

FROM THE EDITOR

Remember the day you turned old enough to get your driver's license? If you were like me—indeed, like most every teen in America—you headed down to the DMV the very next morning. Back in the day, it wasn't just that cars were cool. That shiny new license in your wallet opened up a whole new world, whether it was taking Mary Lou to a drive-in movie, or heading off to your favorite fishing hole with a few of your best buddies.

I heard on the news that only 46 percent—that's less than half—of all 17-year-olds in America today have bothered to get a driver's license. Hard to believe, isn't it?

Perhaps Uber is even more successful than any of us thought. Or, it might be that today's teens are waiting for Google to perfect its driverless automobile. Some pundits point out that, for teens, smart phones and tablets are replacing the need for a car. I guess you no longer

have to pick Mary Lou up if you can now connect with her on Facebook.

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* reported on the steep decline in Little League baseball. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, about two million kids played in Little League last year, compared to 2.5 million in 1996, an overall decline of 25 percent. What's next to go, Mom and apple pie?

Even if you're a bit old-fashioned like me, still read paper books, and drive down to the local hardware store when you need something, it's impossible not to be aware of the big changes going on in our society, from Twitter and YouTube to Amazon and eBay. Other trends like teenage driving and Little League play are less obvious but no less real or portentous, not unlike the proverbial frog who blissfully sits in the pan of water while it slowly heats up on the stove until it's too late.

In the Little League

article it was noted that, according to Nielsen ratings, 50 percent of baseball TV viewers are 55 or older. David Ogden, a University of Nebraska researcher who focuses on youth sports makes the point that, "We're looking at a generation that didn't play catch with their dads."

Every study on hunting participation I've read over the last 40 years underscores that the key to recruiting the next generation of hunters is the introduction to the sport by a family member. At the same time, these studies confirm that the primary reason folks hunt over a lifetime is the social aspect, spending time in the field with family and friends.

Our community has done a good job in creating programs that help newcomers get started in hunting. The *Families Afield* effort, for example, now boasts some 1.5 million apprentice licenses sold in more than 35 states. Sportsmen's organizations



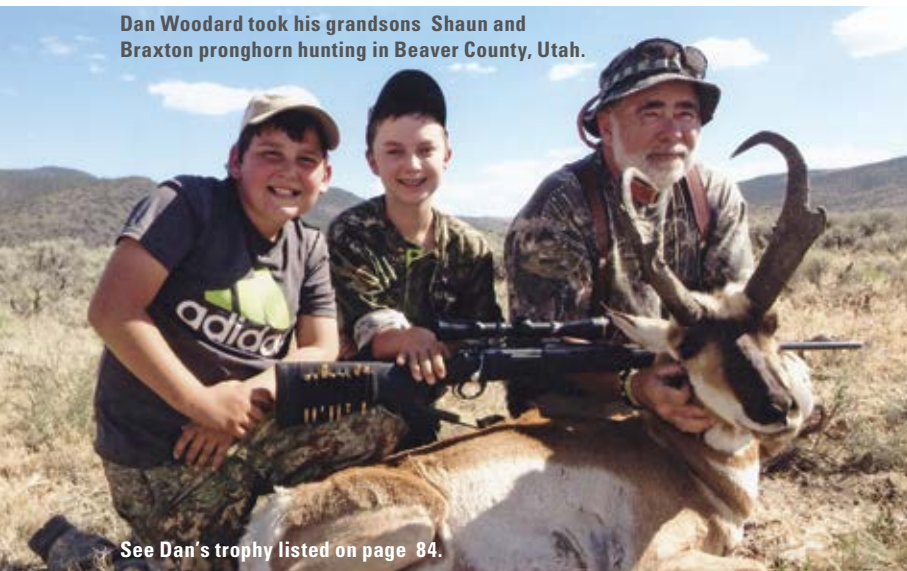
Doug Painter
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

and state wildlife agencies are now more active than ever promoting a wide range of youth hunting programs.

Nonetheless, the future of hunting is dependent on each and every one of us being an active mentor. So, play a game of catch with your kids or grandchildren. Take them for a ride with the top down. And when the time is right, introduce them to our great tradition. Youngsters can play video games and go skateboarding on their own. They can't go hunting without you.

Hope to see you down the trail with a few young hunters in tow. ■

Dan Woodard took his grandsons Shaun and Braxton pronghorn hunting in Beaver County, Utah.



See Dan's trophy listed on page 84.

Our community has done a good job in creating programs that help newcomers get started in hunting.

The Families Afield effort, for example, now boasts some 1.5 million apprentice licenses sold in more than 35 states. Sportsman's organizations and state wildlife agencies are now more active than ever promoting a wide range of youth hunting programs.