apparent when Miller stood back and looked at what had been said. Overall, it is a story of the Bay's revival and of "Oysters, Boats and Men." Through first-hand accounts we learn how watermen tong, dredge and farm-raise oysters; we come to appreciate the waterman's love for wooden boats from skiffs to skipjacks, the crafts that take them out to work on the water in the morning and bring them home on dark and stormy nights; we come to know other watermen beside Little Ernie Harding, such as George Butler, who builds wooden skiffs the old-fashioned way, and Dudley Biddlecomb who, at 76, is harvesting oysters on the Cranes Creek grounds his grandfather bought in the 1920s.

Most of all, *Breathing Life into the Chesapeake* is a story of hope for the Bay and future generations of watermen. "I didn't want to dwell on the past 30 years

and the Bay's decline," said Miller. "I wanted it to be a story of hope, that if we all pitch in we can help the Bay." The watermen in Miller's documentary echo his sentiments. They look forward with optimism to the time when their children and grandchildren will enjoy a Bay as pristine and plentiful as did their parents and grandparents.

John Shtogren is the senior editor for The Virginia Sportsman. He is an outdoorsman, farmer and international management consultant whose travels often take him to the far edges and borderlands. He welcomes comments at jashtogren@yahoo.com.

Breathing Life into the Chesapeake has been aired on PBS. It has had a number of screenings in its first six months, and there are more to come :

- Nov. 7, 2013 First aired on Richmond's PBS station
- Jan. 23, 2014 Shown at Jack Russell Leadership Program, Kilmarnock, Virginia
- Jan. 31, 2014 Shown at the Richmond Main Library
- Feb. 5-9 Among the prize winners at the RVA Environmental Film Festival
- April 2014 To be aired on Tidewater PBS the third week of the month. Check local programming for the exact time and date.
- Spring 2014 To be aired in the Washington D.C. area. Check Miller's website for the time and date as well as other project information, www.breathinglifetv.com.

The first PBS airing in November reached 10,000 Virginia households and when shown in Washington, D.C. it is expected to reach 100,000 more viewers. Miller says viewer ratings have been encouraging. He adds that Little Ernie Harding, who appears throughout the documentary, has achieved star status in the watermen's community.

Currently, Miller is looking into other outlets for his documentary such as cable and satellite TV and DVD rental, as well as getting the film into more schools, libraries, museums and retail outlets.

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Koi in the lily pond

At the pond's edge, a bronze sculpture depicts a child enjoying a book.

offloaded cargo onto boats that followed the creek past this area to Port Anne at College Landing. From there, the goods would be transported by horse and cart to Williamsburg and the College of William and Mary.

The Conservancy properties featured on the tour are large, with complementary landscaping that includes forest paths, hidden gardens, a grotto fountain that was constructed with more than 10,000 seashells, a master gardener's greenhouse and a Japanese-inspired rock garden. If there is a theme, it is the artwork that takes center stage in these outdoor spaces. Metal art and three-dimensional sculptures are special features in all of them. These spaces show the influence of the late Warrenton-based landscape architect Meade Palmer, who edited and refined woodland settings in this neighborhood. Known for his minimalist designs that incorporated traditional materials, he sought to provide historical and spatial context to planting design. In addition to sculpture, Meade-influenced open vistas are punctuated by specimen trees.

After parking at the Williamsburg Winery, Historic Garden Week visitors will

Historic Garden Week in Williamsburg

Story by Terry Buntrock
Photos by Nina Mustard

The garden of Hope and Robert Beck in the Williamsburg Winery's Conservancy neighborhood will be open on Tuesday, April 29, as part of Historic Garden Week. Hosted by the Williamsburg Garden Club, it is one of 31 house and garden tours taking place in Virginia this year. The neighborhood sits on

a bluff overlooking the confluence of Halfway and College creeks.

In developing their home sites and gardens, the Becks and their neighbors were sensitive to College Creek's historic significance. In the early days of Virginia, ships from England anchored in the James River at the mouth of College Creek and



Easily traversed cobblestone walkways encircle the property and lead to a cascading waterfall and lily pond that is stocked with koi.



A slate path leads to a bridge and eventually to the dock and boathouse.



be shuttled to the entrances of each Conservancy property. They will enter the Beck garden from a curving drive that is bordered by hardwood and specimen trees. Deeply shaded springtime beds contain purple, green and white hellebore. A pair of life-size bronze whitetail deer by Virginia artist William H. Turner adds beauty and structure to a colorful grouping of annuals at the circular drive.

Revealing its treasures in layers, the garden's mature creek-fronting landscape includes full vistas of the marshlands and switchback creeks that lead to the James River. The property is a welcoming habitat for waterfowl. Eagle sightings are common. Crape myrtle and raised brick flowerbeds frame the home's front entry. Easily traversed cobblestone walkways encircle the property and lead to a cascading waterfall and lily pond that is stocked with coy and surrounded by butterfly shrubs. At the pond's edge, a second bronze sculpture depicts a child enjoying a book. A slate path leads to a bridge and eventually to the dock and boathouse. Brick garden walls lend structure to the landscape and an ascending walk along the walls returns to the front yard. A toolhouse is tucked away in a stand of magnolia.

Visitors will also have the opportunity to tour the Williamsburg Winery. The property, known as Wessex Hundred, is the tour's lunch location. Its name dates to the Colonial era and describes parcels of land sufficient to support a hundred families regardless of actual acreage. The farm, then known as Archer's Hope, was subject to the Twelfth Acte of 1619 stipulating that each settler plant at least 10 vines to make wine on his land. The tour continues in nearby Colonial Williamsburg with two additional homes and three gardens located in the Revolutionary City. The garden tours are escorted and begin at the George Jackson House and Store. Gardens behind the Coke-Garrett house are punctuated with interesting outbuildings.



A pair of lifesize bronze whitetail deer by Virginia artist William H. Turner adds beauty and structure to a grouping of annuals.

The Beck Garden is open especially for the Williamsburg tour, part of a six-day suggested itinerary of the Chesapeake Bay area. For garden lovers who are also history buffs, the Williamsburg Garden Club has partnered with the Hampton Roads Garden Club and the Huntington Garden Club in hosting a tour of Yorktown this year on Wednesday, April 30. A special combo ticket is available for both tours online only.

Six suggested days of house & garden tours in the Chesapeake Bay area:

Monday, 4/28 at Westover Plantation in Charles City
Tuesday, 4/29 in Williamsburg*
Wednesday, 4/30 in Northern Neck
Thursday, 5/1 in Norfolk
Friday, 5/2 in Middle Peninsula
Saturday, 5/3 in Gloucester

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Paeonia Red Charm

In all, this garden-lover's tour includes 10 distinct sites including the Becks' extensive garden. Related properties include Mattey's Garden at Matthew Whaley Elementary School on Scotland Street. A project of the Williamsburg Garden Club, it was a gift to the City of Williamsburg for its 300th celebration. One of nearly 50 active restoration projects of the Garden Club of Virginia using proceeds from past tours, Bruton Parish Church, which dates to 1674, is also nearby. Both are open on Williamsburg's tour day in celebration of Historic Garden Week.

