



NEWS and EVENTS

British Columbia Final Update

All those participating in our first Pacific Northwest Salmon/Halibut Derby should have confirmed air or ground transport arrangements before now. Please fax us a copy of your itineraries if you have not yet done so. We want to be able to track potential flight delays on the way in and address any foreseeable problems with your times of travel.

We are still waiting for several of you to acknowledge receipt of the recent email describing group travel arrangements. One item notably missing was a description of clothing needed. Plan on dressing in layers to be out in weather that may range from 40° F to 70° F. The lodge provides hooded flotation coat/bibs/boots, but not gloves. Bring your own fishing gear if you want, but the lodge provides good

quality mooching rigs (knucklebusters) for salmon as well as stout boat poles with Penn 113s for deep bottom fishing. Remember that passports are required for entry into Canada via air.

The 10th F.R.E.D. Approaches

We meet on the hallowed sands in just a little more than a month. By this time you should all have your airfares lined up. Your trip must already have been paid in full or your slot is now up for grabs.

Those of you who are first timers should have received a reprint of an old newsletter article with your final bill detailing what to expect on the trip. Please contact us if you did not and we'll get it to you. As with the B.C. trip, remember that passports are required for entry into Mexico via air.

Bodega Bay Salmon Derbies

We'll be holding the first of what we hope will be multiple annual events in Bodega Bay, California on Saturday June 22nd thanks to member Shaan Vandenburg. Shaan listened to fishermen at his local port complain that no derbies were held there and brought it to our attention. Sponsorship from local sources is being arranged at this time. Contact Shaan Vandenburg for entry details.

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NEWS and EVENTS (cont.)



Santa Cruz Salmon & Albacore Derbies?

Attempts at some club derbies in N. California have met with difficulties so far. An early season rock cod/crab event died in the face of new Rockfish season closure problems on top of a miserable crab season. We are rescheduling the salmon and halibut events for Saturday, August 12 and Saturday, September 30 (the CA season closer). Both are to be set up as club outings with none of the fanfare of our larger contests. There will be space on several member owned boats if you haven't got a ride of your own. We'll do our best to accommodate any out of town members wishing to give it a go. Contact Kevin Krause to sign up or help out.

We are also actively developing an annual two-day multi-species open tournament to be held in conjunction with Boater's World, the nationwide marine retailer. The event will include cash prizes and raffle with a fresh fish barbecue. They wish to hold it at either Half Moon Bay or Santa Cruz. It will likely occur in mid-August to mid-September. A commitment (yes or no) will likely be made in the coming week or two and members will be notified via email. Call or fax Tim Babcock if you are interested but don't have an email address.

Two Events Cancelled Due to Late Response

Our 2nd annual N. California golf tournament in benefit of the Alameda County Big Brothers/Big Sisters was cancelled when we didn't receive enough applications to make the minimum participation necessary to keep the date reserved. Ironically we received a large number of applications in the week following the cancellation. Had everyone responded by the due date (or even within 2 weeks of it!) the event would have been held as billed.

The same situation occurred with this year's Tahoe Makinaw trip, where we went from 6 open slots when we cancelled to what would have been a 2 spot waiting list within a week of canceling.

A second golf tournament is being planned for late summer/early fall. Potential venues are being evaluated in the communities Sunol and Santa Rosa, California. Give Wayne Gathright feedback on location and/or day

recommendations. We have been planning weekday tourneys but can switch to weekends based upon majority sentiment.

The Makinaw trip will be scheduled again next spring. We'll be advertising it in the fall newsletter.

Hey, I know we've gotten out late billings on a few things. We're all doing our best here to work our "day jobs" and still find time to run the club. But c'mon, both of these events were announced well in advance! Please get us your money ahead of the due dates. Club funds are your funds too and we hate wasting them on lost downpayments to venues.



Current Event Contacts

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Goose Lake? BUST!

