

Spring 2010

HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS' NEWSLETTER



The men and women who volunteer as hunter education instructors serve as teachers, mentors and coaches. The service they deliver is, quite literally, lifesaving.

Health for Hunters and Preventable Losses

By Stacy Kempf



*Stacy Kempf is the D-2
Hunter Education Specialist*

My senior year of high school was marked by numerous milestones. I will never forget opening the mailbox that held my college acceptance letter or standing with my fellow graduates at the conclusion of our commencement ceremony. However, that same year, an unwelcome event took place as well. In the late fall of 1998, I learned that my granddad had passed away while hunting coyotes in the farmlands of Oklahoma.

My grandfather was, to me, the epitome of a true sportsman. His life had led him from the rolling plains of Texas, to the war in Korea, and back home again where he married his high school sweet heart and spent years working ranches and raising his family. He was the first person who ever took me hunting and the last person I imagined having to deliver a eulogy for.

His life ended on his last hunting trip not because of a lack of judgment or mechanical failure or any other reason you can find in a hunter education manual. He passed away during that autumn hunt because he had a stroke. A blocked artery culminated in the death of a 68-year-old man and created the loss of not only my "Papa Joe" but of an experienced hunter.

The loss of a hunter hurts everyone in our outdoor community. It means the loss of years of experience and knowledge that cannot be replaced by televised hunting shows or advertisement-laden magazines. Therefore, it is important to understand that, as hunters, our health is crucial to ensuring that we not only will get to spend many more years enjoying our pastime, but we'll also be able to spend that time furthering our outdoor heritage.

It only takes a glance around our communities to notice that our waistlines are setting us up for disaster. As of 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Management reported that 65 percent of the adults in our state are living at a weight that is considered unhealthy, thereby putting them at a higher risk for having serious health issues such as heart disease and diabetes. The reality is that, in most cases, these are preventable diseases. The old cliché of a proper diet and exercise is essential to lowering your risk of having an incident like my grandfather did.

The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services recommends the following helpful diet and exercise tips that we can all try to incorporate into our routines:

- **Be active for at least 30 minutes each day** – Something as simple as taking your dog for a walk or working in the yard can make a big difference. If you aren't already active, take small steps to work your way to a full 30 minutes.
- **Avoid saturated and trans fats** – Although they may taste yummy, these two are the main causes of heart disease
- **Write down what you eat each day** – You'd be surprised what you're putting into your body. Seeing it on paper may be the motivation you need to make healthier food choices.
- **Have regular preventive screenings** – Do you know what your blood pressure is? What your BMI is? If you're asking, "what's BMI?" then it's definitely time to see your doctor. (BMI is Body Mass Index, a weight-to-height measure of body fat and a good gauge for health.)
- **If you smoke, STOP** – It may be difficult, but quitting can add years to your life.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation** – Try for no more than two drinks a day.

There's nothing groundbreaking about these tips. Many have been talked about for years, and yet most of us continue to ignore them. If you're in that category, take a moment to decide if picking up that cigarette, eating that fast food meal, or skipping another doctor's visit is worth the consequences. Your decision will not only impact your health but possibly the future of the sport you love. For more information about living a healthier lifestyle speak to your doctor or visit www.healthierus.gov

Wild Turkey Hunting With My Buddy Tyler

By Fred Rorrer

Tyler is only 12 years old, but is well on his way to becoming a seasoned hunter. He has harvested several deer and various small game animals such as squirrels, rabbits, raccoons and even a coyote. He has already developed a passion for hunting that will never leave him.

He hunts near his home in Granville County alongside his dad, Norman, and occasionally with his uncle Danny Ray, better known as “DR.” During 2008, in his second year hunting wild turkey, Tyler harvested a “super” Jake with uncle DR calling and his dad sitting by his side giving instructions. The young gobbler weighed 18.5 pounds and had a 5-inch beard. Earlier in the season, on Youth Day, Tyler and his dad hunted with me in Rockingham County. We hunted long and hard, and came close on two occasions, but didn’t harvest a bird.

I really enjoyed hunting with Tyler and became determined to assist him with harvesting a mature gobbler. I invited him to hunt with me on Youth Day 2009, but he already had made plans to go with a hunting partner of his dad’s. Youth Day came and went (I took a young girl and her dad – another story) and Tyler was still waiting to harvest his first long beard. His dad had to work on opening day of turkey season, so I invited Tyler to come to my home, spend the night and hunt with me the next day. We had a good time visiting and talking about turkey hunts and our plans for the next day. Eventually we wound down and decided we needed to get some sleep.

We awoke to the alarm at 5 a.m., dressed, ate nothing (Tyler said we needed to “hunt hungry”) and were out the door by 5:15 a.m. We arrived at our hunt site about 30 minutes later. Grabbing our gear, we headed to a high spot where we would await for gobbler time.