Since 1920, the Garden Club of Virginia has grown from eight founding clubs to 47 clubs with more than 3,300 members. In 1927, a flower show raised \$7,000 to save trees planted by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. For nearly a

century, this non-profit organization has been committed to preserving the beauty of Virginia for all to enjoy. An early leader in conservation issues and environmental concerns, its tour proceeds fund the restoration and preservation of the state's significant historic gardens. For 81 years, these restoration projects have included some of Virginia's most beloved public sites, including Mount Vernon, the Pavilion Gardens at the University of Virginia and the grounds of the Executive Mansion in Richmond.

The coordinated efforts of talented volunteers, along with the generosity of more than 200 private homeowners, make Historic Garden Week possible. For eight consecutive days, visitors are welcomed to some of Virginia's most picturesque private gardens. Historic Garden

Week is a great way to enjoy some of Virginia's unique properties.

Visit www.vagardenweek.org for a complete schedule, to purchase tickets, and for details regarding itineraries, special activities and current restoration sites.

Terry Buntrock promotes the arts as a tourism industry for the Offices of Economic Development for the City of Williamsburg and James City and York Counties, VA. She is a member of the Garden Club of Virginia.



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A broad stretch of
Indian Creek

The Riffe Farm A Sportsman's Dream

By
Jim Brewer

Breathes there a sportsman who would not cherish his or her own outdoor paradise – a secluded place to fish and hunt in a beautiful setting? A place with trout and deer, ducks and

turkeys? A place to release game birds and host September dove shoots? What a dream! But this dream could become a reality at the Riffe Farm near Union, West Virginia. This 546-acre tract is among the



A cozy three-bedroom home



An upper meadow overlooking tillable land below

A steel-and-wood bridge crossing Indian Creek

The restored 1800s barn



largest available in that area. The Riffe Farm would be indeed a dream come true for those who love the outdoor world of fishing and hunting.

The property consists of mature hardwoods and open, rolling meadows. There is a cozy three-bedroom farmhouse, an historic barn and three spring-fed ponds on the property. The highlight, however, is more than two and a half miles of Indian Creek, a spring creek twisting and bending through the farm. Indian Creek is a crisp, cold-water limestone stream holding brown, rainbow and brook trout. It is a fly-fishing Mecca. The ponds are also springfed and could sustain trout, certainly in the cooler months.

Deer abound on the property along with wild turkeys. The dense cover in the

woods and along the edges of the fields provides ideal grouse habitat. Bobwhite quail once prospered in this part of Monroe County and the lush meadows throughout the farm could once again welcome the call of "bobwhite" from released quail.

The old barn - circa mid-1800s - has been meticulously restored with a new roof and weather boards. It would house livestock easily and would also be a perfect venue to raise and subsequently release game birds such as quail, pheasant and chukar partridge. Near the home is a well-built shop/garage/storage building complete with a concrete floor and built-in utilities. Garage doors at each end allow easy access for equipment such as tractors and mowers.

The modest home on the farm has

three bedrooms, a full bath and a half-bath and approximately 1,350 finished square feet. There is a large, full-width sitting porch on the front with a smaller back porch and a mudroom to the rear. Any number of fabulous building sites are scattered throughout the property for a future hunting lodge or an exquisite retreat.

The historic town of Union, West Virginia, is sited within the fertile confines of Monroe County. It's a small town away from the hustle and bustle of big-city life, but close enough to access when the spring gobblers start to call and the trout begin to rise. The Riffe Farm is within 220 miles of Richmond, 175 miles from Charlottesville and just 75 miles from Roanoke. Washington, D.C. is 275 miles away. The Greenbrier Hotel is just 25 miles away and



A beautiful bend of Indian Creek with St. John's Church in the background



the Greenbrier Valley Airport is within a 30-mile drive.

Imagine wood ducks whistling along the creek banks and spring-fed ponds. Picture a trembling setter on point in a grain field stocked with pheasants. Think about twitching a streamer along the edge of a deep bend in Indian Creek and seeing a brown trout snatch the fly. Deer roam free in this area and wild turkey await the hunter's call.

For an individual sportsman, or perhaps a group who share a love of fishing and hunting, the Riffe Farm is ideal. All mineral rights are intact, adding real value as an investment property.

For more information on Riffe Farm, contact Rob Nelson at (434) 409-7443 or email rlsnelson@msn.com. Or call Debbie Smith at (304) 667-3046 or email debsvass@gmail.com.

Jim Brewer was co-founder of *The Virginia Sportsman* and is a regular contributor.



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Outdoors with Jim Brewer

A Hunting & Fishing Forecast

April/May

For many Virginia sportsmen, April and May mean one thing – shad, called the poor man's tarpon, and one of the hardest-fighting fish that swims. When shad move up into Virginia's tidal tributaries, it's official. Spring is here.

There are two major species of shad in Virginia, the more abundant hickory shad and the recently threatened American shad. The hickory shad are generally smaller, averaging between about 12 ounces and a pound and a half. On occasion, a hickory shad can exceed four pounds, but not as a rule. But what they may lack in size, they more than make up in heart. It's hard to describe the intensity with which a one-pound shad fights on light tackle. That's why you've got to try it for yourselves.

The American shad are still in the recovery room, over-fished to perilously low numbers. A complete moratorium on creeling the American shad in recent years now finds that species on the rebound. There are some restrictions on hickory shad in certain locations.

Fishing for shad is accomplished with either a fly rod or a spinning rod, but guide Dale Hudgins from Richmond says he has better luck with fly rods and a sinking line. The technique is to cast downstream and let the fly drift to the rear of the boat or from your wading position, with strikes often coming when the fly begins to swing up. Often, shad will follow a fly on the retrieve and strike

literally at your feet.

The top rivers in Virginia for shad fishing are the James, the Rappahannock and the Potomac. In recent years, the James has threatened to overtake the Rappahannock as Virginia's number-one shad fishery. With the passageway in place on Bosher's Dam near Richmond, the James is on its way to becoming our top shad river.

But how can a Virginia sportsman devote all his time to shad fishing when spring gobblers are rattling the needles off the pine trees? This year promises to be a good season for spring gobblers with excellent hatches of young birds in both 2013 and 2012.

April and into May is spawning time for bass, both largemouth and smallmouth. Right before the big female bass go on the beds, they'll eat anything in sight and some things they can't see. Smallmouth are very aggressive defending their beds, and anglers can have a field day on a spring morning or afternoon.

The top spot for largemouth in Virginia is Bugs Island Lake. This 50,000-acre piece of paradise in Southside Virginia is full of baitfish and the bass grow, big, fat and sassy as a result. Lake Anna is another good choice for largemouth, especially for lunker bass. An angler probably has a better chance to catch an eight-pound citation in Lake Anna than any other Virginia body of water. Other choice largemouth hotspots include Smith Mountain Lake, Briery

Creek Lake, the Chickahominy Lake and the Potomac River.