Article by Kevin Krause

Photos by Kevin Krause
and Butch Strayer

We had booked the hunt back in October, on the recommendation of a fellow hunter by the name of Mr. Colby LaPlace, who had assured us that reports on the area were good, and that the accommodations were outstanding. True, he said he'd never hunted the place himself, but had done some research, and heard that it was a great hunt. So, having hunted with Colby before, and found him to be a serious waterfowler I put the call out for members and booked reservations for six hunters at the Honker Inn located just on the California side of Goose Lake, along the California/Oregon border. The hunt would take place on the weekend of December 6th, 1999. It was going to be a great way to spend a few of the last hunting days of the millennium bagging Canada Geese just in time for our Christmas dinners. There was also the added promise of a potential Quail hunt, to boot.

The anticipation was great. Tim Babcock and I would ride up with Butch Strayer, a new member (see previous newsletter with photo of Tim, Butch and inflatable bluefin tuna) who was willing to risk six hours in a truck with us up to the Oregon border. Riding separately, were long time member Hans Binsch, a serious waterfowler named Dane Lowry, and his nephew Mike. If you do the math, you will see that there were six of us, with no mention of Colby, the guy who arranged the trip. At the eleventh hour, Colby had to leave town on business and was unable to go.

Make a note, hunters; never participate in a guided hunt that takes place in unfamiliar territory if the hunter who set it up is not around for the hunt. Do not allow the one guy who instigated the trip to become "unavailable" just when you need him the most. Keep in mind that time might just occur when you need to toss his struggling carcass into a "goose-less" half-frozen lake.

Let the story continue. We all arrived late Friday night on the shores of the lake and were welcomed by the owner's wife. While eating reheated leftovers from the evening's meal



we were told that we'd be hunting the grain fields adjacent to the lake in the morning. We were also told that our dogs (of which we had brought no less than three) were not only unnecessary, but would get in the way, so we'd be leaving them in the kennel.

The night was very cold by California standards (slightly sub-freezing) and it was expected to be at least as cold in the morning, so we packed the dogs back into our trucks and trundled off to bed, figuring on an early start.

We got up well ahead of the sun, drank coffee and bundled up in the anticipation of lying on our backs in the wheat stubble. The plan was to be up early enough to make the quarter-mile walk to the fields, and be in position half an hour before shooting time. We broke up into guided groups of three and set out in our respective directions.

The spread in which Butch, Tim and I found ourselves before first light was impressive. They had employed an expansive array of magnum and super magnum decoys, pop-up goose-body blinds, and flags scattered throughout the frosty field. We lay down on thin foam pads, covered ourselves with camouflage netting, and began the wait for the first morning flights of geese.

We waited as first light broke. And then we waited some more. We fidgeted. We froze. We watched as half a dozen geese picked up from the lake, and then settled back down again. At least I think they were geese, it was tough to tell with the lake almost a mile away and our corneas clouded with crystals of ice.

Finally, a group of honkers picked up and headed toward us from the south. We watched in envy as they passed over several fellow hunters from our lodge in the adjacent field about a mile to our left. They rose and fired, and a pair of

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The author posing with guide, Tim Babcock and two of the fastest geese in the west.



Goose Lake (cont. from pg. 3)

geese fell to earth. Soon another flight picked up from the lake and followed their predecessor's path. Again our lodge-mates rose and fired, dropping a single goose to the stubble.

Still we waited, tense in the expectation that our turn would surely come next. We froze and we waited some more.

