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FROM THE EDITOR



Doug Painter
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If you're a country music fan you no doubt recall Miranda Lambert's big hit of 2014, "Automatic." It's a lovely ballad in which she recalls not only the slower pace but also the more "hands on" way we lived in the pre-digital age. A portion of the lyrics go:

"If we drove all the way to Dallas just to buy an Easter dress

We'd take along a Rand McNally, stand in line to pay for gas

God knows that shifting gears ain't what it used to be

I learned to drive that 55 just like a queen, three on a tree"

If you're too young to have hunted with paper-hulled shotgun shells, I'll point out that "three on a tree" refers to a 3-speed manual transmission with the gearshift lever mounted on the steering column. I had one on my first car, a '52 Chevy Business Coupe. Rand McNally, the map folks, is still, I assume, part of our current lexicon.

More than just a wistful reminiscence of her youth, Ms. Lambert also leaves us with a good point to consider. Part of her refrain goes:

"Hey whatever happened to waiting your turn

Doing it all by hand 'cause when everything is handed to you

It's only worth as much as the time put in it"

When I was a youngster, I spent my summers at an outdoor-oriented camp in western North Carolina heading out on week-long hiking trips in the Pisgah and the Nantahala National Forests. Instead of a road map, my challenge was how to learn to use a topographic map and compass. It took me some time to memorize the various map symbols and the meaning of the contour lines, to understand the effect of declination and to finally plot a course on the map.

More than learning how to get from point A to point B in the woods, what I really learned from my new found orienteering skills was a new measure of confidence and self-reliance. No different really than starting a fire (with a limit of three strike-anywhere matches) on a rainy evening, shooting well with an open sighted .22 or paddling a canoe in swift water.

I'm not stubbornly old-fashioned. Today, give me my GPS any time. My point is that if newcomers to hunting, whether youngsters or adults, learn hunting and woodcraft skills "from scratch" they will learn much

more than just the skill itself. As we reach out to new audiences we should continue to emphasize the contributions our community has and continues to make to wildlife conservation and the role of hunting and record-keeping as key aspects of scientific wildlife management. We should not neglect, however, to point out that the learning curve to becoming an ethical and capable hunter has helped instill in our participants important values, from self-reliance and hardiness to self-restraint, responsibility and a respect for our natural resources.

For the newcomer, that learning curve shouldn't be too easy, indeed, "Automatic." Siri may now have all the answers. A strike-anywhere match may still be the better teacher.

It's a pleasure and an honor for me to be part of the Boone and Crockett Club team. If you have any thoughts, questions or suggestions you can reach me at painter.doug@yahoo.com.

Hope to see you down the trail. ■

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The Boone and Crockett Club welcomes shooting, hunting and outdoor industry, and communications veteran Doug Painter as editor-in-chief of Fair Chase, the official publication of the Boone and Crockett Club.

Painter served 38 years with the National Shooting Sports Foundation, working his way up from a media relations writer in 1973 to the president and CEO in 2002. He retired in 2011. Along the way, Painter played a key role in developing numerous communications campaigns emphasizing firearm and hunting safety, hunters' roles in conservation, good sportsmanship and positive public image of hunting and shooting sports.

He remains active in the industry. Painter is involved in many communications projects, is an editorial advisor to *Sporting Classics* magazine, and is on the boards of the Wildlife Management Institute and Youth Shooting Sports Association.

A lifelong hunter, Painter's sporting passions have taken him from Alaska to Africa and South America to Siberia.

"Respect. That's the first word that comes to mind when I think of Doug and his career. We're thrilled to add his caliber of esteemed experience, insight and skill to the masthead of Boone and Crockett's publication," said Morrie Stevens, Club president.