Smallmouth anglers have three wonderful choices – the James, the New and the Shenandoah rivers. The Shenandoah, once threatened with poultry runoffs, is now back in the game, an official player on the smallmouth scene.

In the Chesapeake Bay, flounder are in high demand in April and May as are gray trout, which flood the channels along the Bridge Tunnel. The croaker run up into the tidal tributaries gets underway in May, a time when red and black drum also appear in great numbers along the Eastern Shore, giving saltwater anglers great opportunities at huge fish – up to 100 pounds.

The striper bite also happens in April and May, though the seasons are restricted to mostly trophy fishing. Depending on water temperatures, cobia begin to work their way into Virginia waters in May, along with the powerful spadefish.

Again, so many choices, so many fish and things to do that the toughest part about April and May is deciding which particular passion to pursue.

Jim Brewer is a longtime Virginia outdoor writer for Charlottesville's *Daily Progress* and other Virginia papers for more than 20 years. He was co-founder of *The Virginia Sportsman* and is a regular contributor.



Phoebe Whitmore (L) of CFA competing at the Youth 12 and Under division at the Rockville Fencing Club

Fencing is probably one of the oldest games in existence. The Germanic tribes that swarmed over the Roman Empire at the fall of Rome were perhaps the earliest people to recognize combat with swords as a means of settling disputes and grievances. This practice continued throughout the Middle Ages as an integral part of chivalry. Fencing became a sport and, in fact, an art when Diego de Valera of Spain wrote *Treatise on Arms* sometime between 1458 and 1471.

When Spain became the leading power of Europe, the Spanish armies carried fencing abroad, particularly into Italy where it was taught in the universities in such cultural centers as Bologna and Venice, which were then attracting students from every country in Europe. A fencing tradition was soon established through the lessons and the writings of many famous masters.

The mechanics of modern fencing originated in the 18th century in an Italian

Anya Michaelsen (R) competing at the United States Fencing National Championships in Anaheim, California in June 2012



OFF THE TOPIC

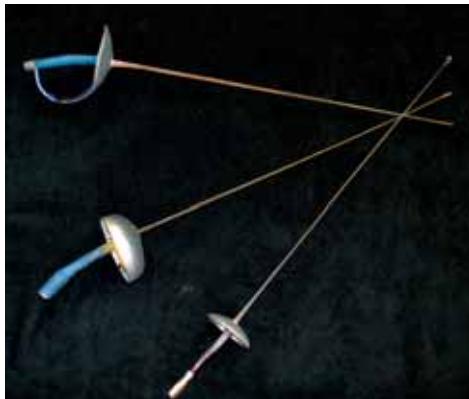
Fencing

Physical Chess

Story by Barclay Rives
Photos by Corey Lee Cleland



(Above) Working out at CFA



Saber (top)
Epée (middle)
Foil (bottom)

James Faine (R) practicing
with Veronia Wesser, who has
represented the United States in
international competitions
(Photos by Hay Hardy)



school of fencing of the Renaissance. However, dueling went into sharp decline after World War I and training for duels, once fashionable for males of aristocratic backgrounds, all but disappeared after World War II, along with the classes themselves. Today, fencing is a sport and participants compete in tournaments and championships.

The Charlottesville Fencing Alliance (CFA) hosts an array of enthusiastic fencers, from middle schoolers to senior citizens. “Fencing is the most popular sport that no one’s ever heard of,” declares James Faine, CFA’s jovial director. An eager promoter of the sport, Faine characterizes fencing as “physical chess,” involving psychology and tactics. Along with skill and stamina, competitors rely on awareness and mental toughness to capitalize on their strengths and to exploit opponents’ weaknesses.

The most common version of fencing today, also called Olympic fencing or competitive fencing, is divided into three weapon categories: foil, saber and épée. Fencers wear wire masks, form-fitting protective jackets, white knee-length breeches, gloves, and shoes specially designed for the sport. During a tournament, competitors may wear a competition lamé (pronounced *lah-MAY*), a garment that fits over the jacket, which is wired to register touches in foil and saber competition. A lamé with one’s name on the back and “USA” indicates the wearer is a veteran of international competition.

Beginning fencers usually fence with the foil, which has a flexible square blade. Its tip is wired to record touches. In foil fencing, the target area is the lamé worn over the torso. The referee is more of a factor in foil competition, because he or she

considers right of way. This is a judgment call, which may reward the attacker even though the defender touched first. The foil is the most popular weapon.

The saber has a flexible, flat blade. Because the competition is based on cavalry tactics, the target area is the entire upper body, everything that would not be protected by horse or saddle. The saber fencer can utilize the edge as well as the tip of the weapon to score.

The stiffer épée blade appears V-shaped to someone gazing down its length. The tip of the épée requires 750 grams of pressure to score a touch. The entire body of the opponent is the target area. Épée fencing replicates a duel to first blood. Faine says that épée fencing is more strategic. It may include bluffing, like poker. Faine won a division championship in 2009 with épée, although he says, “I’m better at



Anya Michaelsen in the championships for youth under 14 in Anaheim, California

Anya Michaelsen after winning the finals at National Harbor, Maryland



coaching than I was at fencing."

During an evening practice at CFA, two young men are warming up with a rhythmic saber drill: Fluvanna High School student Doug Daniels, ranked 32nd in the country, and William Monroe High School student Nathaniel (better known as Bob) Lilly, current Division (Virginia State Cadet (high school) champion. Their

weapons clash as they advance and retreat in synchronized motion. The cadence steadily increases.

After their warm-up, Daniels and Lilly engage in a practice match. The speed of the action exceeds my ability to see and comprehend. Lights on either side of a scoreboard register touches by each competitor. After a touch, the fencers return to the center of a 46-foot-long rectangular strip, facing each other three meters apart. Usually the first fencer to score 15 touches wins the match, although early rounds of large tournaments may award victory to the first to score five touches. Basic moves include the *lunge*, an attack; the *parry*, a defense, which is often followed by a *riposte*, a French word meaning reply. Noticing my bewilderment, another onlooker remarks that saber fencing is the fastest and most aggressive form.

During the match, Daniels displays predatory quickness and energy, with a distinctive way of moving his legs and feet. Top fencers can manage five distinct actions per second. Every moment calls for a decision to go forward or backward, to attack or counterattack.

Faine explains that the exercise instills correct reactions to moves by the opponent. "Instead of practice makes perfect, we say practice makes permanent." Fencers utilize plyometric exercises, designed to increase speed and power by strengthening short-twitch muscles. Soviet trainers developed plyometrics in the 1970s. The breakup of the Soviet Union benefited U.S. fencing, because coaches came here from East Germany and Russia. The Germans, Russians, Italians and French had long dominated international fencing, but recently Americans and Hungarians, as well as Chinese and Koreans, have challenged the Big Four. Fencing has become a modern sport that continues to evolve.

