

# FROM THE EDITOR

## Introduce Someone New to Hunting



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**We are all hunters, predators if you will. Our eyes face forward and we have long canine teeth. Hunting was a major contributor to the evolution of earlier species into**

**what we are today. The notion of agriculture, cultivation, and domestic stock are only 6,000 years old — a blink in human history.**

For a very, very, long time, hunters held the survival of our species in their hands. Successful hunters lived, and they taught others to hunt. Think about it. Man was primarily a hunter for three million years. Until only moments ago, the most important, powerful, and influential people on earth were hunters. If this is so, if hunting is bred into us over millions of years of natural selection, then why isn't everyone a hunter?

**So, with the holiday season upon us, and the new year just around the corner, let's all make a resolution to introduce at least one person to our sport in 2004.**

Actually, more people are still hunters than they or we might think. They can either hunt animals in the woods, taking their place as predators in that way, or they can be another kind of predator by planning a stalk on the sales manager's job or making a power sneak on a new account, using the latest in computer technology and salesmanship skills as his weaponry. An artist drives himself to succeed, a photographer hunts for his next perfect picture, a salesman hunts up his next lead, while a sales clerk searches for her next customer. It is all a matter of perspective, but everyone is stuck with long teeth and eyes that look ahead to eat, instead of to the side in order not to be eaten.

So, if hunting is bred into us, why do we have non-hunters and anti-hunters? The answer is fear. We fear what we don't understand and fear is a very strong human emotion. There is only one way to defeat that fear, only one way to win over our adversaries. We must allow them to know what we know, allow them to recognize what they are and allow them to understand us.

Would it somehow be possible to take the anti-hunter into the woods and onto the

mountain with us? Of course not. They would not for a moment accompany one who kills. However, there might be another way, a more gentle introduction to their very roots. Perhaps we could take him (or her) into the woods with a camera or just for a hike during the off-season. Your non-hunting companion will discover something you've known all along — that you care about the game, the wild world and the planet. It just might stimulate his own interest in the hunt. If not in hunting, it might at least give them a look at what you preserve, and at you, the human who hunts and can also care. If each of us would take one person out in the woods with us each year, we could expose millions of people to hunting and who we are as hunters. While we walk and watch, we can talk as well, we can at least try to tell them that we are the reason the game survives and thrives.

We can strive to cause the "others" to understand that there is a place for hunters in the woods and education is the answer. Allowing them to see the natural world through our eyes is a very good way to begin.

Beyond the hope of at least neutralizing some of our opposition, we must introduce new hunters to our sport. If you are wondering what to get your son, daughter, grandson, or granddaughter for Christmas, think about getting them their first gun. If it is too soon, or politically incorrect for the moment, a fine book about hunting is a good way to pique their interest. Or if they already have been introduced to shooting, you might make their gift a hunt for next fall. It is a rare person who does not like to hunt, with the proper introduction. Some simply do not care to kill and we should recognize and respect that very personal choice. For them it might be a camera that leads them into the wild. That too brings a mutual respect for those of us who do enjoy the chase.

By whatever means you choose, think and move wisely. Many people, young and old, are far removed from their most basic occupation. It is most likely that somewhere deep in their soul there are a few sleeping cells that will still remember that they are hunters. It is our challenge, our responsibility, and our long-term hope to awaken them.

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I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season and remember to say a special prayer for our troops. ■

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