

## **CHANGE HUNTING TECHNIQUE TO ENJOY SPORT INTO OLD AGE 12/05/00**

This is the year (like the last 30 or more) when I was to really get back into serious deer hunting. When I say “serious” I mean exactly that based on my very early years when it took precedence over every responsibility or obligation in my young life. I longed once more to devote every waking moment from November 10 to 20 to hunting deer.

Not just any deer, mind you, but the really old deep woods bucks that shun the haunts of man in the trackless heart of the Adirondacks, in places where you seldom bumped into another hunter and if you did, he was another addict with whom you felt an instant wave of admiration and respect.

As I write this on November 11, at the start of the rut, I have to admit once again that other matters, as they have every year for lo these several, occupy my time. It is with regret I have to grudgingly admit they take precedence over my early infatuation. I also have to admit that at 73, with equal regret, I am not up to the task where I presented the opportunity.

All that being said I have to admit I am fortunate, although not fully sated, with plenty of possibilities to enjoy the sport. I have had to learn to appreciate the camp life and camaraderie that goes with it. In addition, I have discovered a new innovation on my old pastime that I rather learned to enjoy this past week.

I have two cousins, Allen and Jan Narewski, who have a hunting camp over near High Market on Tug Hill. It's a leased site on timberland owned by the John Hancock investment group. I spent an afternoon and evening relaxing and hunting with them last week.

I met cousin Allen on the public highway leading to the gated access and followed him into camp where after unloading my gear we left at 3 pm to sit on watch until dark. We rode into and out from that site on Al's four-wheeler (or ATV) on an old logging trail.

No game was spotted, but there was ample evidence of deer, turkey and bear feeding on beechnuts. The larger beech trees were full of the nest-like clumps of

branches the bear pull together to feed while the nuts are still on the trees. Twice in my life I have walked up on bear in the trees. They come down when startled like a fireman down a brass pole.

We left and returned to the camp in the dark, followed by plenty of cheese, salami, pickled herring and a libation. Rosemary, Allen's wife, had sent along some of her famous stuffed cabbages and we had a later dinner of them. Jan joined us shortly before bedtime and after formulating our plans for the morning, we hit the hay.

Up at 4:30 am fortified by hot coffee, we headed out in the predawn light to stand watch until 8:30. The path to my stand was marked with a trail of bright plastic flagging tape. A couple of city blocks away I came to a sturdy tree stand on the edge of a moderate sloping-away grade. It overlooked Roaring Brook and a large expanse of open beaver meadow. A moderately high slope faced me to the south and east some hundred yards away.

I have never had much patience with sitting on watch so this was to be a whole new experience. As I waited for enough light to see, the familiar sounds of chainsaws, skidders and a slasher wafted my way on the still morning air. Accounts of the previous successes from this stand filled me with anticipation as the sun came up a brilliant red, concurring with the weather forecast of a 70% chance of rain.

I sat there serenaded by the timber harvesting sounds as I scanned the area for any approaching deer. The time passed quickly and before I knew it, it was 8:20 am, close to breakfast time. I was just about to climb down out of the stand when I saw movement on the far slope.

A quick look and turn of my riflescope from 2.5 to 7.5 confirmed a deer working down the slope in my general direction. It stopped and was staring intently over the meadow before me and it was only then that I learned for sure it was a doe. I never took my eyes from her direction as I scanned the surrounding area to see if a potential suitor might appear. None did and as she faded away in the cover 20 minutes later, I headed for camp and breakfast. I was the only one of the three of us to see a deer.

The predicted rain appeared and we coasted until 3 pm when we all left to spend the time until dark on stand again with no results. After a hearty meal of perch fillets, boiled potatoes and green beans, I packed up and headed back home to the real world.

I may yearn for the good old days, but spending my time hunting the European way (as I call it) has its points at my age. The deer may not have as good a chance as they used to, but old age and treachery can overcome youth. The venison will taste as good and will be easier to get back to camp.