Rosie Purvis attends Sweet Briar College and practices at CFA. She competes in Women's Modern Pentathlon, which

includes fencing, riding, swimming, running and target shooting. Purvis was a member of the U.S. team for the 2012 World Cup. The riding portion of the event is a stadium-jumping course of four-foot fences on a randomly assigned unfamiliar horse. Purvis notes that the horse might not understand English, which increases the challenge. Purvis is the 2013 women's épée Division Champion.

Faine asks who her opponent will be. A man across the room, pointing his weapon our way. "That's a challenge," Faine explains. The gesture obligates competition between the two. Their épée fencing seems less frenetic than the saber fencing, although the weapons can still move with blurry speed. Purvis seems to stay in stalking-attack mode. Faine says one expert characterized Purvis' style as "drag you into an alley and take your money."

Nearby, another female fencer competes against a male opponent. University of Virginia student Irina Klissourova, currently the number-one ranked collegiate women's foil fencer, faces Matt Steppan, a 2012 UVA graduate. Faine says CFA has an equal ratio of males and females. "Fencing is great for women. It's one-on-one combat where they can succeed if they work at it." Steppan is taller than Klissourova, but her quickness neutralizes his longer reach. Faine points out how she is able to keep his foil outside and trap his blade as he turns.

Those striving for medals and higher rankings feel the urge and the need to fence at least three or four times a week. However, Faine welcomes once-a-week recreational fencers, who can enjoy fencing as a lifetime sport. CFA offers school programs and tries to make the sport affordable to anyone interested. Says Faine, "We have beginner classes that start four times a year. It's fun. Come try it."

Barclay Rives lives on a small portion of his grandfather's estate in Keswick, Virginia, and foxhunts with the Keswick Hunt Club.

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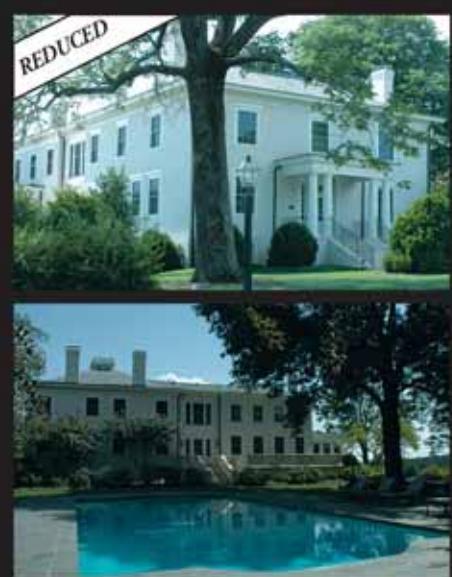


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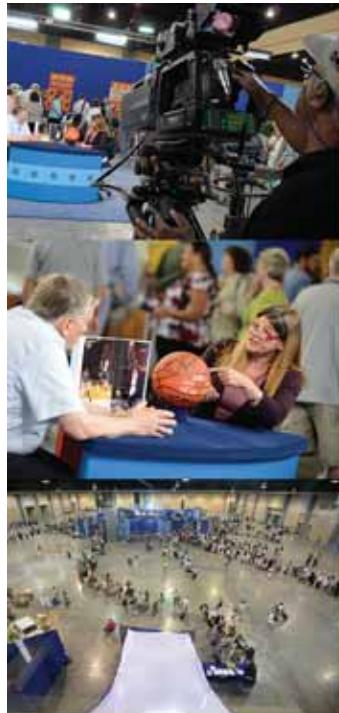


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American Wild Life

Charlotte Reather
Illustrations by Olivia Doull

After being posted to Washington, D.C. in 2012, High Tower (HT), my Royal Marine husband, and I found ourselves living in the complex concrete sprawl that is Tyson's Corner. HT and I are not really pavement people. We are distinctly muddy with very green gumboots and a tweed pattern on our DNA. Suburbia is like being in the Truman Show – everything antiseptically cleansed of nature and life; an elephant's graveyard where greysuited executives go to die along with their hopes and dreams. OK, it's the pinnacle of existence for some but for us, without dogs, trees, horses and wildlife, well, it's not quite our cup of tea.

Today we are making our escape from suburbia and heading for the hills; however, not the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia; we're off to the Great Smokies in Tennessee and for a whole week. We rev up the Toyota Highlander, wait for the garage door to clank open and, like Seabiscuit out of the starting gate, race towards the mountains and freedom.

Pigeon Forge is not what we expected. Instead of a charming rural idyll we are confronted by Ocean City, Maryland, on acid. Garish tattoo parlours and fast-food outlets bombard our senses. "It's like Blackpool in the mountains," says HT, referring to a tawdry seaside resort in northern England.

Thankfully, our lodge is nestled high in the mountains away from the neon jungle and mini golf with live animals. After a good night's sleep we enjoy

breakfast overlooking the Smokies – thus named because of the mist, which I had read in a visitors' guide has increased in recent years because of pollution, in particular ozone. I ask HT if he thinks it's a heavy ozone day – the leaflet firmly advises against rigorous exercise when the count is high.

But there will be no loafing today; my Marine husband's on a mission to "crack some phys." His face falls when the receptionist informs us that all the trails are closed owing to the government shutdown (it hadn't even crossed our minds). "However," she whispers conspiratorially, "guests have reported Rainbow Falls is accessible, you just didn't hear that from me."

The gate across the road forbids access to vehicles but several hikers walk around it and we decide to follow suit. It's 2.5 miles to the start of the trail and nature has already started to reclaim the leaf-covered road. Wild turkeys wander across nonchalantly. A hiker, coming towards us says, "There's a bear round the corner." A bear! I can hardly contain my excitement. Ever since we'd been posted to Washington a year earlier, all I have wanted to see is a bear.

We walk very slowly and sure enough there he is, about 300 pounds (according to HT) and up a tree. We carry on observing from a safe distance as my pamphlet instructs. The hikers behind aren't so cautious, all waving their iPads and phones aloft, filming the startled creature as he makes his way down to the forest floor. He doesn't seem too bothered; he's found some delicious berries to munch

but HT calculates that they are only four leaps away from danger. We move along and bound up the three-mile rocky trail to the falls. We have the whole forest to ourselves – thank you, government shutdown!

An hour later we reach the falls, which is more of a dribble than a light-refracting torrent. But we don't mind, we are at one with nature. We take out our picnic.

I look around, munching nervously. I'd read in my pamphlet that bears cannot



only smell food, they can distinguish food labels and I really don't fancy a hairy arm-wrestle over my packet of Lays. The beauty of the forest starts to take on a sense of foreboding when it occurs to me that we are in the American wilderness, with dangerous animals and locals. I ask HT if he has seen Deliverance. I imitate a banjo and say, "Squeal like a pig." He looks at me blankly. I tell him he'll come off worse.

"We've got to get back," I say. Not because of the bears or banjos but because I've booked us a couples massage back at the ranch. HT rolls his eyes – he'd rather be waterboarded than engage in

metrosexual pampering. He asks me to cancel. I try to call the lodge but there's no signal. He is going to have to suck it up and take it like a man.