We heard one bird way off in the distance and that was it. We walked and called and once sat down on the end of a ridge and called for about 30 minutes (actually Tyler took a nap while I called). We then walked all over the farm but could not get a rise from a gobbler. At 11 a.m. we decided we needed some food — hunting hungry was no longer an option.

After eating, we visited another farm and walked and called but heard nothing. It did not help that the wind was blowing 25 mph and made hearing very difficult.

Returning home, I was trying hard to come up with a plan for the remainder of the day that might bring success given the weather conditions. I called a good friend, Randy Perry, to discuss the bird he had harvested earlier in the morning. After listening to his great story and giving congrats, he then unknowingly provided me with some very useful information. He mentioned that two gobblers were seen in his pasture late in the morning along with hens.

I immediately got permission from Randy to bring Tyler and hunt on his small farm. I then made sure Tyler was up to the task. After receiving a positive response that he was ready and willing, we prepared for an afternoon hunt.

We arrived at the farm about 3 p.m. We setup in some hardwoods just off the edge of the pasture where the birds roosted, but made sure we could shoot into the pasture as well. I called long and loud so I might be heard over the wind. I used my box call, slate call and mouth diaphragm. We had only been sitting about 20 minutes when I looked up and saw a big gobbler out in the pasture headed our way. I informed Tyler and he slowly slid around the tree. I continued to call and the bird continued to walk toward us. He was not in a big hurry but was steady and determined in his approach.

At 25 yards, the gobbler stopped and searched for the hen(s) he believed to be present. Tyler made a final gun adjustment and I gave the OK to shoot when he had a clear shot. The gobbler began walking so I whispered to Tyler to wait and I would stop him.

I gave a quick cluck and the gobbler stopped, presenting a great shot opportunity. Instantly Tyler put him down. I waited a moment and told Tyler to go and get his bird. I followed and much smiling, high fives and a hug or two came as we celebrated our success. We had to soak up the moment and just look at the great bird lying in the green pasture grass. It was 4 p.m. and the wind was still raging, but two determined hunters had completed a grand quest. Tyler now had his first long beard and what a great bird it was, with an 11-inch beard, 1-inch spurs, and 19.5 pounds.

Tyler spent the night and we re-lived the hunt many times. It was great! I drove him home the next day and we shared the story again with his family. We were both proud and happy, but I think I may have been the happiest. It was just a great feeling to share the thrill of the hunt with such a fine young hunter. I look forward to sharing additional adventures with him.



—Fred Rorrer is the D-5 Hunter Education Specialist.



On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

This is all too familiar to everyone. An animal rights movement with media savvy and plenty of bluff and bluster; anti-hunting efforts in many guises; and the not-in-my-backyard attitudes, which allow the convenient “I’m not necessarily opposed to hunting, just not (fill in the blank).”

Hunting is in the news, on the agenda, showing up on blogs – and not always in a favorable light. All of which can put a hunter on the defensive. (And probably makes you mad sometimes.)

So how do you combat it?

In many ways, you already have, by being a sportsman and role model. I’ve always been struck by the willingness of skilled outdoorsmen (and a lot of them have been women) to share their knowledge, especially with youth. This is why I am especially proud of our hunter education instructors.

Maybe the best defense is a good offense, in demonstrating skills and offering words of encouragement, and taking someone hunting when you can. Make every day youth day.

Here’s a reminder: A new boating safety education law goes in effect May 1, 2010. Anyone younger than 26 years old who is operating a vessel powered by a 10 horsepower or greater motor on public waterways must have successfully completed an approved course, offered for free by the Wildlife Resources Commission. For more information, go to www.ncwildlife.org or call (919) 707-0030.



Capt. Chris Huebner

Father and Son Hunters Bag Big Bucks — 32 Years and Yards Apart

By Tom Higgins

Lightning in the form of trophy-sized whitetail deer has struck for Mark Mitchell of Cramerton and his son, Zach.

On Nov. 7, 1977 Mark Mitchell, then 12, felled a massive 10-point buck weighing nearly 300 pounds while hunting with his dad, Bub, in Richmond County near Mount Gilead.



On Nov. 7, 2009, Zach, 12, bagged a 10-point buck of approximately 195 pounds at almost the same spot.

“The coincidence is incredible to me,” said Mark Mitchell. “We were hunting this year from a stand that’s within 100 yards of where I got that buck back in ’77.”

Zach passed up a shot at an 8-pointer, figuring he might spot a bigger deer. Within a few minutes he did, dropping the 10-pointer in its tracks from about 150 yards.

“Zach started deer hunting when he was 5,” continued Mark. “He bagged his first deer at 6. Now, after hunting all over the U.S., he has 25.

“It’s gratifying to get in the outdoors with my son and pass on the knowledge of hunting and fishing to him that my dad gave to me.”

Mark’s father, a locally well-known outdoorsman and marksman, formerly of Gaston County, now lives at Georgetown, S.C.

—Tom Higgins is an outdoors and motorsports writer.

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North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission District Boundaries



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North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Hunter Education Program

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