

# SUPPORTING OUR HUNTING TRADITIONS

**A key and a long-term asset on our side of the ledger is that the broad brush of the American public continues to view hunting in a favorable light.**

Hunting, of course, remains a popular tradition in many parts of our nation, especially in our more rural areas. As I write this column in December of 2020, you can bet one of the most frequently asked questions at the breakfast counter in country diners across the land is, “Did you get your deer this year?”

We are also benefiting from the surge in hunting license sales this season as more and more Americans are looking to spend time outdoors, especially with family members. Many of these individuals are new

hunters or lapsed hunters. Either way, it's great to have them in our ranks.

Our good friend Shane Mahoney also makes the point that there are still many people in our country who, while they have never hunted themselves, admire and respect someone in their family—Dad, Granddad or good old Uncle Joe—who is or was a hunter. Such positive associations have helped to maintain a favorable perception of our sporting traditions.

On the other side of the ledger is the hard reality that a growing percentage of the public has no association with or even basic knowledge about hunting in America. If you're an older person, like yours truly, your buddies no doubt send you the occasional email

with the headline, “You Know You're Over 65 If....” A photo that caught my eye in one such email shows two General Motors-stamped keys, one with an oval head, the other with a rectangular head. Having had a driver's license back in the 60s, I knew immediately that the oval key was the one you used to unlock the door of your Chevy, Pontiac, etc. The rectangular key was the one you put in the ignition to start the car. If you didn't drive back in that era, you most likely would have no clue as to what set one key apart from the other. Why would you?

That analogy is the basic difference between hunting and poaching. What reference do many Americans have nowadays to clearly make that distinction? These days, all too



**Doug Painter**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

often, the headline in the paper reads: “Hunter Nabbed Killing Illegal Deer.”

It's great to see the Boone and Crockett Club taking the lead in a new and broad-based anti-poaching campaign, “Poach & Pay.” Through this effort, the Club will work with state wildlife agencies, legislators, and the judicial system to improve the detection and conviction of poachers and to ensure that the fines being assessed for this illegal killing are in line with the value our society places on wildlife.

The program will also include a public outreach campaign that will actively engage the sportsmen's community as well as the development of template legislation for state lawmakers to help state agencies fight wildlife crime. I hope you read the full story beginning on page 30 of this issue.

This is exactly the kind of leadership from the Club that will help not only draw a clear distinction between hunting and poaching but also reinforce the values inherent in our sporting heritage.

Hope to see you down the trail. ■

In Ohio, 1975, Gary E. Landry 'got his deer' with this typical whitetail deer, scoring 182-7/8 points.

There are still many people in our country who, while they have never hunted themselves, admire and respect someone in their family—Dad, Granddad or good old Uncle Joe—who is or was a hunter. Such positive associations have helped to maintain a favorable perception of our sporting traditions.

