HUNTING FOR A HOLIDAY GOOSE
STAYING MOBILE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

SURVIVE DEER SEASON’S END DAYS
FIVE STEPS TO SCORE BIG DURING LATE SEASON
December 2012

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As We Celebrate Five Years – We Salute You

Where have the first 5 years gone?

It seems like yesterday I was sitting with President Bill Hite and Assistant General President Steve Kelly of the United Association discussing how much union members needed an outdoor organization they could call their own.

President Hite really opened my eyes when he said, “We have more than 300,000 members, and at least 70% of them hunt, fish and shoot. We have to do something for those guys.”

From that moment, the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance began to live—first as an idea, then as a program of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) and today as its own non-profit, conservation organization dedicated to union members and their families that hunt, fish, shoot and enjoy America’s great outdoors.

But a good idea is only as powerful as the people who get behind it and make it happen.

From its inception, the USA has been blessed with smart, dedicated, hardworking and very capable supporters beginning with the TRCP’s late founder and Chairman of the Board, Jim Range, who believed in and fully embraced the USA from day one.

And this union-dedicated outdoor community would never have gotten off the ground without the leadership and financial support of our charter unions and their leaders that serve on the USA’s Board of Directors:

• AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka
• Roofers President Kinsey Robinson
• IUEC President Frank Christensen
• UA President William Hite
• Boilermakers Secretary-Treasurer William Creedon
• Insulators President James Grogan
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• IAMAW President Thomas Buffenbarger
• IUPAT President James Williams
• BAC President James Boland
• TRCP President and CEO Whit Fosburgh

The USA board is a virtual who’s who of the American labor movement today that collectively represents more than 2.5 million union members, who regularly enjoy and recreate in the outdoors.

Then there’s the USA staff—the hardest working, most dedicated staff any organization could expect—that has grown this organization into something we can all be proud of.

Can you believe 15 people produce the USA’s magazine, website and award-winning TV show; manage USA’s sporting clay shoots, conservation dinners and Boots on the Ground conservation projects; handle all membership mailings and fulfillment; raise money and pay the bills?

But in the end, you know what makes this organization great? It’s you—the members.

You keep this organization moving forward…by reading and contributing photos and stories to this magazine…by visiting and engaging on the USA website and Facebook page…by attending our shoots and dinners…by tuning in to Brotherhood Outdoors…by coordinating and volunteering for Boots on the Ground projects…by encouraging your union brothers and sisters to join the USA.

Union sportsmen and women like you have always been there – volunteering, contributing, conserving and working hard to preserve the outdoor life we all grew up loving. The difference is that now you have a face, a voice, an outdoor organization designed by and for union sportsmen and women like you. It’s the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance – and it belongs to you!

The only real credit we can take is telling your stories and revealing to North America’s outdoor community what an incredible bunch of folks you are.

So as we celebrate the USA’s first five years, we offer our sincerest thanks for giving us the opportunity to tell the world who you are, what you’re doing, and the impact you’re having on the future of the outdoors and conservation in North America.

It is our pleasure and highest honor to serve you and to be your outdoor organization. It’s been an amazing five years, and our brightest days are still ahead.

Fred Myers
Executive Director/CEO
Union Sportsmen’s Alliance
USW Local 4959 Extends Membership Benefits to the Outdoors

Local covers cost of USA membership for its 400 members

by Kate Cywinski

With members in Washington State—home to elk, deer, moose, bear, sheep, game birds and more—and the Last Frontier, a dream destination for so many sportsmen, it’s no surprise that a large percentage of Steelworkers Local 4959 members spend time hunting and fishing.

So when United Steel Workers (USW) Local 4959 Secretary-Treasurer Glenn Trimmer heard about the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance at several USW meetings and the Alaska AFL-CIO convention, he thought it would be a great organization for his union brothers and sisters. He discussed the possibility of signing up every member of the local in the USA with Local 4959 President Kris Dye, and in September, the motion was passed.

Demonstrating that unions provide a better quality of life both on and off the job, USW Local 4959 covered the $45 non-charter, 3-year USA membership fee for each of its 400 members.

“Several of our members live in Kenai Alaska, home of the Kenai River where the largest King salmon in the world are caught. We have members who hunt moose, deer, bison, goat, caribou, and just about anything that moves,” Trimmer said. “We thought it would be good to enable our members to share their experiences with other union members.”

Now part of an organization more than 30,000 union sportsmen strong, members of USW Local 4959 can connect with their brothers and sisters who share a similar passion for the outdoors through USA’s quarterly magazine, website, Facebook page and forums as well as by attending USA’s sporting clays shoots in Anchorage, AK and Puget Sound, WA.

“We are so thrilled to welcome members of USW Local 4959 in Alaska sporting their USA logo caps

of USW Local 4959 to the USA community, and we thank Secretary-Treasurer Glenn Trimmer and President Kris Dye for taking this important step to support their members’ outdoor interests and help grow this union-dedicated conservation organization,” said USA Executive Director and CEO Fred Myers. “There is strength in numbers, and more USA members will strengthen the impact we can have on the future of hunting and fishing in North America.”
Five Years in the Making  USA celebrates major milestones

There’s no doubt about it—time flies. We do everything we can to make it slow down, but it keeps on ticking by. The amazing thing is how much can happen in so little time. Five and a half years ago, the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance was still just an idea. One look at the timeline below and you can see just how far the USA has come thanks to you and all our dedicated members!

**Sept. 2010**
USA announces new television partnership with Sportsman Channel.

**June 2011**
USA unveils custom-wrapped shooting truck and trailer.

**Jan. 2011**
USA expands popular shooting tour to 25 markets.

**June 2011**
USA debuts new TV show, **Brotherhood Outdoors**, on Sportsman Channel.

**Dec. 2011**
USA adds Cabela’s as a national partner.

**June 2012**
USA member John Sferazo nominated as finalist for in Field & Stream “Heroes of Conservation” award.

**Jan. 2012**
USA’s **Brotherhood Outdoors** wins Best Hunting/Fishing Combo show at Sportsman’s Choice Awards.

**Nov. 2012**
USA reaches **50,000 Active Members!**

**Oct. 2012**
USA adds Remington and Carhartt as national partners.

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Illinois and Ohio AFL-CIOs Endorse Union Sportsmen’s Alliance
By Laura Bliss Morris

Recognizing that the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance helps provide a better quality of life away from the job site for union members, the Illinois and Ohio AFL-CIOs unanimously passed resolutions of support for the USA at their recent conventions. The resolutions focused on introducing union sportsmen to the valuable benefits of the USA as well as its imperative conservation work and commitment to the brotherhood.

