

BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB'S LIFETIME ASSOCIATES PROGRAM

The Boone and Crockett Club's Lifetime Associates program has grown considerably since its inception three years ago. Each time I review a Lifetime Associate application I am impressed with the wealth of conservation and hunting related experiences each individual brings to the Club.

In order to recognize our Lifetime Associates we are beginning a series of articles written by or about our Lifetime Associates. Lifetime Associate, Robert Nichols, shares the story of his hunt for a whitetail buck in Texas in this issue of Fair Chase.

The next issue will feature an article about Ken Davis, a new Lifetime Associate, who has made a significant contribution to the perpetuation of our Wildlife Cultural Heritage. I hope you will enjoy these and future articles featuring our Lifetime Associates.

Following is a list of NEW Boone and Crockett Club Lifetime Associates:

- 67. Ken E. Davis - Asotin, Washington
- 68. Doug Obert, Sr. - Scottsdale, Arizona
- 69. Thomas E. Day - Republican City, Nebraska
- 70. Robert A. Berggren - Forest Lake, Minnesota
- 71. Jean Eveland Berggren - Forest Lake, Minnesota
- 72. Dale J. Hislop - Calgary, Alberta
- 73. Thomas E. Slagle - Pineland, Florida

Lifetime Associates receive the following benefits:

- Lifetime Subscription to Fair Chase,
- Bob Allen long-sleeve shooting shirt,
- Brown duck-cloth hat with leather bill,
- Lifetime Associates Plaque,
- 20% discount on books and merchandise,
- Significant Tax deduction, and
- Invitation to special events.

If you're interested in the Boone and Crockett Club's Lifetime Associates Program, please contact our headquarters toll-free at (888) 840-HUNT or (406) 542-1888.

The cost for the Lifetime Associates Program is \$1,000.

We offer the following plans:

- 1) one payment, check or credit card, for \$1,000;
- 2) four quarterly charges to your credit card of \$250; or
- 3) twelve monthly charges to your credit card of \$83.34.

See order form in the center of this issue for more details.

THE DOUBLE BOOK BUCK

All good hunting stories

have a beginning and an end. This one began in the rainy spring of 1991 when millions of whitetail fawns were born into good range conditions in Texas. One fawn way down in Kleberg County had a unique future. By the fall of 1991, he was a button buck, just like the other buck fawns that survived the summer, the coyotes, the fire ants, the hogs and the highways.

By the fall of 1992 he had antlers, maybe just spikes. We never noticed him, a small young buck among the crowd.

1993 and 1994 brought more points and a wider spread, but no special attention.

He first came on our radar screen in the fall of 1995 as a light-antlered 6x6. Good confirmation, good potential, sixteen inches wide, ten-inch G-3's, eight-inch G-4's. We guessed him at 152 gross. My son Wallace got a great picture of him with my camera. We spend a lot of time focusing binoculars and cameras and very little time drawing our bows. (Wallace still has my camera. He has confiscated it for his own purposes. The camera has seen lots of great deer up close. But that is another story.) Based on his first casting call, he was going to be a star, and we knew it at 4-1/2. Lloyds of London would have

By Robert Nichols
B&C Lifetime Associate

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insured his antlers. He hung out near a heavily traveled road, but was seldom seen.

We have a wonderful lease, with great security. We had no camp, but decided to move in a couple of mobile homes that fall of 1995. In September, Redman Industries delivered two double-wides to the lease, one for me and one for my son-in-law and daughter. They live in San Francisco, and have become enthusiastic hunters. With my four children,

their five children, Ross Irby, various workers, machines, and delivery trucks our camp was a busy place. Move-in coincided with bow season, naturally.

October is hot in Kleberg County, with a relentless south wind and record book mosquitoes. We worked the air conditioners hard and mowed the grass while my wonderful wife rearranged the furniture in the double-wide again and again. She has a disease she can't help, afflicting many women in their thirties: chronic interior design. Her official title is Queen of the Double-wide. She loves to cook and is not very hard on the quail population. It looks and feels like a camp should, thanks to her.

Christmas 1995 was a huge success. Christy and Jay's young children from San Francisco learned about hunting, aging deer, South Texas sunsets and coyotes singing on starry nights. The children watched my daughter shoot a hog at dusk. When they saw her level that .270 and bring down a huge hog, suddenly everything changed. She had a Texas-girl skill they never dreamed she had. The children caught on immediately, and we began a huge slaughter of aluminum cans and plastic bottles with .22's. Christy and Jay laid down the rules for each of the kids:

Kill lots of cans first, then;

*Kill two javelinas
with good shots, then;*

*Help Jay clean
the javelinas, then;*

*Kill two does with
shoulder shots, then;*

Help Jay clean the does, then;

*You've earned the right to kill a
management buck.*

Jay worked like a Trojan, I helped a little, and this process was in various stages for each child at the end of the Christmas vacation. The next Christmas was just the same, with kids working through the process. Management bucks were taken by each child, all over 6 1/2 years old. Now they talk of hocks, potbellies, ear wrinkles and loose neck skin. Not an animal was lost due to diligent trailing, and shooting skills were improving. After Christmas of 1996 the Queen of the Double-wide asked me for a little time for just the two of us. What better place, I suggested, than a remote, romantic double-wide? There was some discussion initially, some compromise, some rash future promises, but good sense prevailed. After all, it was still deer season.

Our time alone was full of romance. Our mornings were perfect. Beverly slept in and I hunted several romantic tripods. In the afternoons we did only what she wanted to do: cook for us, rearrange the furniture and drop me and my bow off in a romantic spot. She got to watch those romantic sunsets from the porch of the double-wide thinking of me and my bow in our beautiful pasture. A perfect romantic retreat.