We've only a few hours to get back to the hotel. We speed up our pace and that's when my right boot hits a rock and my left boot keeps travelling down the mountain, the heel skidding forward as I try to get a grip. My left knee goes backwards in slow motion and my backpack-laden torso flies over the top of it. Snap! I crumple to the ground. HT turns around. "I've broken my leg. I heard it go."

"It was a twig," he says firmly. The blood drains from my face and I suddenly feel like I'm in one of those 911 Rescue shows where they re-enact a terrible accident and courageous rescue – except no one's coming today because the park is closed and the rangers are at home.

"You have to walk," says HT. He makes me try six times until I scream loud enough for him to believe it's not possible. I try hopping – that's doesn't work either. He sits me on a rock. He is in Marine mode – like the Incredible Hulk when he turns green and explodes out of his shirt. He eyeballs me steadily. "Listen, this is going to hurt. A lot. But we need to get off this mountain so I need you to do one thing for me – I need you to SUCK-IT-UP." I nod with large frightened eyes. He then puts me over his shoulder – I scream in pain. He adjusts me by heaving me up higher. I scream again. "BOTTLE IT," says the Marine.

For the next hour and 45 minutes, HT and I are in the seventh circle of hell.



Every 10 minutes he takes a rest and then picks me up again – I make strange growling noises and breathe as if in labour with breeched twins. HT is a human fountain of perspiration and he is banging my injured leg against trees and boulders. I gurgle instead of scream. "Well done," he pants. I am 150 pounds on a good day and he is also carrying two backpacks.

When we finally reach the road, we realize we still have another 2.5 miles to our car, and there's no bloody phone signal and HT's exhausted. We are doomed. And then, in soft focus, a white pickup, as if sent by the Lord Himself, drives around the corner towards us. I wave maniacally! "Help!" HT tells me to be quiet – he'll handle this. He thinks we are about to be arrested. After a few words with Chuck, the ranger, I am lifted into his pickup. "I only came in to shoot some wild pigs, kinda lucky I ran into you guys," he says. He is a big, charming mountain of a man and also our hero.

The doctor takes one look at my leg. "A tibial plateau fracture – one of the



most painful injuries." He injects a cocktail of painkillers in my arm and puts up the X-rays and CT scans. "Ooh, yep, that would hurt," says a sheepish Dr. HT who made me wait an hour to be seen by triage after telling everyone it was "just a torn ligament."

"Yup, bit like an axe going down the length of the bone," says the doctor. "20 years ago 50 percent of these ended in amputation." I burst out laughing. They tell me I need immediate surgery, which in my narcotics-addled head sounds jolly exciting.



HT gives me a cuddly black bear as I am taken down to surgery to have a 5-inch titanium plate and 8 screws fitted to my shinbone. I squeeze it tightly and smile inanely at my husband. The doctor was right, these American drugs are WAY better than the U.K.'s paltry nitrous oxide. As they put me under, I think what a traumatic yet eventful day it's been. Still, it could be worse: I could be stuck in a traffic jam on Route 7. And besides, today I saw a real live bear.

Charlotte Reather writes "Charlie's Challenges" for *Countryside* magazine and is the former "Wild Life" columnist in *The Field*. She is the co-author of actor and angler Robson Green's book *Extreme Fishing* which reached No.1 in the *Sunday Times* Bestsellers List in 2013. Visit her at www.charlottereather.com.

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A Country Gent's Note

On My Way

Barclay Rives

As I drove through the small town of Gordonsville, Virginia, on a rainy afternoon, I noticed a man bearing a bulky hiking backpack walking in the opposite direction. My first thoughts were suspicious and uneasy. I worried the man might be a threat, walking by my house while I was not there. My home lies south of Gordonsville, and I was driving north to Orange in search of a mower part. The man's gray hair, beard, and general appearance made me place him in my approximate age group. He was lean, tall, and he walked briskly. I reconsidered his plight. Someone intending mischief would have chosen a brighter day, instead of marching through a thunderstorm. I resolved to offer him a ride if I passed him along the road on my return trip.

An older neighbor of mine picked up hitchhikers, but only if they were walking. He believed standing still and thumbing indicated lack of initiative. My neighbor liked to economize whenever possible. When he was salvaging and reconstructing an old house, including a slate roof for which he needed help, he picked up a hitchhiker who happened to be a recently laid-off slate-roof specialist willing to work for a discount wage.

The traveler I passed was near a cinderblock house, on the outskirts of town, occupied in the 1970s by a man I called The Waver. A mostly bald fellow with crowning wisps of white hair, The Waver sat on the front stoop of his house and waved at every passing car at all hours and in all weather.



The Waver would smile if I waved before he did, as if to say, "You beat me at my game."

On my part-finding mission to Orange, each business I visited referred me to somebody else, until I found a dealer who usually carried what I needed. Although he did not have the part in stock, he phoned his Charlottesville branch to put a hold on one for me there. I was planning to go to Charlottesville the following day.

My business in Orange had been punctuated by thunder, lightning and cloud bursts. I drove back through Gordonsville, and spotted the backpacker a couple of miles south of town. The rain had ceased. I pulled into a farm driveway about 20 yards past him. I felt a twinge of fear, wondering if he might be the "killer on the road, brain squirming like a toad" The Doors had warned about in the song "Riders on the Storm." He broke into a run when he saw I had pulled over for him. He put his backpack on my back seat; then he settled into

the passenger seat. He thanked me for picking him up, and told me I was the first to offer him a ride since Fredericksburg. His smile was missing several teeth.

He was from Texas. He had worked a variety of jobs. Divorced, with grown children and without a home, he confided that his family was not close. While walking from Fredericksburg, he had read all the Chancellorsville and Wilderness battlefield markers and had thought about the soldiers who had walked the road before him. He had slept under the compact Wilderness battlefield shelter, where a policeman woke him. A passing driver had dialed 911 to report his presence. The policeman questioned him, then allowed him to resume his trek. The man complained about the multitude of ticks. I sympathized. Tick removal often requires tweezers and privacy, which he might have lacked. He was headed for Tennessee, but hoped to spend a few days in Charlottesville en route.

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I decided to drive him to Charlottesville, partly because I did not want to pull into my own driveway and entertain him at my house. I was willing to provide limited help, but I was not opening my wallet or my heart like the biblical Good Samaritan. He asked me if I knew of a shelter where he could find a bed and a shower. I drove him to The Haven, a homeless shelter on Charlottesville's Market Street. Then I picked up my mower part.

I never asked the man's name. He thanked me when he got out of the car, and I said I hoped people in Charlottesville would treat him well. I felt the pleasant sense of having done someone a small favor, which is its own reward. A New York cab driver once told me how a man had left a fancy briefcase in his cab. The cabbie tracked the man through Grand Central Station and returned the briefcase. He proudly declared, "So that was my good deed for today." He turned down the offered cash reward because, "If I took money, then it wouldn't be a good deed."