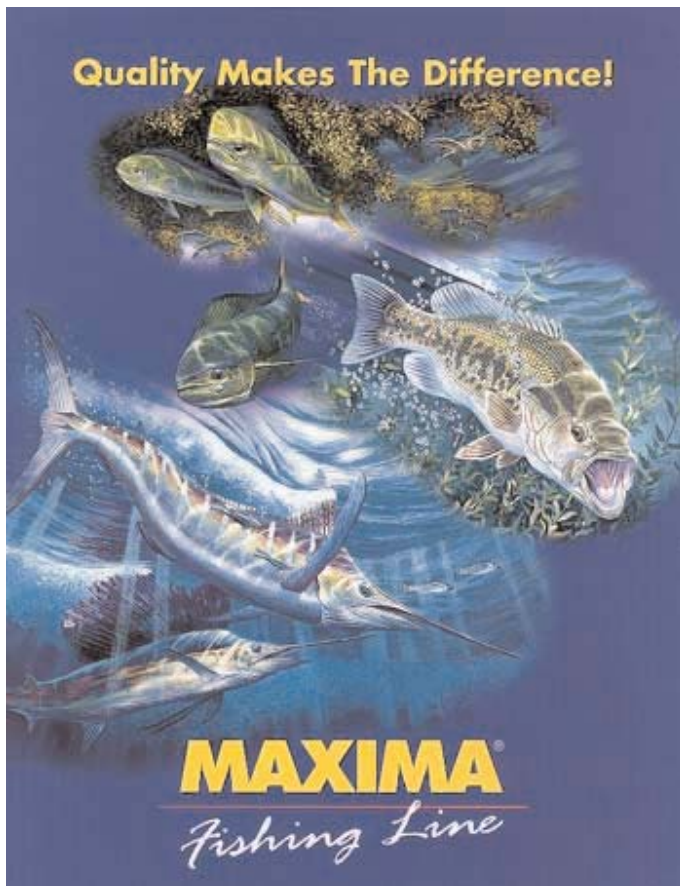
We lay on our backs in the field and let the sun rise around us. We saw cows. We saw bluebirds. We saw cows and bluebirds. But by the time the "morning shoot" ended at 11:00 a.m. we hadn't seen a goose within a half-mile of us. We rose stiffly and emptied our guns for the walk back to the truck.

The guide clearly didn't seem at all surprised that we had not shot any birds. "It's been kinda slow this year." was all he said. When we asked about an afternoon shoot, he shrugged and said that the birds generally "didn't fly in the afternoon".

When we finished our lunch, the rest of our group caught up with Tim and myself, and reported no action from their blinds. That is with the exception of one suicidal red-head duck that bombed in on them unnoticed by all but the guide. To his amazement, the hunters only hunkered down and froze at his sudden exclamation of "Duck!" Subsequent shoutings of "Duck!" by the guide only heightened his frustration and strengthened our comrades resolve to hunker into invisibility.

Butch soon rounded up his Chesapeake, Cooper, and set off with Tim for a mid-day quail hunt. They were sent to the owner's ranch about 15 miles south along the lake to keep from scaring birds off the water near the fields that would be shot in the morning. They returned two hours later, birdless, having seen only a single set of pheasant tracks and three mule deer doe.

Still itching for action Tim and I cajoled our guide into taking us back to the field for an afternoon hunt.



We returned to the same spot and settled in with about two hours of daylight left. Before we could load our guns and get under cover, a large flight of Mallard came off the lake and headed straight for us. We squatted in the open while our guide called at them for a good ten minutes then watched in despair as they headed eastward without having come within range of our guns.

And so we sat for another long birdless spell. Eventually the sun began to disappear behind the trees along the far side of the lake and despair began to rear its ugly head. Just in the throws of sunset a flight of about thirty geese lifted up off the lake well over a mile away. Tim and I began a desperate high volume wailing with our flutes, much to the amusement (or disgust) of our guide, hoping beyond reason that the geese would actually hear us and find their way to our spread. And then they turned. Soon it became apparent that they were headed our way. The guide began to call at them as they drew near, and they wheeled in for a second, and then a third, look.

Tim and I were still blowing our calls for all we were worth. The one thing you learn early on about goose calling is that "more is better" and that you almost (almost) cannot blow a flute call wrong. Get on it and blow like crazy. After the third pass, the guide yelled, "Take them!" We sat upright with Tim and I unloading on the two rearmost birds. Surprisingly enough, they folded out of the sky, and cartwheeled to earth.