“The continued success of the USA depends on active participation and support from organizations such as the Illinois and Ohio AFL-CIOs,” said USA Deputy Director Mike d’Oliveira. “With major Boots on the Ground conservation projects, sporting clays shoots and other USA programs happening in both states, we’re elated to receive such strong support from these communities.”

From the jobsite to the field, the USA is working with partners like the Ohio and Illinois AFL-CIOs toward its goal of uniting active and retired union sportsmen and women into one of the largest sportsmen-based conservation organizations in the country. Built for union sportsmen, by union sportsmen, the USA boasts support from 11 charter unions and the AFL-CIO—allowing them to offer members benefits such as a nationally broadcast, union-dedicated TV show, a quarterly outdoor magazine, chances to win prizes and trips, special discounts on outdoor gear and services and more.

"With more than 74% of union members expressing an interest in hunting, fishing or shooting, the USA offers union members the unique opportunity to connect on a lifestyle level during a time when solidarity is key," said Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan.

Special thanks to Tim Burga (Ohio AFL-CIO President), Jim Watroba (BM/Secretary-Treasurer of IUPAT D.C. 6), Ken Kedula (Director of the BAC OH-KY Administrative D.C.), Michael Carrigan (IL AFL-CIO President), Tim Drea (IL AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer) and Jason Woolard (IBEW Local 702 Business Representative) for their help in bringing these resolutions to fruition.
Lincoln Electric – Proud Supporter of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance
Through the years, my family has built our public waterway dock into an unparalleled fish haven by enhancing it with Christmas trees. Each year, we have a post-Christmas “dock day,” where we lug 20 to 40 Christmas trees down and sink them using ropes and cinder blocks. We’ve been doing this annually for more than a decade, and it has turned my dock into one of the most sure-fire panfish magnets I’ve ever flipped a jig under.

It’s important to check with local and state officials to learn the legality of sinking cover, especially in public, navigable water. In effect, you’re creating freshwater reefs, but in some areas, you may have to request permits for sinking brush.

Christmas trees are ideal for building my sunken panfish castles because I can get a lot of them in a very short time. Fir, pine and spruce trees rot quickly once sunk, but I don’t care because there will be plenty more the following Christmas. Between Christmas and New Year’s Day, most people take down their trees and put them out front for garbage collection. Neighbors who know I want trees put them aside for me.

Be sure to wear gloves for this work, as Christmas trees are full of messy sap. I collect several dozen trees and deposit them near my dock for later sinking. I wait for a cool, clear, calm day, and then get all the help I can from family and friends.

Sinking trees is quite simple, but there is some planning and time involved. You’ll need a sharp knife or two and plenty of sturdy, 1/4-inch diameter rope. I like real hemp, which eventually rots, compared to nylon that will outlive me when discarded in water.
I'm fortunate to have neighbors who love giant Christmas trees, which is great, as one 14-footer is quicker and easier to sink than a pair of 6 footers. Sometimes, with giant trees, cutting them in half facilities the labor of handling, roping and sinking them.

While almost anything heavy can be used for tree and brush anchors, I prefer whole, large building cinder blocks. I've bought them from building supply stores, but more often, I visit construction sites before the designated tree sinking day. Invariably there are damaged cinder blocks, and usually a polite inquiry will lead you to all the broken, unusable blocks you'll need.

While it's been proven conclusively that the higher profile a “reef” is made, the better it is for fish habitat, I sink Christmas trees so they are level on the bottom. I don't want Christmas tree tops sticking above the surface, since it can be a boat hazard. More importantly, I don't want to advertise that I've sunk brush to every angler casting the waterway.

To sink trees horizontally, I securely rope a cinder block at each end of a tree, and two people slide it horizontally off the dock, where it settles quickly to the bottom. With huge trees, it often takes three whole cinder blocks to sink them fast, which is important because I don't want trees drifting away from the dock. I want a tree in an exact spot, so I can locate it easily for fishing. Sometimes with a short tree, small brush clump, or tree top, I use a single cinder block, tie it to the big base of the cover and send it down. I work hard to sink trees tight to dock pilings, beside wooden cross supports and under pier planking—places sportfish ordinarily congregate.

In the frozen north, sinking Christmas trees can be done very easily by dragging them onto winter ice. Make a pile of brush/trees with lines and concrete blocks attached, then wait for the spring thaw to sink the cover. Be sure the spot where you position brush on ice is where you want to sink trees when it thaws.

Every Christmas, I think about how easy it was making brush piles with trees on the frozen lakes of Wisconsin where I lived as a young man. But the extra effort of sinking trees in open water near my home is worthwhile because I can fish my dock cover 12 months of the year—confident that every time I cast a lure or bait a 2-pound crappie may be waiting.
Union Sportsmen Take a Bite for Conservation

USA launches conservation dinner series to raise funds for Boots on the Ground

By Kate Cywinski

This fall, union sportsmen and women and their guests in the Dallas, TX; Glassboro, NJ; and Houston, TX areas had the unique opportunity to dine in the name of conservation during the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance’s first conservation dinner series. Adding to a robust, 25-city sporting clays and trap shooting tour, these dinners allow union sportsmen to come together outside the workplace to discuss important conservation issues and start planning imperative projects in the communities where they live, work and play. Organized by union volunteers in each market, the USA’s three conservation dinners in 2012 form the foundation of a conservation dinner series the USA plans to continue to build across the nation to directly engage more union members in the USA’s conservation mission.

The USA’s 1st Annual Dallas Area Conservation Dinner began the series on Sept. 22 with a packed house of 300 union sportsmen, contractors, leaders and special guests. Just on the heels of that event, the USA headed to New Jersey for the 1st Annual Tri-State Area Conservation Dinner on Sept. 27. Then it was back to the Lone Star State on Oct. 18 for the 1st Annual Texas Gulf Coast Conservation Dinner.

Thanks to the hard work of our union partners, all three events were highly successful in raising funds for the USA. Equally as important, they provided an opportunity to educate attendees about USA’s mission and sign up volunteers for its flagship conservation program, Boots on the Ground (BOTG). BOTG brings together union members willing to volunteer their time and expertise to tackle conservation projects that enhance wildlife habitat, expand and improve hunting, fishing and shooting access, and pass on our outdoor heritage to the next generation.

A portion of the funds raised at each dinner will be used to fund a BOTG project that benefits all hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts in that region. So not only do attendees enjoy great food, camaraderie, giveaways and the chance to win prizes at the dinners, they will get to see and experience the results of conservation projects in their own backyard.

