

I'M HEADING OUT TO HUNT, YESSIR, ONE OF THESE DAYS

October 28, 2003

The times they are a changin'. Or so it seems to me as I progress further and deeper into the recesses of old age. Certainly change is constant, as most of us know it, no matter what our age. I have come to realize the difference for people in my age bracket is that it takes longer for our minds to catch up with our bodies. This becomes most evident when the things that were focal points in our lives for many years can be enjoyed, but not with the same gusto they once were.

The first day of deer season along with the opening days of a great many other hunting, fishing and trapping seasons are not welcomed with the same passion they once were. I looked forward as usual to this year's opening, spending the entire afternoon and evening assembling my gear for the following morning.

Like the youngsters on Christmas Eve who hie off to bed, "with visions of sugar plums dancing in their heads," I knocked off with visions of trophy racks in mine. I was organized like never before. All my years of venturing forth woefully unprepared were at last put behind me. After all, I had plenty of excuses during my working life but now that I am retired all of my experience was being put to good use. I was sure to win big. I may have lost some of my vim and vigor, but experience would replace what was lost and I would easily duplicate my earlier experiences.

I was so sure of it I decided a man with my experience did not need to be up and out at the crack of dawn. Amateurs may require such edges but not a man like myself. I had covered every base, even poring over a map of hunting territory the night before. The area was personally known and in my mind's eye I could picture the runways and feeding areas where I would find the deer. I just wanted my plan of attack well versed and rehearsed before stealthily setting forth my steps cushioned by my Bean boots.

My tired old eyes viewed the fresh snow with one of welcome and not apprehension as I donned my carefully planned ensemble well organized from the night before. I wanted to waste no more time after arriving back home with the mail and paper. On the ride to town my practiced eye carefully assessed the magnitude and extent of the snow.

By the time I arrived back at headquarters, my observations analyzed and all factors considered, my best instincts told me to delay the mission at least one more day. After all it was only the first day of the season. Why ruin the whole season by limiting out the very first day?

There may be some who will view this whole rendition as a cop-out. I have no doubt, however, that the real experienced initiate will recognize my decision for what it is, a wise conclusion reached after well thought out and proven facts.

Furthermore, I had searched in vain during my preparations for my favorite knife. I wisely used the rest of the day in a successful search for it. Any real hunter worth his salt knows how important such details are.

I now face the rest of the season with the same spirit and anticipation I always had. Even though it's five days later and other commitments have demanded my time. Besides, the bucks aren't in full rut yet.