And then an amazing transformation took place. While we'd clearly shot a pair of Canadian geese, what came down more closely resembled flying cheetahs. As soon as they hit the

ground, these "cheetah-geese", known from this point on as "geetahs" took off across the wheat field at a frightening pace. They moved so fast that before our guide could hop up and grab his gun, the one I'd shot had crossed the entire length of the field heading for the lake a mile away. Tim's on the other hand, had hung a right and was making for the Oregon border and freedom from California licensed hunters.

His geetah hit less hard than mine, Tim went shambling after it, stopping only long enough to shoot every thirty seconds or so trying to finish it off. This, however, only spurred his geetah on to even greater efforts. This bird-mammal must have been the sprint champion of its flock, because it reached a waddling speed that actually set the wheat stubble to smoking as it passed.

At about this time our guide cornered my geetah a few hundred yards short of the water. He had emptied his gun during the chase, so he was forced to deal with it using only hand-to-hand techniques. As he circled it warily, the geetah feinted with its bill and struck with the speed of a cobra. Barely avoiding the whip-like neck, he threw his coat over the bird, and beat it to death with a sun bleached cow pelvis picked up during the chase.

I turned back in time to see Tim slinging a now dead bird over his shoulder and beginning the thirty-minute walk back to where Butch and I stood among the decoys. Billows of steam escaped from his jacket as he

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walked. In short, he looked like a portable sauna gone amuck.

Later that night, after comparing stories about our day's hunting, we decided that the only way to get right with the world was to have a few cocktails. After pouring a few dozen glasses for our guides, we got them to admit that Goose Lake hadn't really had any geese that year due to the weather, and that there had been basically no migration down from the north at all. The few resident geese (or geetahs) on the lake had been hammered all season long by hunters, and were about as wary of decoy spreads as the Lombardi's are of leaving the sight of land. So it was with heavy hearts, and pounding heads, that we set out the next morning, with our entire group together along with a pair of guides. Apparently the idea was to try and fool the geetah/geese by sheer numbers of decoys. I guess they figured that if they put out a spread consisting of about a million decoys with six or eight men laying among them the critters might actually come close enough for a shot.

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SHIMANO



Butch Strayer and Tim Babcock with a few of the quail taken along the lake front.

Goose Lake (cont. from pg. 5)

Finally four hours later, frozen, bitter, without so much as a shot taken between the six of us for all our suffering in the subfreezing temperatures, we packed up our gear. As we limped limped back to the trucks, Hans noted that now he knew what his fathers' winters had been like on the Russian Front during WWII.

Now imagine us loading up the trucks, driving out of Goose Lake like a bat out of hell, (or a geetah on the loose for that matter) and heading for home. I could have imagined it. Wanted to imagine it. My two companions, however, had something else in mind.

Tim and Butch were still anxious to shoot at something and had already ponied up the extra cash to hunt quail on the previous day with the proviso that the fee would cover both days. This time the owner granted them access along the railroad tracks running between the lodge and the lake. And since I was their ride, I got stuck waiting for them while they marched up and down the lake front, jumping hundreds of quail, and actually killing a couple of limits. I take that back. Not just killing them, but relentlessly hunting them down into the thickest cover and sending the dogs in after them. At one time, they had no less than five dogs working the cover; my Golden Retriever, Butch's Chesapeake, a fat Yellow Lab, and two Lab puppies, all stirring up birds. Those poor quail paid with their lives for two days of near goose-less hunting!

The end tally of this disastrous endeavor; two badly killed geese, a brace of quail limits and six cold and tired hunters with nearly eight hour return drives ahead of them. If hunts like this make the good ones that much sweeter, my next good hunt ought to be a whopper.