“Every day union sportsmen are making an impact in their communities by educating future generations on the importance of conservation efforts and putting boots on the ground for volunteer projects,” said USA Executive Director Fred Myers. “Hosting these conservation dinners not only helps further that mission but facilitates conversations about important conservation issues among a group of sportsmen and women who have the skills and expertise to immediately enact change.”
When Thorn learned about USA's Boots on the Ground program, she thought a project at Bolsa Chica Wetlands would be a perfect opportunity to get union members and their families involved in a conservation project in their own backyard and educate them about the value of wetlands in the area.

“I hope to get at least 60 to 100 volunteers out for the project. It would be a great way to remind the public that we union members are their neighbors, and we care about the environment and the community we live in. And it’s a great way to teach children about conservation and the spirit of volunteering,” Thorn said. “All hours worked are recorded with the Land Trust and can be used toward any community service hours required by schools, colleges and scout programs.”

Working with the Bolsa Chica Land Trust and its wetland restoration team, union volunteers will plant native grasses, clear brush, remove invasive weeds and perform general trail maintenance to improve wildlife habitat as well as recreational opportunities for both locals and the many tourists who visit the area. Thorn hopes that this Boots on the Ground project will inspire many local union members to continue volunteering throughout the year.

“I encourage anyone who is interested in organizing their own Boots on the Ground project to go for it,” Thorn said. “It doesn’t matter if you live in the city or the country; there are tons of conservation projects in your backyard. And it doesn’t matter how big or small the project—everything makes a difference.”

If you're interested in getting involved in or organizing a Boots on the Ground project, please contact Tim Bindl at (608) 397-1023 or timb@unionsportsmen.org.
USA and the Roofers Inspire Minnesota Youth

Union volunteers team up for Boots on the Ground Get Youth Outdoors Day

by Laura Bliss Morris

Nearly 150 union members, shooting enthusiasts and other guests—including Roofers President Kinsey Robinson, Governor Mark Dayton and Attorney General Lori Swanson—teamed up to support conservation at the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance’s (USA) 2nd Annual Roofers International Twin Cities Sporting Clays Shoot and Get Youth Outdoors Day on September 15 and 16.

Raising more than $62,000—nearly double the amount raised at the 2011 event—the shoot also served as the perfect opportunity to introduce skilled union volunteers to the impact they can make on conservation projects in the communities where they live, work and play.

The day after the shoot, 12 volunteers from the Roofers, Bricklayers, Laborers, St. Cloud Building Trades, MN Department of Natural Resources and St. Cloud ATV Club united to host Get Youth Outdoors Day—a Boots on the Ground project aimed at inspiring a love of the great outdoors in Minnesota’s youth.

Twenty-two youth, ages 9-17, received hunting and firearm safety training and supervised hands-on introductions to trap shooting, rifle shooting and varying Minnesota terrains via an ATV simulator.

Help Put More Boots on the Ground

Donate Today!

With more than six million AFL-CIO union sportsmen and women across North America, we can confront the issues of dwindling hunting and fishing access and diminished wildlife habitat head on and reconnect future generations with the outdoor heritage we hold dear. Your donation will make possible more beneficial projects like our Take Kids Fishing Day and Get Youth Outdoors Day. When you make a donation at one of these levels, we’ll send you a special thank-you gift for making a difference for hunters and anglers of today and tomorrow.

Donate Today!
Visit www.unionsportsmen.org/donate or call 877-872-2211 (toll-free).

Mike Ganz of BAC Local 1 teaches youth about wildlife.

Because so many union members supported this year’s events, each child was able to receive personal instruction at the patterning and rifle shooting stations, which were managed by Mike Ganz from the St. Cloud Building Trades.

And thanks to the guidance of Roofers President Kinsey Robinson and his wife, Mona, 21 out of 22 participants broke a target at the trap shooting station.

With sportsmen contributing nearly $2.9 billion every year for conservation, and the outdoor industry boasting 600,000 U.S. jobs, it’s critical that the USA and its partners continue recruiting and mentoring the next generation of sportsmen and women.

If you’d like to get involved with a shooting fundraiser or conservation project in your area, please contact USA Director of USA Events & Fundraising Nate Whiteman at 440-867-2732 or natew@unionsportsmen.org.

USA and the Roofers Inspire Minnesota Youth

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by Laura Bliss Morris

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• Best of Brotherhood Outdoors DVD ($10 value)
• USA auto & hard hat decals

$45 Conservation Supporter
• USA logo Buck knife ($30 value)
• USA logo ball cap ($20 value)
• 1-year subscription to Field & Stream ($10 value)
• Best of Brotherhood Outdoors DVD ($10 value)
• USA auto & hard hat decals

$75 Sporting Heritage Supporter
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• USA logo Buck knife ($30 value)
• Best of Brotherhood Outdoors DVD ($10 value)
• USA auto & hard hat decals

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Survive Deer Season’s End Days

By Doug Howlett

Late season can be tough on a deer hunter. The weather’s colder, the rut is over, deer have been pressured and, quite honestly, for the hard hunting among us, we’re getting tired both physically and mentally. But don’t give up yet. The good news is late season is when some of the biggest bucks fall each year. Here are five strategies to help you pull that rabbit from your hat and still make this a season you’ll never forget.

**Go Green or Grain**
It’s all about the food, and that is your first priority this time of year. Focus on green food plots planted with late-season brassicas such as turnips, rape or kale or late-harvested agricultural crops of corn, soybeans and alfalfa where waste grains litter the ground. Deer will bed close to these areas. In the case of still standing corn, they’ll bed right in it because they’ve been pressured hard from hunters and know that to travel far wastes precious energy and makes them susceptible to danger. Key on food-rich openings bordered with thick brush, such as a grown-up cutover, tangles of honeysuckle and briar or other cover where deer can walk less than 50 yards between bedding and food. Set up a trail camera or timed plot cam, pinpoint when and where deer are entering the field and, when conditions are right, slip in as close as you dare for a shot.

**Make the Most of Mast**
With food in mind, those stands of white oaks that were dropping acorns early in the season may still have plenty of nuts lying beneath the leaves, too. And with many of these areas back in the woods, bucks feel safer and may move when there is still ample shooting light. Scout out your property’s hottest mast producing spots from early in the season and look for sign that deer have been digging among the leaves or trampling snow in search of the high protein feed. Hang a stand in the spot with the most disturbance and sit tight early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Deep woods stands over mast may have gone ignored in the evenings early in the season, but now they’re a good bet.

**Putting It into Action**
Grab a satellite image of your hunting land and put an X on every stand location or area where hunters have spent time this season. You’ll notice a few bare spots among the ink that went overlooked. That’s where your bucks will be hiding. Now you have to hunt them. Check for well-used deer trails entering these spots that lead toward food, wait until the wind is right, hang a stand and sit it looking to score in the first or final moments of shooting light.