I walked part of the way from Fredericksburg to Orange 30 years ago. A truck driver had dropped me off in Fredericksburg at dawn. I had caught a ride in his 18-wheeler from Florida and had watched him down six cups of coffee in a Carolina truck stop in the middle of the night. He also gulped pills from a prescription bottle. I doubt they were antibiotics. I walked a few miles from Fredericksburg before someone gave me a ride to the Wilderness 7-Eleven at the intersection of Routes 3 and 20. My brother came to pick me up after I gave him a wake-up call from a pay phone there. Unlike my rider, I do have family I can call on for help.

Family and many other advantages I enjoy are gifts I have not earned. My rider started with fewer advantages and probably worsened his situation with a few poor decisions. If I were in his place, I might have done much worse. My mother phrased her existential question about the unfairness of life by asking, "Why am I Mrs. Alexander Rives and not Mrs. [here she

More than 30 Gold Medals

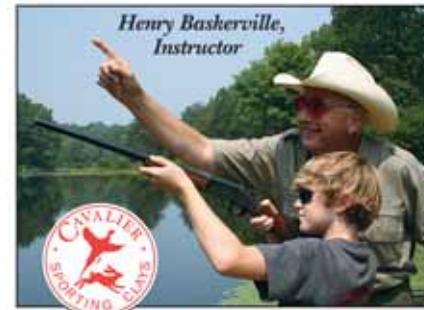
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would insert the name of a local character less trustworthy and sober than my father, which made it funny as well as philosophical]"? Although he did not explain life's unfairness, the traveler did remind me of how much I have to be grateful for, which was an excellent return on my investment of time and gasoline.

Barclay Rives lives on a small portion of his grandfather's estate in Keswick, Virginia, and foxhunts with the Keswick Hunt Club.

WINE

Rosemont: Blending Fine Wines in the French Tradition

George Abry



Rosemont winery is built into a hillside with its production facility located four stories underground.



In a remote section of south-central Virginia, deep in Mecklenburg County on a rural highway just north of Lake Gaston and the North Carolina border, sits Rosemont Vineyards and Winery. Its vineyards cover lands once rich in tobacco, corn, butterbeans and tomatoes. If you didn't know there was a winery somewhere around there, you probably wouldn't look for one.

At Rosemont you will meet several members of the Rose family including father and son, Stephen and Justin. Justin Rose is a 32-year-old winemaker, a chemical engineer from the University of Virginia who spent time in Napa Valley learning the



Justin and his father, Stephen Rose exchange notes in Rosemont's 22-acre vineyard. The vines are a mix of Bordeaux *vinifera* and hybrid grapes, including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

Rosemont's red wines are aged for at least 18 months in French and American oak barrels.



art of winemaking. He returned to Virginia to take control of 31,000 vines in his family's 22-acre vineyard situated on the Rose family's 450-acre estate in La Crosse, Virginia.

On this December afternoon, winemaker Rose is in the cellar racking a tank of Traminette, using a tube to separate white wine from the sediment of aging wine, then transferring it to another tank. First used in France's Bordeaux region in the 1800s, racking is a labor-intensive, time-consuming method of decanting that relies on gravity as opposed to pumps. "We take a minimalistic approach to making wine. You get more complexity this way; it helps us manipulate flavors through fermentation," Rose says.

Rosemont is a family-owned winery

producing 4,500 cases of wine each year. It's hard to believe Rosemont just opened its doors in 2008. With only five vintages to its name, the winery already has earned several industry awards. Its 2007 Meritage, the winery's first vintage, won Best in Show in the 2010 Atlantic Seaboard Competition, besting hundreds of wineries from up and down the East Coast. Rosemont earned two gold medals in the 2013 Atlantic Seaboard Competition for its Cabernet Franc 2010 and Kilravock 2010.

"You need dreams to bring balance to your life, and my wife, Chandra, and I decided we needed a dream," says Stephen Rose, Justin's father and founder of Rosemont, recalling his decision to open a winery. "Plus, we wanted to do something

different with the land, something nobody else had ever done in this area."

Rosemont is the name of the original Rose family farm purchased in 1858 by Litinus Rose, who served as a physician during the Civil War. Stephen Rose's grandfather was a truck farmer who grew vegetables and cultivated a peach orchard. His own father raised dairy and beef cattle. He also recalled how his great-aunt used to grow her own grapes on the farm, using the extract for homemade wine, holiday fruit cakes and what they called wine jelly. "But I was a child of the '50s and '60s and I just wanted to get out of here," he said.

After earning his degree, Rose went to work for Dow Chemical Company in 1976. During his corporate career, he traveled the world and lived in five different states. Around 1999, he started thinking seriously about leaving engineering and retiring to the family farm. If there's one thing engineers like, it's data. Before he invested in a winery he wanted to see numbers, lots of numbers. In 2000, he started doing in-depth research, gathering historical and geological data, running economic models and conducting marketing studies.

Rose enlisted Virginia-based grape expert Lucie Morton, a viticulturist whose recent high-profile Washington-area clients have included Black Ankle Vineyards and Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard in Maryland, as well as Boxwood Winery in Northern Virginia. With her guidance, Rosemont's vineyard was laid out, and trenches were measured. Working with Morton was a two year process, from taking initial soil samples to choosing clones and planting the vines.

Meanwhile, Justin was preparing to graduate from UVA but needed a thesis topic. With all the wineries in the Charlottesville area, his father had an idea: Why not focus on the micro-oxygenation of wine, a wine-maturation technique originally developed in France and now used throughout the wine-making world? His thesis work would give him a good feel

for the wine industry and get him thinking seriously about a career in wine. Morton suggested he spend time in Napa Valley studying the trade. In 2006 Justin enrolled at Napa Valley College to study viticulture and oenology, apprenticing at O'Shaughnessy Winery and Capiaux Cellars.

In 2006 construction started on the new Rosemont winery, with Stephen serving as his own general contractor. Working with Ohio winery architect Kristopher Sperry and using period materials salvaged from original farm structures, he created a contemporary facility with an early American feel.

Built into a hillside, one of Rosemont's hallmarks is its gravity-flow design. The production facility is located four stories underground. "We process our reds at the highest level; we literally drain by gravity into the barrels below," says the younger Rose. "Then we shovel out the remaining skins, by gravity, into the press, which is on the next level. So we actually use all four levels to process the fruit." Rosemont's reds are aged for at least 18 months in French and American oak barrels.

Rosemont's vines are a mix of Bordeaux *vinifera* and hybrid grapes, including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. "They showcase the aspects of their flavors without too much manipulation," says the winemaker. "I try to let the fruit speak for itself, then go really hard at the blending to produce a finished product of depth and complexity."

A French word with no literal English translation, *terroir* connotes that sense of place unique to any first-rate vineyard: the sun, soil and rain; the sum of all climactic conditions; the microclimate surrounding any particular growing season, and the culture of a winery. To produce a wine that personifies its *terroir*, Rosemont works with Lucien Guillemet, the owner and winemaker of Chateau Boyd-Cantenac,



With only five vintages to its name, the winery already has earned several industry awards.

who visits twice each year and mentors young Rose. The result can be found in Rosemont's Kilvarock, a signature red composed of the year's best barrels from each vintage, as determined by the winemaker and Guillemet.

