

Be Patient, Never Give Up and Trust in God

October, 2013

What a great year this has been. Turning 62 and preparing to retire after 40+ years, can be a challenging time but with the right mindset, it can be a time of new adventure, lots of fun and with a joyful spirit appreciating even more this life that we have while here on Earth. These golden years can be truly fantastic if we choose to wake each day with a new dream to dream. At this twilight time in life our reflections and stories do not have to outweigh our dreams and I have a couple of stories (dreams come true) to share.



Thanks to a partnership with 3Js Archery in Mechanicsville, Md., I am honored to try out a new Bear bow each year. The 2013 bow is a black model Bear Empire set at 60 lbs. with a 28.5 in draw. After a quick bow set up this spring and guiding a 12 year old JAKES member of the Southern Maryland NWTf Chapter on a successful turkey hunt on youth day, I was fortunate enough to harvest a double bearded (10.5" and 7") 21 lb. mature Tom with the Bear Empire and Easton FMJ arrows. I listened to my life-long best friend Pat Langley, to use Zwicky Judo springs behind the broad heads to keep the arrows from a complete pass through. This years' spring Gobbler (pictured) expired within just a few yards – a wonderful feeling of success on a warm, sunshine filled, spring Southern Maryland day – Thank You Lord!

As the long hot summer days grew shorter and cooler, the dreams of bugling elk wake you up each night with great anticipation. Finally the annual trip to Colorado became a reality in mid-September. Off to the Rockies for a couple of weeks of hunting mixed in with assisting our long-time friends and Outfitters Warren and Eric Bruton of Mesa, Colorado at their archery camp. The weather had been poor at archery camp with heavy rains during the entire second half of September. The elk rut had just started and seems Pat & I brought heavy winds combined now with the daily rains.

The 3rd and 4th week of archery camp in Colorado can range from 90 degrees hot and dry weather to below freezing temps and heavy snows. We had it all. We had some hunting success with hunters from Michigan, Maryland and a 29 year old gal from Oklahoma from a group called Babes, Broad heads and Bullets. After several

long days of watching chipmunks and stellar Jays and the Aspens (Quakies) weaving back and forth in heavy winds with very little elk activity, the Lord blessed me with a hunt of a lifetime and a dream come true.

On September 19th the moon was full and I was actually scouting hard for the next morning not expecting the day to end as it did. On an evening stand with light south winds in my face and just a ½ mile east from my friend Pat, the gold colored Aspens and dark green spruce woods began to come alive. Within the first hour a spike bull in full velvet stopped within 15 yards to mark his territory and walk the same path that I had just came in on. Although I was scent covered to the hilt an elk's nose is his superior defense and once he hit my trail crossing my scent he returned quickly to the thicket where he came from. "That was neat" but sure wished he had 4 points, I thought at the time". With the wind still in my face, a branch antlered satellite bull came down off the mountain into another spruce and willow thicket to my right (west side). I heard the sounds of cattle within a few hundred yards in the same direction and hoped they didn't come my way. While elk and cattle use the same area, I never liked being surrounded by cattle while hunting in the Rockies. Within a few minutes I noticed movement to the east (my left) which turned out to be four (4) Mule deer does. I had a deer tag and discovered later that I was fortunate they were all does. A large elk cow ran from the spruce thicket to my right and it didn't come to mind at that time that a small herd of elk were passing through the area. Then what I thought to be an Angus steer coming out of the same thicket the elk cow ran into, turned out to be a large black bear and at 36 yards easily in bow range but with no bear tag –well, it was just another page in this exciting evening. It's now that prime time ~7:00 PM, the last few minutes of light and with the full moon I thought I had already had a blessed evening. Then a slight shift of wind from south to southwest and a challenging bugle directly above me at ~80 yards, a very nice branch antlered bull was gazing my way as he was obviously looking for something. Then that 8th sense kicked in which is only known to us hunters. With the recent shift of winds from South to SW, I turned slightly to see and hear a magnificent 6X6 bull running with his antlers nearly touching his rear end coming directly past me within 10 yards. I had no time to think but to pick a spot quartering away at about 11-12 yards and release. The arrow disappeared entirely and the bull turned quickly and ran the same path that he came in on crossing a small mountain stream behind me and to my right. I lowered my bow and thanked God for what had just happened and with a prayer of conviction pleading to the Lord to make this dream come true with a quick and merciful death. Then that slight doubt set in, we have all had it. Did I really see the good hit and will I recover this beautiful bull elk. On the edge of dark, and with one last prayer for the Lord's guidance, I started that walk to the location of the shot - no arrow to be found and no blood. Dang! With a flashlight in hand and a dream in my heart, I crossed the stream to where the bull had made a turn up the hill. Fresh blood filled his left footprint, then heavy dark red blood that a blind man could follow.

Hopes now are bursting my gut and within just ~ 75 yards and with enough remaining light to see an opening ahead with a giant of a bull lying with his antlers reaching out above his beautiful tan colored massive body. Walking up to this animal I realized that I had just harvested an elk of a lifetime and for a 62 year old country boy – it

certainly was a gift from God. After meeting up with my friend Pat and going to camp for dinner we returned to field dress and haul the bull back to camp. The arrow had clipped the liver, lung and centered through the heart only exiting a few inches out through the brisket, all resulting in a very quick kill.

After sharing the story with Pat, we both realized that we now have another life experience to share as we grow even older together. Although we were ~½ mile or so apart hunting that evening we both heard the last sounds of the bull as he took his last breaths. He even struggled to give out a few light bugle sounds as if he were challenging the others with his last breath. What an evening, a dream come true and a blessing from the Lord.

As mentioned the equipment used was a 2013 bear Empire bow set at 60lbs., Easton full metal jacket arrows and 125 grain Muzzy Phantom broad heads. In closing this story I would like to challenge all hunters to continue to dream, be patient and never give up. Don't be surprised when a dream comes true and the Lord blesses you with an experience, a memory for a lifetime and when He does share it with a friend.

Billy Moore, La Plata, MD

James 1:12 - The Message (MSG)

¹² Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.



Above: Billy Moore with bull Elk he shot in CO with his bow.

Below: Billy Moore and Pat Langley with bull elk Billy shot with his bow in CO.