GAMEPHOTOGRAPHY 101

Article by Tim Babcock

Photos by People Who Wish To Remain Unnamed

There I stood on the shore of a small northern Ontario Lake holding the biggest damned Pike I'd ever landed. No trophy by most standards, but my personal best by a long shot. Its' toothsome head draped, exhausted over my left forearm while I gripped its' tail with my left hand, fingers unable to close around it. Moments ago I had handed my battle scarred Pentax K1000 camera to my companion and stood waiting to be immortalized in glory with a "snik" of the shutter. I had unwavering confidence in that camera. It was the very same that has seen me through oceans, rivers, deserts and rainforests without fail.

The beauty of the situation was that none of this was ever supposed to have happened. I was, you see, on what had been billed as an expressly non-fishing vacation, per agreement with my wife, Nikki. At her urging we had met in Montreal where she had been on assignment for her employer. From there we had begun a two-week planes-trains-automobiles trek that saw us through Montreal, Quebec City and ultimately Toronto.

We stayed just outside Toronto in Mississauga with friends whom we'd met in Utah several years earlier while skiing. Their names are Paul and Ruta and both happen to be native Canadians of Lithuanian decent. When not skiing, Paul and I usually talk fishing. Whenever Paul talks fishing, the topic inevitably meanders to tales of monster Pike caught by he and his buddies at a place a couple of hours north of Toronto called Fox Lake. The Lithuanian social group that they belong to own and operate a camp there.

The possibility of visiting this gem of a Lake had always intrigued me, but as promised I was on a non-fishing holiday. The prospect of his sharing with me this magic spot must have been on Paul's mind as well, because he had begun asking for permission to steal me away for a couple of days to take me there almost as soon as we set foot in their house. I put up the obligatory objections required to ensure that I would not return home to find that my offshore reel collection had been donated to the Salvation Army. After a suitable pause during which my wife's eyes rolled back like a Thresher Shark working a tuna carcass, I raised my hands in the uniform gesture of helplessness, pleading that it would clearly insult our host if I didn't accompany him.

Ever the observant husband, I set to reading my wife's expressions carefully. The flaring of her nostrils and narrowing of her eyes seemed to suggest that she was not in agreement that I should honor our guest's gracious invitation. The



The author with Pike?

clenched jaw and thin line of drool tracing its way slowly down her chin clearly told me otherwise, so I slapped my friend on the back and off we went to his basement to begin packing.

A day later as I stood on the bank of Fox Lake beaming at my catch, I couldn't help but think of what incredible luck I'd had. Not only had I escaped certain death by successfully locking myself in my host's guest bathroom and shinnying down a drain spout to jump into his Pathfinder and ultimately to freedom, I'd actually caught a Pike! And what a beauty it was! I'll never forget the feeling of satisfaction knowing that I was, after all, *the man*.

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GAMEPHOTOGRAPHY

101 (cont. from pg. 7)

Two weeks later, I picked up my pictures on my way home from buying back some offshore fishing reels at the Salvation Army store (I'd gotten one heck of a bargain on a hardly used Tiagra 50WLRS). Hands trembling, I ripped open the package and tore the photos loose, shuffling through images of dimly remembered Canadian historical landmarks and garlic-reeking French restaurants, seeking proof of my phenomenal fishing prowess. What I found set my teeth on edge and caused my stomach to lurch. There in my hands, next to a couple of pictures of smaller fish and an unlucky snapping turtle that had noshed on my bait and gotten himself hooked, was what must have been the picture that I'd taken a thousand times in my mind, the picture that would set my spurious angling cohorts forever in awe of my fishing skills. Although taken in late morning on a mostly sunny day, the photo was so underexposed that the fish was almost invisible except where held in front of the white shirt I had worn. In short, the picture was a useless blur and all my marital machinations had resulted in naught.

My first inclination might have sent US/Canadian relations into cold war status. Upon second thought, however, I was forced to acknowledge that the error was entirely mine (I can admit this type of thing freely within this forum, secure in the knowledge that my



Hat head strikes! See tip on presenting your sportsman...

wife never bothers to read anything that I write, anyway). In retrospect, Paul had told me he'd never used anything other than autofocus cameras. Although I'd set the picture up before handing off my camera, I had made the mistake of asking him to operate an instrument that he wasn't comfortable with. In turn, I had paid the price for a lack of good judgement.