The Roses will plant several acres of new vines in the near future but the plan is to keep the winery from getting too big. They also want to focus on the various specialty wines that Rosemont creates specifically for its Barrel Club members—including a new port-style dessert wine in the making. In addition to producing its lineup of wines, Rosemont hosts weddings, receptions and an annual arts festival. Chef David Rose, another member of the family, often prepares a special tasting menu for guests during summer months and major holidays.

Aubrey Rose, Justin's wife, handles sales and promotion for Rosemont. She thinks the outlook for Rosemont and other Virginia wineries is stronger than ever. "Over the past five years, the Virginia wine industry has started to turn its image around, more people are investing in it and the state has done a lot to promote it."

The 2011 Kilrvock is a recently released signature red wine. The blend has a rich, full body complimented by jammy dark fruit, currants and subtle floral undertones. This is certainly a wine to hold onto for four to six years. It won a silver medal in the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Competition and a bronze medal in the Wine TV Awards in 2013.

The 2011 Merlot shows the best of Rosement's terroir with aromas of black fruit, exotic spice and sweet pipe tobacco. A beautiful soft beginning with flavors of blackberry and chocolate develop into a bolder finish with well-structured tannins. It won bronze medals at both the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Competition and the Town Point Competition in 2013.

The 2012 Lineage is bright and crisp with aromas of honeydew, orange blossom and grapefruit. A medium-bodied wine with a hint of creaminess and vanilla undertones. Aged 30 percent in French oak, the 2012 Lineage won a bronze medal in the 2013 Atlantic Seaboard Wine Competition.

The 2011 Rosé is a dry, elegant wine with aromas of strawberry, grapefruit, cranberry and floral undertones. It is a medium-

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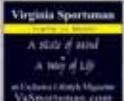


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bodied rosé with crisp acidity and a lingering, fruity finish. This wine won silver medals in the Atlantic Seaboard and Virginia Wine Classic in 2012 and the 2013 Virginia Governor's Cup.

Lake Country Sunset is a sweet white wine that has aromas of pear, honeysuckle and pineapple with undertones of citrus. Medium-bodied with a complementary sweet finish, perfect for the summer.

George Abry is a freelance writer and an instructor at the Virginia Military Institute where he teaches public speaking and works in VMI's Writing Center. His work has appeared in New Orleans' *The Times Picayune*, *Old House Journal*, and *Studies in American Culture*, among other publications.



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FOOD

Five Sauces for Fish

Claiborne Williams Milde

The freshest fish straight out of the water asks for nothing more than a sprinkle of salt and fresh lemon juice. But if you, as I do, switch to a seafood-centric diet from a meat-based one as temperatures warm, you may be searching for more varied ways to dress your fish. Here is a compilation of some greatest hits, sauces to which we return again and again for their bold, fresh flavors. Best of all, these are dead simple to make, and all but one require no cooking whatsoever. Ingredients are minimal and, in most cases, they can be kept to the side until ready to serve. See notes for recommended fish.

Yogurt-Cucumber-Mint Sauce

This rich and refreshing, Greek-style sauce is beautiful alongside fish grilled over a fire (it also happens to be perfect with lamb).

Serves 4.

Ingredients

- 1 cup Greek yogurt (or plain, whole-milk yogurt with the liquid strained away)
- 1/2 cucumber, peeled and cored to remove seeds
- 3 sprigs fresh mint leaves, removed from stems and chopped finely

Optional: . clove raw garlic, grated or pressed

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



Clockwise from center: yogurt-cucumber-mint sauce; brown butter with hazelnuts; tangy green herb-sauce; raw tomato sauce; Sriracha mayo

Instructions

Shred cucumber with the large holes of a box grater, then stir into yogurt. Add mint and olive oil, salt and pepper to taste (and garlic, if using). This sauce is best made a few hours in advance to allow flavors to meld together.

Brown Butter with Hazelnuts

This delicate and decadent sauce is a classic with freshwater trout or panfried flatfish such as flounder. Serves at least 4.

Ingredients

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter

- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped hazelnuts
- 1/2 lemon
- Sea salt to taste

Instructions

Put a small skillet over medium heat, and then add butter. As soon as butter melts and begins to bubble, add the chopped hazelnuts. Monitoring carefully, toast the nuts in the butter, stirring frequently, until both are golden brown. Watch the pan carefully toward the end – butter can burn in a flash. Remove skillet quickly from heat, sprinkle in salt and lemon juice and serve immediately.

Tangy Green Herb Sauce

This vibrant, versatile sauce is best paired with sturdier fish such as rockfish or salmon. We sometimes pass it around the with whole-roasted fish, and it's great with steak, too. Serves 4.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons capers
- Small handful mixed fresh herbs off their stems, such as tarragon, mint, oregano, parsley (avoid such strong herbs as rosemary and thyme)
- Heaping handful lettuces/greens (preferably a mixture, with some piquant greens such as arugula or watercress)
- 2 tablespoons wine vinegar (sherry or red wine vinegar, for example)
- 1/4 cup or more extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Pulse together everything but the olive oil and salt in a blender. You may have to stop a few times and press the leaves down onto the blades. When herbs are somewhat chopped, add olive oil and pulse some more. You want a coarse blend with small bits of leaves in it, not an herb smoothie. Once blended, stir in salt and pepper to taste and serve at room temperature.

Raw Tomato Sauce

Use the summer's best tomatoes for this bright, simple sauce. Best enjoyed over freshly grilled mackerel or any firm-fleshed, roasted fish such as cod or rockfish. Serves at least 4.

Ingredients

- 4 medium tomatoes at their peak (or 2 jumbo ones)
- Handful fresh basil leaves
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Using the large holes of a sharp

box grater, grate the tomatoes one at a time over a bowl. You will be left with some tomato skin and pulp in your hand – give it one extra squeeze and discard skin and any pithy core.

Swirl in olive oil, add salt and pepper to taste and tear or chop basil leaves and sprinkle in. Serve very fresh at room temperature.

Sriracha Mayo

This spicy, savory dipping sauce is irresistible with grilled shrimp or fried oysters. Makes approximately 1 cup.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup plain mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons Sriracha (spicy Thai) sauce
- 2 tablespoons lime juice (about 1 lime)

Instructions

Stir together ingredients. Taste, and add more Sriracha if you like a spicier sauce.

Continued from 66

"Fred, I gotta stop drinking," one resolved.

"Yeah, me too. Tomorrow," said the other.

The girls were the first to reach the parking lot and quickly took refuge in their official scout van. All you could see within the vehicle were the tops of brown beanie caps and wide eyes peeking out the windows.

I jumped in my car, waders and all, and sped back to town. I made it to the wedding just as the bride was heading down the aisle.