**Get Nasty**
Watch the weather for a huge, nasty, snow-dropping, wind-spawning Alberta clipper-type storm front to move in, and you can bet it’s going to put deer on their feet. The nastier the better, so call in sick if you have to, find a shooting house on a good food source or put on your Heater Body Suit to stay warm and do your best to camp out all day. These big fronts are the one time late in the season where deer movement can match that of the rut.

**Push the Bush**
When all else fails, gather up a few buddies and organize a few well-planned drives. We do this the final day or two of deer season on my Virginia farm, and it’s almost always good for putting a big buck or two on the hoof and in front of a gun. In fact, for those bucks that have gone nocturnal due to deer pressure, it may be the only way you’ll ever see them during shooting hours.

When other hunters have tagged out or given up, your perseverance combined with a strategic approach can pay off big. And what better way to wrap up the year or begin a new one than a new wall hanger and a freezer full of meat.
Hunting for a Holiday Goose

"Get 'em, boys!"

At these three simple words, our little cornfield exploded in furious action as four hunters burst from well-concealed layout blinds with shotguns barking. In less than a few seconds, it was over. Of the eight Canada geese that came in low, sailing into the decoy spread like a squadron of bombers, six fell to our anti-aircraft fire. The remaining two circled the spread at distance, gaining altitude, wondering, I imagine, why the other half dozen weren’t joining them. Soon, they disappeared into early morning haze as two Labs, Deke and Chip, collected the bounty.

The four of us—two railroaders, Brian and Dana; a small-town grocer, Trevor; and me, a lowly hack—form a loose collective we like to call Platte River Goose Control. From November through February, we spend what little free time we can muster staking out the fields and meadows lining Nebraska’s North Platte River, hunting the many thousands of geese that use the shallow waterway as a rest area on their migration south. Though there’s not a chance of actually controlling the burgeoning population of birds, we do okay, managing to scratch out a limit most days.

The key to our success is staying mobile. Where most hunters in the area hunt from semi-permanent underground pits or conventional waterfowl blinds, we sacrifice that comfort (and the accompanying hot breakfast) for the increased odds of setting up exactly where the geese want to be. Taking the guns to the geese can be a gear-heavy proposition. Brian and Trevor pull enclosed trailers stuffed with full-bodied and shell decoys, layout blinds, tubs of camouflage grass and various other accoutrements. Often, the early morning set-up takes longer than actual hunt, but a little hard work goes a long way in all but guaranteeing success.

To the uninitiated, the idea of hunting from layout blinds can seem a bit Spartan. I grew up gunning geese and ducks from heated blinds, so I was skeptical at first too. Now I’m completely converted. When you dress appropriately, hunting from layout blinds is not only tolerable, but downright comfortable. And, if you don’t want to invest in a layout blind, a foam pad and some leafy camouflage material is a suitable substitute. The important part is being “on the X” as mobile waterfowlers like to say. Set up in just the right spot, and sometimes it seems like all you have to do is swat the birds from the sky.

As for the large amount of gear required, solo hunters and smaller groups shouldn’t be discouraged. In truth, as long as you’re where the geese want to be, all it takes is as little as a dozen or two goose decoys to bring them in. And, with a tank of gas and a good plat or property ownership map, you can follow flocks to where they’re feeding and find out which farmer owns the property. From there, it’s up to you and your friendly demeanor to secure permission for the next morning’s hunt, when it will be you shouting that familiar three-word phrase.

"Get 'em, boys!"

By David Draper
Glistening roast goose makes a mouthwatering centerpiece for Christmas dinner, but achieving the right results from a lean, wild goose takes a bit of care. The secret is brining the bird beforehand and steaming it in the oven, which keeps the dark, dense meat moist throughout the cooking process.

**Brine**
1 cup kosher salt
1 cup brown sugar
2 gallons cold water

**Ingredients**
1 (8-10 lb.) Canada goose, dressed and plucked
4 cups of prepared stuffing of your choice
4 tbs. butter, melted
4 tbs. olive oil
Kosher salt and ground black pepper
2-3 cups chicken stock

**Preparation**
*The day before:* mix 1 cup sugar and 1 cup kosher salt with two gallons of cold water. Whisk until everything is dissolved and the water is clear. Submerge goose in brine, let rest overnight in the refrigerator.
*The day of:* Remove goose from brine, pat dry inside and out with paper towels and let rest until it comes to room temperature. Preheat oven to 400°.

Season cavity with salt and pepper to taste. Pack stuffing firmly inside cavity. Mix melted butter and olive oil. Brush liberally over all exterior surfaces of the bird. Season skin with kosher salt and black pepper.

Place goose in roasting pan and pour in stock, reserving ½ cup to add later in the cooking process if necessary. Seal roaster tightly with aluminum foil or lid and place in the preheated oven. After 90 minutes, remove the foil or lid and cook another 20-30 minutes or until a digital thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh reads 155-160°. Transfer the goose to a platter and let rest 10-15 minutes before carving.
Lessons from a Wild Goose Chase for Wisconsin Walleye

A little planning can make any public lands fishing trip a success

By Christen Duxbury, TRCP

I have a desk job working to educate sportsmen about the importance of conservation policy, so you can be sure most of my non-work hours are spent outdoors. It's rare that I get to unplug and explore for days on end, so when I got the chance to head up to the North Woods of Wisconsin to do some fishing this summer, I jumped at the opportunity.

In the weeks leading up to my trip, I had dreams of walleye, perch and Muskie, and the sound of spinning reels woke me on a few occasions. As my departure date grew closer, one fish started to dominate my thoughts: the walleye. Something about these green, spiny, marble-eyed monsters called my name. I was determined to catch one.

The northern region of Wisconsin is prime fishing territory with tons of public access. We headed to a cabin on a lake that's part of the Northern Highlands American Legion State Forest. The area offered walk-in campsites with canoe launches, neon fish flickered in the window of most every bar and the gas stations offered bait vending machines. I felt like I had died and gone to fishing heaven.

On our first day “Up North,” I was desperate to fish. I love a good road trip, but I was plain tired of being stuck in the car, and my leg began twitching at the first lake I saw. I spied a fishy looking creek off the side of Highway 51. I pulled onto the gravel shoulder, pieced together my rod and sprang down the hill.

Most of the places I fish back east require long drives down country roads, muddy parking lots full of cars and anglers around every stream bend. The idea that I could pull my car to the side of a paved county road and hop out to fish public waters was revolutionary. I was the only angler in sight and quickly found out why. Yellow signs greeted me from the banks of the creek. They read: Caution! Foot-hold traps and rotating jaw traps have been set in the area to mitigate damage due to animals. Not wanting to start my vacation by losing a toe to a rusty trap, I got back in the car to search for better waters.

