

WHEN CATALOGS ARRIVE HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

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We have all heard the old cliché "Hope springs eternal." Well, it fits me to a tee. I read *Gray's Sporting Journal* or pore over the L. L. Bean catalog and my mind is off and racing.

I see myself moving through ideal grouse or woodcock cover behind a letter-perfect pointing dog, gun at the ready, executing a double as the birds flush. My mind has wandered back 50 years when the thought was at one time reality.

I begin to toy with the idea of picking up a German Shepherd pup, training it to perfection, and sallying forth to pick up where I left off. I will, of course, need a new game-bag, brush pants and the other accouterments necessary to portray the image I have made for myself.

Fortunately, I wake from my reverie most of the time before actually taking any positive action. On the other hand, however, I am at times lulled into succumbing to the illusion and I purchase many of the items I feel are necessary to turn the dream into reality.

An inflatable rubber boat, in which I planned to explore back country trout-rich beaver ponds, is a good example. It has languished unused in the top of my carport since it was purchased three years ago. It and several similar items that I shall hold in abeyance as grist for a future column.

It depends on the season as to where my latest fantasy will lead. A typical case in point is the fall I sent for 18 different brochures on wall tents and accessories. I hunted for years in the 50s from just such an outfit and yearned to try it again.

I picture a remote deer camp set up in prime wilderness, say the Middle Branch Lake area. I would still hunt from my home ending up at night at the camp, reversing the procedure the next day.

Those catalogs entertained me for many a night until Jerry Olsen confessed that he had the same dream and wanted to borrow them. I loaned him my whole file (I have files for such things) with the admonishment to be sure to return them. I was definitely going to order my outfit.

In the interim, a brush with reality changed my mind. Five bone-chilling nights in a wood-heated outlying camp (one night with a raging fever and flu, the weather worse than the flu) and I had second thoughts. The following week I told Jerry he was welcome to keep the file.

Gone are the days of spending a month or more shantied up in a tent beaver trapping in February or March. I am not completely cured of my affliction and I still contemplate expeditions that I am sure will be ideal.

To make a long story short, I am still a lot like the old guy who marries a much younger wife: I still let my mind make contracts my body cannot fulfill...