

**SIXTY YEARS BEHIND THE TIMES AND THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE
IT
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One of my favorite TV channels is the Outdoor Life Network. I generally enjoy the hunting and fishing episodes but with several reservations.

My interest in both are much like my politics, lifestyle and the sentiments expressed in the old Utica Club beer ads: "Sixty years behind the times and that's the way we like it."

Once I had my formative years behind me, I realized one did not have to limit out to enjoy either sport. My reservations are about the perceptions one derives from watching modern day presentations of both on television. For the most part they are canned events and do not portray either as most of us know it. By "canned" I mean staged or commercialized presentations, not typical of real life.

The hunting usually is done on private game preserves where much of the game is planted or hunted over baited stands. Many of the stands are fabricated and manufactured tree stands overlooking planted food plots. I have no problem with improving habitat to support game birds or animals, but hunt them on even terms. In many of the hunts shown, this is obviously and blatantly ignored. It turns me off and makes me ashamed to be a hunter, let alone giving others a wrong impression of the sport.

Compared to fishing, hunting has not changed over the years except for huge improvements in clothing and camping gear. Fishing is a fast moving sport and extremely difficult to keep pace with in terms of new equipment and tackle. I might add in terms of cost as well. It's come a long way since the Bristol steel telescoping fly rod and cat gut leaders. I was out of the loop for many years and was left so far in the dust I have no hope of ever catching up. It's a billion-dollar industry with many facets that were unimaginable when I became fascinated with the sport. It's spawned a whole bevy of professionals who make their living fishing and promoting angling and related products.

Fishing tournaments with huge cash prizes and the fame that comes with winning them launched many of the featured players in the TV fishing series. A few of the stars featured on both the hunting and fishing programs are progeny of famous sports figures. They are usually shown at some exotic, exclusive hunting and fishing resort that few ordinary fishermen will ever hope to visit. I endure much of the disclosure to glean what little I can of their use of the latest lures and tackle form my own use.

Particularly perturbing to me is this mad practice of catch and release fishing. Excuse me, but I like fish and make no excuses for keeping a few for the table. I could cry when I see these guys sliding one after another prime potential walleye fillets back in the water. I find little enough time for fishing as it is and devote what little of it I have to producing a meal or two.

I still flounder around trying to figure out how to master all the nuances of modern lines, reels, rods and lures. At times it's an insurmountable task for a guy who is exhausted just getting his tackle together and waders on.

To make a long story short, I pine for the days when my gear consisted of a nice straight pin cherry with 10 feet of black casting line and a snelled hook. The garden worms were carried in a Prince Albert can in my hip pocket. A 10-inch brookie from the Alder Creeks was a trophy.