During this second honeymoon, I had seen the beautiful twelve point, now 5-1/2 years old. He was a spooky deer, never giving me a good look. I saw him several times from 150 yards running away. I began to set up wherever I saw him last. Each time he would move. The rut was in full bloom by early January 1997. Several times he came within 200 yards of the tripod, but never for long. I was determined to hunt him with my bow, and began to hunt only

this deer. Finding him was a problem, and whenever I did, he disappeared like a ghost.

Late one morning I was ready to climb down and walk to camp at 9:30. Fifteen more minutes, I told myself. (The Queen of the Double-wide was always up and ready for coffee by ten.) Like a ghost at 9:40, he came walking through the brush, neck outstretched, oblivious to everything except the Queen he was following. His path would take him by me broadside at 20 yards. You could hear my heart beating in Dallas. I was sure the buck could hear me breathing. I had the wind, and his Queen had his undivided attention. Tines grew everywhere. They looked 24" long. Time was racing. I knew I had to draw without him seeing me. I knew he was spooky. Cleverly, I waited to draw until he stepped behind a bush at 30 yards. Drawing with a mechanical release, I knew he would keep coming. Like all spooky bucks, he froze behind the bush. I was frozen at full draw. He couldn't possibly have seen me. I had the wind. The doe had no clue. Instinct and fate made him freeze. Both are hard to overcome. He stood behind that bush a long time. I was still at full draw. My right arm was already shaking. I remembered a trick Wayne Peoples taught me. I slowly rotated my right hand until my fingers were propped behind my neck, relieving the stress on my right arm. My release firmly strapped to my right wrist held the string at full draw. I patted myself on the back for remembering the trick. He stood there for a long time, then stepped out. Slowly I rotated my right hand back to the release just as he stopped broadside. Wait till he looks away. Follow through. Watch the arrow hit.

He never saw me. He never saw the arrow. It was a perfect shot. It flew straight and true, just under his chest. It made perfect contact with the Kleberg County sand and stuck there smartly. The fletching provided a colorful contrast to the sand as he ran off, startled but unscratched.

I've rehashed that shot ten thousand times. It wasn't the

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STORY
SERIES**

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equipment Ken Witt sold me. I did everything Wayne Peeples taught me to do except hit the deer. Maybe my right arm was shaking. Maybe my heart pounding shook the tripod. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe. I retrieved the arrow, walked to camp and told the Queen the sad story. I received the appropriate amount of sympathy, but twisted my knee kicking myself for missing a trophy at 20 steps. He was over 160. Spooked and gone forever.

I finished that season on a cold rainy Sunday hunting my 6x6. Despite logging lots of hours behind the binoculars, I saw him only once more, running at 200 yards away from my tripod. I came home in the dark rain, empty-handed. It had been a great season, for everyone else. Several "first bucks" were taken. My grandson, Hunter, killed his first buck with an audience; his mother, me, my mother and his Uncle Wallace. Wallace won Los Cazadores that year with a huge buck. Jay, Scott Brandon, and I all won bow jackets. Stories were told at the campfire, memories were put in place, the magic of hunting exposed to lots of young minds, but I missed my twelve. Missed. At 20 steps.

It was a long summer. October 1997 finally arrived and we met Jay for the opening weekend of bow season. I declared my intentions loudly to continue to hunt the big 6x6. We searched for his sheds, but never found them. I went looking for my old spooky 6x6 and Jay went to hunt the non-typical we had all been saving for 4 years. (There's a great story about Jay's non-typical, but that's for him to write.) While I was searching in the heat of October, Jay found the non-typical and killed him with his bow. B&C official measurer, Butch Thompson, scored Jay's deer at 175 gross for Los Cazadores and Jay was delighted. No sign of my 6x6. Sharing Jay's success was great, but not quite as great as having my own 175. Jay flew back to San Francisco and I returned to Dallas empty-handed. Several more trips to the double-wide to hunt my 6x6 also left me empty-handed. I overheated the binoculars trying to make a 6x6 out of lots of 5x5's. I had not seen my deer, and it was already Thanksgiving. I projected multiple disaster scenarios. He was caught in a fence. Been shot by the neighbors. Starved to death. Left his core area. Killed by the Mad Cow disease. Then, the day

after Thanksgiving, there he was. In an improbable open area, following a new girlfriend, smitten by her loveliness, prepared as they say to "make a commitment". There was no question of identity. Six beautiful long tines per side, with a new kicker on his left G-2. I guessed over 30 inches per side and over 16 inches in circumferences. Nineteen inside. Long mains, maybe 25 inches. He was over 160. Could he make the book? Probably the new kicker would keep him out. I was plenty excited. Then the planning. How to get close in open country? Where's the wind? Stalk? Too risky. Tripod? I left the area and never alarmed the deer.

Over the next days, I hunted only him. I haunted the fringes of his core area, always quietly. Slip in early, slip out late. I never saw him. Just like last year, he just plain disappeared. Back to Dallas, back to work. Then back on December 12. That afternoon, there he was, just where he was before. I was frustrated, but set up nearby the next morning. No show.

The afternoon was hot and windy. I set up in a thick bush and waited. Because of the wind, not much moved. At 5 o'clock, a doe slipped in from behind me on my



**LIFETIME ASSOCIATE,
ROBERT NICHOLS,
WITH HIS "DOUBLE
BOOK" BUCK SCORING
170-1/8 POINTS.**