I'm not sure, but I think I was the only guest at the event wearing waders and a trout vest, which made for some interesting conversation at the reception. Conversation of any type with my wife would resume after about a week. Her first words to me after I announced a fishing trip to the Tye River were these:

"What time will you be home?"

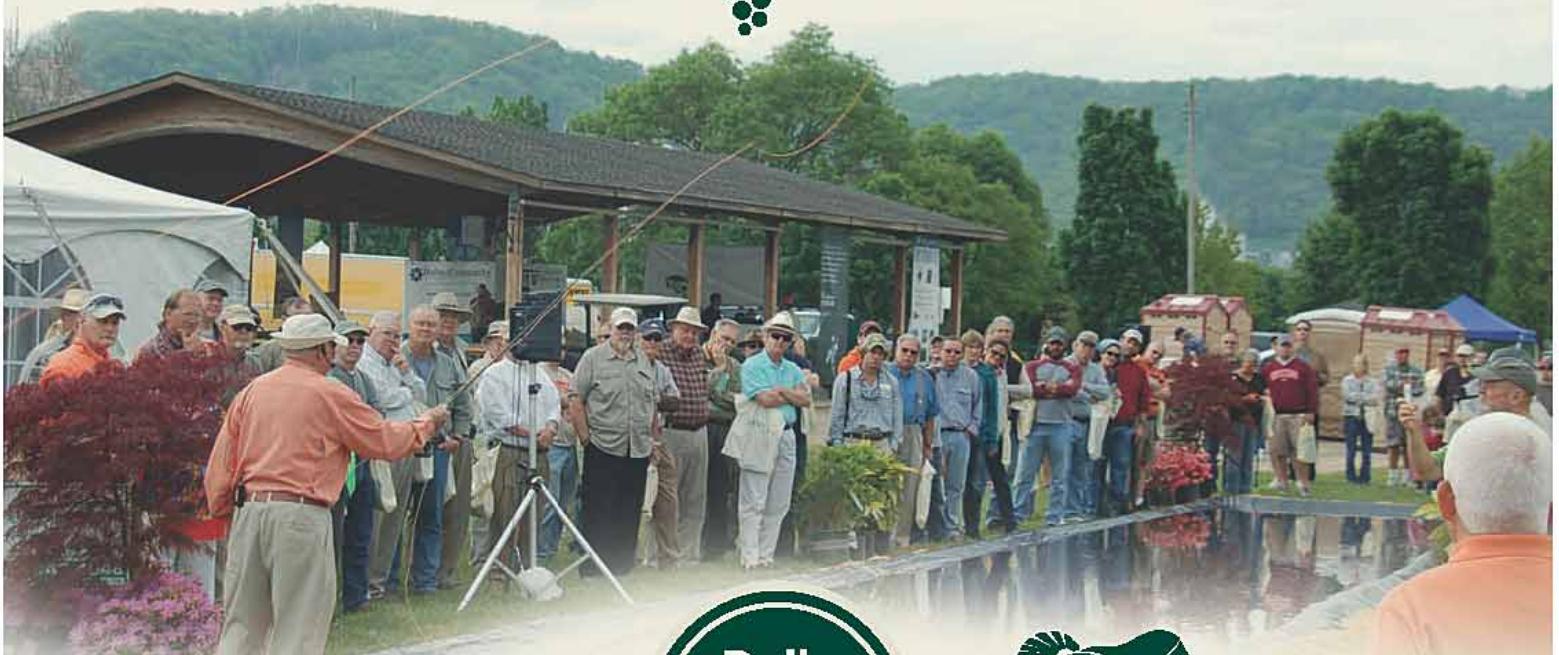
Jim Brewer is a longtime Virginia outdoor writer for Charlottesville's *Daily Progress* and other Virginia papers for more than 20 years. He was co-founder of *The Virginia Sportsman* and is a regular contributor.

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HUMOR

I'm Late, But Barely

Jim Brewer

“W hat time will you be home?” Why is it that wives want all this information? They are never satisfied with the standard response: “When the fish stop biting!” They want to know the exact time of arrival, down to the minutes and seconds. This is especially true with newlyweds. However, after 30 or 40 years of marriage, a vague answer like, “Probably today,” should suffice.

But it happened fairly early in our marriage that I had planned a fishing trip on the St. Mary’s River to coincide with a March brown mayfly hatch. There were beautiful wild rainbows in the St. Mary’s at that time, along with native brook trout and some nice browns. It was a red-letter day on my fishing calendar.

“What time will you be home?” asked my wife, Nancy, as I finished my last sip of coffee and was just about to make an attempt at sneaking out undetected.

“The hatch should be over by late afternoon,” I reckoned. “I’ll be back by dinner time.”

“You’ll be back before then,” my wife countered. “We have a wedding to attend that starts at 5 o’clock. You need to be home by 4 p.m. No later!”

With those instructions passed my way, permanently etched in stone tablets similar to the Ten Commandments, I set off for the St. Mary’s. It was an hour’s drive, so if I left there by 3 o’clock, I figured I could make it back home in plenty of time.

It was a beautiful morning and I enjoyed the hour-long hike up the mountain



when I began to notice the mayfly hatch under way. Big, fat bugs were swarming on the water. Fish were rising everywhere and I used a March brown fly pattern that was apparently irresistible. I landed trout after trout and became totally lost in the moment. After catching I don’t know how many fish, I happened to glance at my watch. It was already 3:30 p.m.! The only way I could possibly make it back on time was to sprint two miles down the mountain and then speed back to town without tripping a state trooper’s radar gun.

Even though the last time I did any sprinting was in eighth-grade gym class, I took off like a bat outta you-know-where with water still squishing in the bottom of my leaky waders.

“I can’t bear to be late!” I kept repeating, urging myself on as I sloshed down the path.

After about a half-mile, I approached what appeared to be a pack of Girl Scout Brownies – seven or eight young girls with beanies and little brown outfits.

They were heading up the mountain as I was racing down. Behind the excited band of merry munchkins was a middle-aged woman with a cane. I assumed her to be the den mother or the brownie master or whatever they are called.

I had no time for conversation, but as I passed by, I repeated my self-motivational words: “I can’t bear to be late! I can’t bear to be late!”

“Bear?” said one of the girls. “Is that man running from a bear?”

“BEAR?” shrieked another brownie.

“RUN! IT’S A BEAR!!” they all squealed as they turned en masse and fled down the mountain, nearly trampling the woman with the walking stick.

Down the mountain we raced with me in the lead, the Brownie pack close on my heels and the den mother bringing up the rear, waving her cane, saying, “Wait! Stop! There is no bear.”

Soon, the young girls flew by me and pulled well ahead in our downhill slalom.

It was about then that we all passed two good old boys heading up the mountain, each with a fishing pole in one hand and a Milwaukee’s Best beer can in the other. They were staggering a bit in their ascent, but stopped dead in their tracks as they witnessed a semi-crippled woman chasing a fisherman in waders who was in close pursuit of what appeared to be a pack of shrieking elves.

Continued on Page 64

Cruising Essentials

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