What followed was a comical few hours of desperate searching, crowded docks, snagged lines, an I-got-here-first confrontation and plenty of “No Trespassing” signs. I eventually found a nice, little public lake with a wide bank where, on the last cast of the evening, I hooked my first walleye.

As hectic as all that running around was, I learned from my mistakes that first day. And, in the end, I had the trip of the summer, bagging plenty of walleye, trout, perch and sunfish. Here are a few lessons I learned that made for some great days of fishing:

1) Get a good map. Stop by a Cabela’s, Bass Pro Shops or a local outfitter and pick up a regional map. That 50-state atlas that’s been sitting in your car since 2002 isn’t going to be very helpful for finding good places to fish. And that smart phone of yours probably won’t work in the back woods, so get a detailed, local map.

2) Talk to the locals. You can learn more about where to go and what to use for bait and tackle in five minutes of conversation with a local than you can in five hours of Internet research. It takes humility to walk up to someone and admit you don't know a lick about catching a walleye, but that’s the easiest way to learn, and it’s a great way to meet people. So if you see a ranger station, visitor center or bait shop, stop and ask questions.

3) Hire a guide. If you can afford one, get a guide. Not only will you be pumping dollars back into the local economy, you’ll get to fish the best places for the best fish in the area. Trust me, these guys and gals do their homework and will get you onto fish come hell or high water.

4) Don’t assume what works in your home waters works everywhere. I’d wager that five percent of what I know about fishing in Virginia is transferrable to fishing in Wisconsin. The sooner you figure out what tools and knowledge you need to fish in the area you’re visiting, the quicker you can get out on the water – and the more success you’ll have.

5) Get a license. It’s the law, and your fees and taxes go toward maintaining all the great public places to hunt and fish.

In short, here’s what I learned – aside from the fact that Wisconsinites are the nicest darn people around. With a little prior planning, you can make any public lands fishing trip a success.

Christen Duxbury is the communications manager for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, a national conservation organization that works collaboratively with its partners, like the USA, to maintain America’s hunting and fishing heritage.
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The New Year Brings An All New Brotherhood Outdoors

Season 4 premieres Jan. 6 with new hosts and new look at a new time

By Kate Cywinski

The USA’s award-winning outdoor TV show, Brotherhood Outdoors, will kick off the New Year with a brand new season full of surprises to knock your Christmas stockings off.

In its fourth season of taking everyday union sportsmen on extraordinary adventures, the unique series will premiere on Sunday, Jan. 6 at 11 a.m. (ET) with episodes airing each week during the new Sunday morning timeslot. Joining union guests on each episode will be Daniel Lee Martin and Julie McQueen, Brotherhood Outdoors’ dynamic new host duo with nearly 50 years of combined worldwide hunting and fishing experience and a knack for production to bring a fresh perspective to the show.

“We’re excited to introduce Brotherhood Outdoors viewers to Daniel Lee and Julie in season four,” said USA Executive Director Fred Myers. “Not only are the two avid sportsmen and quality entertainers, but they understand and support the USA’s conservation mission and are truly passionate about sharing our guests’ stories with the world.”

From the sleek new look of the Brotherhood Outdoors logo to the original graphics and innovative maps, viewers can expect a lot of exciting changes in season four. What won’t change is the show’s focus on everyday union sportsmen and women and their commitment to their communities and the preservation of our outdoor heritage.

Electricians, boilermakers, laborers and many other deserving union workers will join Martin and McQueen for outfitted North American hunting and fishing adventures or act as the guide—showing off their skills and favorite hunting and fishing pursuits. Through it all, viewers will get an intimate, behind-the-scenes glimpse into the lives of these hardworking Americans.

“What I love about Brotherhood Outdoors is that it’s not just about big horns and monster fish,” said Martin. “It’s about the traditions and family ties that bind America’s blue-collar sportsmen together and showcasing the relationships that can be fortified out in the woods and on the water.”

A staple in Sportsman Channel’s ‘Made in America’ programming, the new season of Brotherhood Outdoors will begin with a Vancouver Island black bear hunt featuring Mark Spreadborough, an HVAC Mechanic and member of United Association Local 290 from Kalama, WA. In this emotional roller-coaster of an adventure, Spreadborough will attempt to harvest a bear with his great-grandfather’s 1895 Winchester rifle made famous by Theodore Roosevelt, who called it Big Medicine.

Other union members will bugle for bull elk in Nevada, shoot arrows at flying Asian carp in Illinois, stalk mule deer and coues deer in Arizona, reel in Atlantic stripers and much more in what’s sure to be the most adrenaline-packed season yet. Tune in to join the fun, and remember, you can be the next guest on Brotherhood Outdoors. But that’s only if you apply – www.BrotherhoodOutdoors.tv.

Presented by Bank of Labor, Brotherhood Outdoors is also sponsored by the following union and contractor partners: Employee Benefits Systems, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, National Electrical Contractors Association and United Association/International Training.
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Co-Host Daniel Lee Martin
Co-Host Julie McQueen

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Union Printer Applies Meticulous Craft Attitude to the Outdoors

By Mike Matejka, Great Plains Laborers’ District Council

Today’s hunters have so many sophisticated weapons, tracking devices and other tools at their disposal that you wonder how sportsmen harvested game 200 years ago.

That’s a challenge David Darnall experiences first-hand as a muzzleloader rifle hunter and mountain man re-enactor. A member of Communication Workers International Typographical Union Local 177, David’s day job is running a union print shop—Darnall Printing & Signmaking—with his wife, Lorraine, in Bloomington, Ill.

While the ink is drying and the presses are quiet, the two escape to their 84-acre spread. On fall weekends, you’ll find David at rendezvous and other events, where he’s often nicknamed “Preacher,” describing outdoor skills to children.

“I was born 150 years too late,” David joked. Born in Germany, he grew up as an “army brat,” spending his formative years at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., where the rolling Ozark hills quickly filled his days. In his youth, the family relocated to Bloomington.

When he’s “in character” at the Sugar Grove Nature Center in Funk’s Grove, Ill., he’s dressed in leather garments and moccasins he made himself, often adorned with a coyote fur hat. Amongst his artifacts is a tomahawk his great uncle “Cricket” Hulvey made. Hulvey was a renowned tomahawk thrower, and family lore is that he demonstrated his talent for British Royalty.

All stages of preparing a hide are on display for visitors along with antlers, bones and hides for the children to touch. They also demonstrate how to locate native prairie plants and, sometimes, show the children how to harvest them.

