



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Convention is over for another year and what a great convention it was. We have received many positive comments about the game heads display, the many vendors, the food, and of course the water park. All in all I think everybody had a great time. And I'd like to thank all those who helped make it possible.

Our Kicking Bear youth program was held at Gander Mountain with many of our youth participating. It is so important to do whatever we can to introduce kids to archery and bowhunting.

On that note I'm going to share with you a letter I received from Ed Ackley of Madison after our winter issue of *The Bowhunter* magazine came out. Here is his letter.

February 11, 2010

Dear Mr. Allen,

When I opened the latest issue of *The Bowhunter* magazine the first article I read was yours. When I got to the part where you mentioned Gordy Heggesta, it not only brought a smile to my face, it also brought back many childhood memories.

How I met Gordy is quite a story. Around 1948, my father had read an article in the Madison newspaper stating anyone interested in the sport of bow hunting should meet at the Y.M.C.A. on West Washington Avenue and bring their bows and arrows as they would be shooting. I picked up an interest in archery in Boys Scouts, so on the given day I jumped on the Madison bus and went uptown to the "Y". (I would like to see what would happen if someone tried to get on a city bus with a bow and arrows today!)

When I arrived, the gym was filled with older men, but no one my age. The men instructed me on how to be safe and said I could shoot if I wanted to. I put on my back quiver,

nocked an arrow in my long bow and started shooting. Before long Gordy Heggesta came over and gave me help and guidance. I must have been doing all right because before long George Vantassle and Bo Payton started helping me too.

Every week after my chores were done I would get on the bus to shoot with the older men. Sometimes they would pick me up and take me to Middleton to shoot outdoors at Bo Payton's house and within a few years, they started taking me deer hunting and pheasant hunting with a bow.

I still remember my first Necedah Shoot with Gordy, when I was 13 years old, in the old refuge sitting by the campfire talking about bowhunting. They were discussing how they had found a place to shoot on a hill just outside of Middleton next to the new Black Hawk ski jump. They decided to call the new club Blackhawk Bowhunters. They discussed what type of bales they should use for backstops (they decided on marsh grass) and decided to hold a tournament. They cleared brush and got things ready for weekend shooting and when we showed up, the neighbor's cows had broken through the fence and knocked over and ate a lot of the hay bales. That marsh grass must have been awfully tasty!

By this time, I had been able to save up enough money to replace my long bow with a Eddings Supercast bow. It was supposed to be the first full working recurve and cost \$93 new (that was a lot of money back in the 50s). I got my first deer with it when they opened Horicon Marsh for bow hunting in the early '50s, and yes, Gordy was there with me.

I lost touch with Gordy when I enlisted in the military, but have always been grateful for what he taught me. When I was discharged from the service in 1963, I bought a

Bear Tamerlane HC 300 (which I still have) and rejoined Blackhawk Bowhunters and held the office of President. I have also been a member of Poynette Bowhunters and most recently a member of Stoughton Conservation Club. One of my prouder moments is taking a First, Second, and Third place in the Senior Division at the WBH fall shoot. Up until last year, I haven't missed a shoot since 1972. At the age of 72, I no longer shoot in league, but still practice two or three times a week.

So, I guess the message of this story is take a young person hunting, guide them and teach them what you know—I'm glad Gordy took the time to teach me.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story.

Sincerely,
Ed Ackley, Member # 2944
Madison, WI

I want to thank Ed for his letter. All of us who either have taught a youth to shoot a bow or those of us that have taken a youth hunting have no idea how much we have made an impression on that young person. This is so much better for them than watching TV or playing video games.

I was in the archery business for 35 years and I still have past customers tell me how much they appreciate how I set them up and got them shooting correctly. I am now a bear hunting guide. It's a lot of work, but whenever a hunter shoots his or her first bear it's almost as exciting for me as it is for them, and I know it's all worth it.

Please take the time to teach a youth about the outdoors, shooting and bowhunting. It's often as easy as just bringing them along with you. And look at the memories you both will make.

Shoot straight!
Wright Allen