

# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



**Greg Tinsley**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Boone and Crockett Club

## New Testament

The only cruel aspect of Deep South living is that the best of the whitetail-deer hunting season was so far away as this was written. Even with early cold for these parts, Mississippi probably remains four months out from the mere semblance of a frosty morning. I've become jealous and melancholy at the thought that I will not be among the millions of outdoorsmen in mountain hunting camps as this issue of *Fair Chase* drops.

Nevertheless, another four months of swelter isn't a long time in the grand scheme. The soothing tranquility of big adventure in the offing, the anticipation of sighting the exclusively wild and the seldom-

seen things, the idea of persevering blunders, defeats, and the elements, is again wafting through the mirages of summer. Fall big game is on its way to town, my friends, and I wish it would hurry. This leads to some introspection about what it all means...

My father turned out to be a genuinely religious man. He possessed the keen powers of observation that defined a sparkling journalist who would earn a percent interest in a Pulitzer Prize during his 40-year publishing career. Now the Dad who raised me was a superb wingshot and a reluctant big-game hunter; but my father fit one of the non-hunter demographics, and, in fact, I was only fortunate to know him during his last decade on Earth. Father did understand hunting and religion, and he saw their similarities, proclaiming that hunting was as much religion as it was anything else. "There is great ritual in both," he told me two years before his death. "They are anciently intertwined, spiritually based faiths. Over the ages, I believe that they deserve equal importance; perhaps they are exactly one in the same."

That was startlingly personal testimony from a Presbyterian elder, a bit of a city slicker for most of his life who kept a miniature terrier named Wallace and seldom owned a long gun.

I agree with father's view of hunting as religion. For me, there's nothing more evangelical than the texture of good country in horizontal light, or the feeling of wellness one experiences during a heavenly high-country moonrise, mesmerized by laughing coyotes and the rarified glunking resonance from the throat of a herding bull elk. To me, at least, religion is nearly at its finest in those things. Praying to God seldom seems more natural to me than after I've watched a file of magnificently single-minded whitetail bucks grind through the woods in pursuit of a balky doe.

Suddenly, then, the ethics of hunting, the underpinnings of honorable behavior during the pursuit of game, takes on significance. With hunting as religion, any and all disrespect for the ritual and the prey becomes blasphemy. *It really is very serious stuff*, which was what O. Wayne Lee, my non-hunting father, seemed to have come to long before he led me to it completely, or at least validated the mostly unspoken perspective of it that I'd learned from Dad.

Not long ago I wrote a piece for another magazine that really cooked at least one reader. I opined that shooting game during a rainstorm, or under the threat of heavy rain, was borderline unethical. My letter-writing critic, undoubtedly a good guy and a hard hunter, blew up all over me; mainly, I think, because he'd recently used a longbow to arrow a wonderfully meaty cow elk just seconds before a glorious timberline thunderstorm turned the world into a waterfall.

In an email I congratulated the bowman on the big-medicine kill and suggested that, thankfully, hunting ethically remained a self-governed action. I gently reminded him that expressed opinion was covered by the First Amendment, quickly signing off with the notion that he would not be welcome to begin stalking me. Religion, hunting, ethics, politics, opinion, and Little League baseball, singly, or in any combination, represent tricky business.

This year as I strategize the placement of tree stands, arc the composite stickbow in practice, and marry a new Gold Ring to the trajectory of the Rifles Incorporated .300 Win. Mag., I will be more theologically aware. I will place an even higher level of appreciation and reverence to what I personally, and collectively, want hunting to be.

## FOUNDED IN 1887 BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Robert Model

Executive Vice President - C. Robert Palmer

Vice-Presidents of...

Development - Gary W. Dietrich

Conservation - Lowell E. Baier

Administration - Benjamin Wallace

Big Game Records - Eldon L. Buckner

Treasurer - Joseph A. Ostervich

Secretary - Robert H. Hanson

Class of 2005 - Tim Brady

Class of 2006 - FR. Daily

Class of 2007 - Edward B. Rasmuson

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Audit - Charles E. Long

Conservation Policy -

Stephen P. Mealey and Rollin D. Sparrowe

Budget, Finance and Endowment -

Robert Hanson and William H. Tilley

Development - Donald Duckworth and Stuart Strahl

Hunter and Conservation Ethics - Steve C. Lewis

Marketing & Outreach - Andrew Hoxsey

Membership - Keith Ward

Nominating - Earl E. Morgenroth

Publications - Mark Steffen

Research, Education, and Outreach - Harold J. Salvasser

Records - Eldon L. "Buck" Buckner

Strategic Planning - Steve Mealey

### PAST PRESIDENTS

Theodore Roosevelt

Benjamin H. Bristow

William Austin Wadsworth

George Bird Grinnell

Madison Grant

Kermit Roosevelt

Frederic C. Walcott

Archibald B. Roosevelt

Karl T. Frederick

Fairman R. Dick

Alfred O. Hoyt

Robert Munro Ferguson

Robert S. Waters

Frederick C. Pullman

John E. Rhea

Wesley M. Dixon, Jr.

Jack S. Parker

William I. Spencer

Judge F. Anderson

James H. Duke, Jr.

George C. Hixon

Stephen S. Adams

Paul D. Webster

Daniel A. Pedrotti

Earl E. Morgenroth