Back home, if David and Lorraine really want to escape, they head into their wooded property, where David is building a log cabin using authentic tools. So far, it consists of a wood foundation and a few courses of logs covered by a canvas tent over the 14’ by 16’ area. The wood stove inside makes for a nice “telephone free zone” to relax in, and they often spend winter evenings reading frontier diaries and memoirs, trying to research daily life in the 19th century.

When it’s time to hunt, David goes out in the woods with a 54 caliber Hawkins muzzleloader that he built from a kit. The gun, which has an iron sight and a range of about 100 yards, is accurate if handled properly. David usually uses about 100 grains of powder with a 54 caliber round ball.

“It’s just a different attitude with a muzzleloader,” David said. “You know you’ve only got one shot. With modern iron, with a shotgun, you have three, and you always have that in the back of your mind. But with a muzzleloader, you really have to think about your shot. It makes you a better shooter. You’ve got to prep yourself, establish your cadence and be conscious of your breathing and mentality because, when the moment comes, you’ve got to be ready.”
David remembers his first deer, a buck, he took with his muzzleloader. It was a crisp Illinois autumn day. Like any good hunter, David was moving slowly through the woods and open prairie, pausing for 15 minutes at a time to scan the horizon. The large male moved into view.

“I stood quietly,” he relates, “trying to move my rifle up as slowly as possible. He looked up and started to pick me up. I let off my shot and, of course, he saw the powder cloud. I couldn’t pick up a visible wound, though I was convinced I had hit him. He stood there looking at me. I started to reload, wanting to try a second shot, but not frighten the deer. I slowly put in my powder, seated the ball and started to bring up the ramrod. At that point, he turned to move and started to stagger. The animal made three reckless lurches and fell over. My ball had gone through the rib cage, penetrated the heart and came out the other side. It was as clean a shot as possible.”

David’s approach to hunting and the outdoors is the same meticulous craft attitude that marks Darnall Printing as a small, quality printer. A good printer knows quality doesn’t come easy. Satisfying the customer means the right mix of ink and water, a clean paper feed and the press parts moving in well-oiled unison.

A true craft worker applies his or her technical skills and knowledge to problem solving to ensure a job well done. Outdoors, there is no customer to satisfy, only the self. And for David, that self-satisfaction comes with a gun he made himself, moving about the Illinois prairie as a trapper would have when Abraham Lincoln was just a babe.
**Beavertail Final Attack Portable Pit Blind**

To get birds, you've got to be able to get to the birds. Whether you're hunting shallow water, marshes or flooded fields, Beavertail's Final Attack Portable Pit Blind is a great addition to your hunting arsenal and likely the most versatile sneak boat you'll ever own. With its ultra-low profile, it sits so low in the water you'll have birds landing around you before you're done putting out your decoys. Yet it still has ample room for you and your gear. If paddling isn't your thing, the Final Attack has a built-in transom, so you can easily attach a motor. And if water isn't your thing, it has built-in wheels that make it a cinch to move across dry land for an excellent pit blind or portable field blind. Constructed from 100% custom compounded polyethylene, this blind is built to take abuse, without taking on water. And it's light enough for one person to lift to the roof of a car, so not having a hunting buddy is no reason not to get out there and fill your bag.

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**Carhartt Detroit Duck Jacket**

Whether you work outside for a living or spend a lot of time in the garage, barn or woods, you need a rugged jacket that can stand up to rain, snow, wind, mud—whatever Mother Nature throws at you. And because you work hard for your money, it better stand up to the elements for a long time. Developed especially for today's worker, Carhartt's Duck Detroit Jacket fits the bill. Part of Carhartt's Made in the USA line featuring some of their most legendary products, the jacket is constructed of rugged, 12-ounce 100% cotton duck tightly woven for wind and snag resistance. Plus it has blanket lining in the body and quilted-nylon lining in the sleeves for warmth and comfort. Its snap-adjustable waist and cuffs enhance fit for greater mobility, which is important when you're working with your hands. The outer shell is treated to repel water, and it's designed for an optional snap on hood, which comes in handy in windy and cold conditions. Put all those features together, and it's no wonder it's a staple in the closet of so many hardworking Americans.

[www.carhartt.com](http://www.carhartt.com)

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**Hard Impact Technologies Penetrator**

If you're a bowhunter, no doubt you've spent countless hours sitting in your stand or blind, waiting and hoping that of all paths that deer can take, it will walk within 20 or 30 yards of you. When it finally does, you want your shot to count. New to the arrow scene, Hard Impact Technologies introduced a whole new take on compound and crossbow arrows. Aptly called the Penetrator, this arrow is designed with patented Weight Transferring Technology that's deployed inside the arrow shaft at the moment of impact for deeper penetration with greater kinetic energy into your down-range target. To engage the transferring system, you simply point the arrow up before placing it into the crossbow or compound bow. The system is housed near the front of the arrow shaft, providing pinpoint accuracy and more stabilized arrow flight. The Penetrator is the brainchild of union elevator mechanic (IUEC Local 32) Jeff Price. He and IUEC Local 32 Business Representative Scott Russell formed Hard Impact Technologies, developed the product and continue to run the Atlanta-based company.

[www.hardimpacttech.com](http://www.hardimpacttech.com)
Nature Blinds TreeBlind

If you’re a whitetail hunter, you’ve probably hunted from 10-30 feet up a tree at least a time or two, but have you ever hunted from inside a tree? Designed by a Hollywood set designer, Nature Blind’s new TreeBlind is shaking up the outdoor industry with a blind that looks just like a real tree. This weatherproof, soundproof, scent-proof masterpiece is shaped like a tree and has a bark texture surface that looks and feels like the real thing, so don’t be surprised if you catch a buck rubbing your blind while you’re inside! While the outside blends into natural surroundings, its 6’10” tall interior is a far cry from the hollow of a dead tree with its 360 degree views, carpeted floors and silent magnetic sliding, one-way-view windows. The fully-enclosed, lockable, polyurethane shell and floor to ceiling seamless insulation keep the weather and critters out and keep you comfortable for an all-day sit. Roomy enough for two to three hunters, TreeBlinds are hand-made in Texas with the durability to last for decades.

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USA’s 2012 Shooting Tour Breaks Clays and Records

Shooting program draws more shooters and raises more money for conservation

by Kate Cywinski

USA’s 2012 Shooting Tour, which wraps up on Dec. 1 in Southern California, has broken plenty of records along with hundreds of thousands of clays while introducing the shooting sports to youth and adults and setting the stage for a number of conservation projects. All in all, it’s been one heck of a year!

Since the USA held its first three sporting clays shoots in 2009, the program has continued to get bigger and better each year—drawing more shooters and raising more money to support USA’s conservation mission.