On the heels of my profound disappointment, I urge you to keep in mind that no matter how good your camera equipment is, the experience and skill of the person behind the lens is often the limiting factor. Those of you who take a measure of pride in your photodocumentation efforts can back me up on this by making a quick inspection of your outdoor sporting pic-

tures. You'll probably notice that your collection includes more than a few nice shots of others in pose with fish and game interspersed among primarily marginal to poor shots of you and yours.

For this reason, I have adopted a policy of keeping a simple disposable camera on hand whenever I take to sea or field. You never have to worry about the comfort level of the person behind it. You will also worry less about damage from impact or water, as they are compact, light and even come in waterproof models. These inexpensive cameras now sport many features. Some even offer a choice of panoramic or standard view pictures in the same unit.

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Quick Tips for Great (or at least better) Photos

Line Up the Shot: Look at the area available for the picture. Have someone stand-in where you would like to place it and look at them through the lens. Put the sun at your back and make sure that the area between the camera lens and the subject is free from obstacles before you shoot or pass the camera off to someone else. It may take a couple of minutes to do this, but your small time investment will inevitably pay off in the finished outcome.

Choose the Backdrop: Remember that what is behind the subject will likely become part of your picture. Assume for example that you've caught a trophy small-mouth bass near the outfall of a nuclear power plant and your friend is about to get a picture of you and the fish before releasing it. While it may seem a "no-brainer" to frame the shot with the power plant behind the photographer, remember that your buddy is probably thinking less about how your photo will look on the wall of your office than he is about getting his line back in the water to catch a bigger fish than yours...

Present Your Game: Examine it and clean off visible blood. A bloody shot doesn't display well. If it is a fish, hold it up in front of you. Always stand behind or be-

side the game. Never stand in front as it diminishes the size of the game in relation to the person in the picture. Also, make sure that the best side of the game faces squarely toward the camera, things look smaller from oblique angles.

Present Your Sportsman: Ditto on the blood and check for general appearance, as well. I'm not talking fashion choices, here. Just take a look at who will be in the shot (yourself, if included) and make sure that they remotely resemble themselves. I'll never forget my shock over pictures taken by another friend after a whitetail hunt in South Dakota a few years back. Conditions were poor, but I'd managed to take a small 4x4 buck and was glad for it. I'd inadvertently removed my stocking cap prior to the pictures revealing a serious case of "hat-head", an act that had gone unnoticed by my partner. The pictures were shockingly accurate and thoroughly enjoyed by my wife.

Take Multiple Shots and Angles: Shoot a couple of shots from each of several slightly different angles. Film is inexpensive, and you'll appreciate the opportunity to choose your best shots after the trip. Quadruple your efforts if a true trophy is involved.

I'm no great photographer. Those that know my skills will tell you I've got my hands full telling an F-stop from a backstop. What I do have is a not inconsiderable base of game photographic knowledge gained both from years of mangling my own efforts, and from looking over hundreds of your photos submitted for publication in this newsletter. My lack of technical camera skills aside, allow me to impart a few quick tips that will help ensure that the quality of your next trophy photo doesn't leave you muttering in despair.

Keep the above tips in mind and not only will you find your game pictures much more satisfying, but my job as editor of this newsletter will be that much easier. I penned this article in the hopes that I might break the seemingly endless cycle of game photo disappointment. If I can stop just one bad picture from being taken, it will all have been worth it!



Note the contrast in appearance between the two anglers. Mike Burneson (right) seen nicely presenting a good Chinook. Kevin Krause (left), fish bleeding and turned oblique to the camera, has placed his hand through the front gill-plate of his salmon partially obscuring the fish and creating a less natural presentation. The photograph also has some framing and shadowing problems, to boot.

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