Nearly 2,000 union members, partners and guests from southern Florida all the way up to Alaska participated in USA shoots this year. Many of them got to attend a USA event for the first time thanks to six inaugural shoots in Louisiana, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Arizona and Missouri.

Thrilled to see more youth shooters among the participants, we introduced a High Over All Youth trophy and were able to award it to a young shooter at almost every event. We were also honored to welcome three teams of Wounded Warriors to our Capital Area and Kansas City shoots.

Thanks to everyone who attended USA’s shooting events and all the sponsors who recognize the value of this union-dedicated conservation organization, USA’s 2012 shooting tour raised more than $900,000. Nearly a million dollars!

That’s nearly double what USA’s 25-shoot tour raised just two years ago. For helping us achieve such dramatic growth, we have to thank the AFL-CIO, Boilermakers, IAMAW, UA, Roofers, IUEC, IUPAT, Chicago Federation of Labor, Illinois AFL-CIO and Chicago and Cook County BCTC for stepping up as title sponsors of eight USA shoots and working tirelessly to secure sponsors and participants.

Their efforts paid off. USA’s Kansas City shoot raised 27% more than in 2011, while revenue from our Twin Cities shoot nearly doubled from last year. Our Illinois and St. Louis shoots were two of our largest grossing inaugural events while our Capital Area shoot broke the record to become the largest grossing event in the history of USA’s shooting program. And our Las Vegas shoot was combined with a conservation dinner and Ruger Rimfire Challenge for a 3-day extravaganza that not only raised additional funds for conservation projects but also enhanced the experience for those who attended.

While raising money for the USA’s conservation efforts, USA shoots also act as building blocks to many Boots on the Ground (BOTG) projects, which bring together skilled union volunteers to improve and enhance public hunting and fishing access, conserve wildlife habitat and pass on our outdoor heritage to the next generation.

USAs Puget Sound shoot is a good example. It led to a BOTG project where 40 members of Painters District Council #5 and Plumbers and Pipefitters Locals 26 and 32 constructed large gates for hunter walk-in access roads to help the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintain the quality of private lands for continued public access.

A UA member who attended the USA’s 2011 Southern California shoot is spearheading a BOTG project at Bolsa Chica Wetlands where union volunteers will remove invasive species, clean the trail and undertake other hands-on projects (see page 9).

And the USA’s 2011 Minnesota shoot was the foundation for Get Youth Outdoors Day in September that promoted the shooting sports as well as safe techniques for handling guns and driving ATVs to youth (see page 10).

As the USA celebrates five years, it’s impressive to see all it has accomplished in such a short time, but preserving wildlife habitat and improving hunting and fishing access is no small task. There is much left to be done, and the USA is only as strong as its membership.

The successes of our 2012 shooting tour and the conservation projects they inspired demonstrate the strength of our members and supporters, and we can’t wait to see where 2013 takes us. We hope to see you on the shooting course next year.
UPCOMING USA EVENTS

For a complete list of events and to register visit: www.UnionSportsmen.org/events

Saturday, January 12
Southern Florida Sporting Clays Shoot
Sunrise, FL

Saturday, January 26
Central Florida Sporting Clays Shoot
Lakeland, FL

Saturday, February 9
Louisiana State Sporting Clays Shoot
Natchitoches, LA

Saturday, February 16
Houston Area Sporting Clays Shoot
Houston, TX

Saturday, March 2
Dallas/Ft. Worth Building Trades
DFW Metroplex Sporting Clays Shoot
Dallas, TX

Saturday, March 16
Nashville Area Sporting Clays Shoot
Nashville, TN

Saturday, April 13
Southern Illinois Sporting Clays Shoot
Sparta, IL

Saturday, April 27
Baltimore Area Trap Shoot
Carney, MD

Saturday, May 4
SMART New Jersey Sporting Clays Shoot
Port Republic, NJ

Saturday, May 18
New York Sporting Clays Shoot
Yaphank, NY

Friday, May 31
AFL-CIO Capital Area Sporting Clays Shoot
Queenstown, MD

For information on sponsoring, attending or helping organize an event near you, contact:

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Hey Kids – find out how much you know about deer by taking this quiz. Write your answers on the form below and mail it in by January 15, 2013, and you’ll be entered in a drawing among all participants for a Ruger 10/22 Compact rifle. For some additional fun – test your parents or grandparents to find out if you know more about deer than they do. You can check your answers with the key on the bottom of the page. Contest open to youth ages 5-16. Parent/guardian of the winner must accept the firearm for the youth.

USA Kids Deer Quiz

1. A deer can smell a human from how far away?
   a. 100 feet   b. half a mile   c. 2 miles

2. Do deer look up? In other words, could they see you in a treestand?
   a. Yes   b. No

3. Can deer swim?
   a. Yes   b. No

4. Which bucks make the earliest rubs?
   a. oldest   b. youngest   c. spikes   d. all deer rub their antlers at the same time

5. When are whitetail deer most active
   a. lunch time   b. mid-afternoon   c. night and early morning

6. What is the most accurate way to tell how old a deer is?
   a. teeth   b. points on its antlers   c. size of its tracks   d. weight

7. Which of the following are whitetail deer tracks?
   a.  
   b.  
   c.  
   d.  

8. What is the best place to shoot a deer for a clean, quick kill?
   a. butt   b. head   c. right behind the shoulder   d. neck

9. Which of the following should be on every hunter’s checklist?
   a. decoys   b. arrows   c. hunting license   d. shotgun shells

10. Which of the following actions are acceptable for an ethical deer hunt?
    a. To kill a buck outside of deer season because it’s the biggest one you’ve ever seen.
    b. To take shot at a deer standing behind a big tree just in case you can hit it.
    c. To use a gun during archery season because you haven’t gotten a deer with your bow.
    d. None of the above. An ethical deer hunter obeys hunting laws and regulations.

Kid’s Quiz Answers: 1-b, 2-a, 3-a, 4-a, 5-c, 6-a, 7-c, 8-c, 9-c, 10-d
Air Rifles
for Backyard Plinking
to Olympic Training

The surefire, classic Christmas gift for any good boy or girl

By Dave Hurteau

This year, get your shooter the one surefire, can’t-miss, classic Christmas gift. Get an air rifle. With so many models available today, ranging from $20 to more than $2,000, it’s easy to find the perfect gun for any good boy or girl, young or old, novice or expert. Low-powered rifles are perfect for safe backyard plinking. Mid-velocity models can take out back-forty small game. Meanwhile, the highest-powered guns are serious shooters that shine at the range and, in some cases, pack enough wallop to take down mid-sized game. Here’s how to figure out which air gun is right for your shooter.

Pellet Power

Before looking at specific models, it’s important to have a basic understanding of the three main types of air-rifle power sources: CO2, pneumatic and spring-power.

CO2 air guns are powered by a small canister of compressed gas that lasts for about 50 shots, and they have two big advantages. First, you don’t have to manually pump or cock the gun, and second, this system allows for semiautomatic fire. On the downside, CO2 guns tend to be less powerful than pump or spring guns, and the cost of replacing the CO2 cartridge adds up. This system is fantastic for fast-paced plinking but is a bit underpowered for most hunting.

Most pneumatic rifles are pump-action, powered by a lever—usually near the fore-end. The more pumps, the faster the BB or pellet travels. Though you have to manually pump these guns between each shot, it allows you to vary the power. Pneumatic guns are typically affordable and capable of 700-800 fps, fast enough for small-game hunting. At the very cutting edge of pneumatic guns, however, is the PCP or pre-charged pneumatic system, which uses a pre-filled air tank to deliver about 30 semi-auto shots per charge at a blazing 1,000 to 1,200 fps or more.
Spring-powered air rifles use a coiled, steel spring to compress air in a chamber. You must manually cock the spring, either by breaking open the barrel or by working a cocking lever, but you only do so once to achieve maximum power. Springers are typically capable of 1,000 fps or better. The only downside is that most are single-shot guns. But as a group, spring guns are well-crafted, serious shooters that can deliver excellent accuracy.

And now, let's go shopping. Here's a breakdown of the type of air rifles you can expect to find at various price ranges.

**$1 to $50**
Some of the most popular and classic air rifles fall into this price range. The 350-fps Daisy Red Ryder Carbine ($33; daisy.com) has introduced more Americans to shooting than any other rifle. For a few dollars more, Crossman's classic Pumpmaster 760 ($44; crossman.com) and Daisy's 880 ($45; pyramydair.com) get you into the 600-fps range. And for $50 on the nose, you can find Crossman's 625-fps, semi-auto, CO2-powered 1077 ($50; airgundepot.com).

**$51 to $100**
This range buys you a little more power and a lot more style in the pump category, including the 750-fps Crossman 2100B ($89; crossman.com), the equally fast Daisy Powerline ($84; daisy.com), and the 600-fps Crossman M4-177 Tactical Pump which looks and feels like a real M4 ($73; amazon.com). Just about $100 gets you into the break-barrel springer category with the 525-fps Gamo Recon Whisper ($90; pyramydair.com), which features an ultra-ergonomic stock, excellent trigger and 4x scope.

**$101 to $300**
Now we are talking serious air guns, including the top CO2 guns, as well as new PCPs, springers, and Nitro Piston models. Top guns include the 1,200-fps Cossman Nitro Venom Dusk ($150; pyramydair.com), the 1,300 fps, gas-piston Gamo Bone Collector Bull Whisper with scope ($215; airgundepot.com), the beautifully made Benjamin Trail NP Hardwood .22 Cal with scope and walnut thumbhole stock ($194; airgundepot.com), the classic-looking 1,000-fps Beeman Elkhorn break-barrel spring gun with 3-9x32 scope and RS2 trigger ($240; beeman.com), and the Hammerli 850 CO2 Magnum ($290; airgunstyle.com) billed as the most powerful CO2 rifle in the world, with an 88-gram AirSource cartridge that fires 250 shots at 754 fps.

**$301 and Up**
This category begins with fast-shooting, highly accurate, beautifully finished guns and ranges into precision-made rifles sporting free-floating barrels and adjustable triggers designed for Olympic training. Good choices at the lower end include the ultra-quiet 1,000–fps Remington NPSS .22 Nitro Piston with digital camo and 3-9x40 scope ($320; airgundepot.com), the handsomely stocked, PCP-powered, 1,100-fps Benjamin Marauder ($470; cabelas.com), and the futuristic, blazing-fast, PCP, 1,450-fps Airforce Condor .177 Caliber Air Rifle with 2-16x50 scope ($766; amazon.com). From this point on, you are looking at ultra-accurate match rifles, such as the top-of-the-line .177, 12-ft.lb, Air Arms EV2 ($2,000; topairguns.com) or the insanely cool, straight-out-of-Terminator Salvation Anschutz 9003 Premium S2 Precise Air Rifle ($3,750; pyramydair.com), just in case you have an extra four grand lying around and want your good little boy or girl to start training for the 2016 Games.

These last examples represent what has changed most about air guns in recent years—that is, the increasing availability of high-end, sophisticated, hyperaccurate rifles. But just as important is what hasn't changed. Air guns still do what they did so well when you and I were kids, in fact, probably better than ever. They introduce youngsters to shooting and hunting, they teach safety and sportsmanship, and they bring us together with our kids for quality time in the outdoors.

*This year, get your shooter the one surefire, can’t-miss, classic Christmas gift. Get an air rifle.*
Share your best shots with your brothers and sisters of the USA, and you could win a Buck knife engraved with the USA logo. Visit www.UnionSportsmen.org/photos to check out additional photos and submit your own.

Abby Christy, granddaughter of Painters Local 246 member Ralph Southern, reeled in this 3-lb. bass and is on her way to being a fisherwoman.

R. Tim Samaniego, a member of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 776 from Lima, OH, poses proudly with his 6-year-old granddaughter, Destiny, and the whitetail deer she shot with a crossbow in Vinton County.

Matt Feder, a member of Fire Fighters Local 425 Wisconsin Rapids, harvested his first black bear on Wisconsin’s opening day with the help of friend and fellow fire fighter Bob Barteck.

Tom Moxley, a retired member of Ironworkers Local 433 from Cerritos, CA, harvested this impressive elk in Nevada with a Remington 700 BDL 7mmMag at 200 yards.

Ken Drzendidowski of Ironworkers Local 21 (left) and John Lukowski (middle) and Butch Serefko (right) of Steamfitters & Plumber Local 464 show off the silver salmon they caught in Alaska’s Kenai River with Long Live the Kings outfitters.
Karlee Ketelboeter, 15-year-old daughter of Elevator Constructor Local 132 member Steve Ketelboeter, shot her first bear in northern Wisconsin using a 308 Winchester. The bear weighed 220-lbs.

Glenn Pardo, a member of Electrical Workers Local 728 from Ft. Lauderdale, FL, took his father fishing for his birthday and landed this 44-in. snook in Stuart, FL. They released the snook to fight another day!

Dan Riley, a member of Painters Local 861 from Harrisonville, MO, and his son, River, enjoyed the scenic view from Deer Mountain Trail in Rocky Mountain National Park. Dan spent the day hiking with River and his daughter, Brook, and they made it to the summit, above 10,000 ft.

Winner will receive a Summit Treestand!

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