Trout on the Rocks
YOUR GUIDE TO FLYFISHING POCKET WATER FOR TROPHY BROWNS AND RAINBOWS

POPPER TRICKS FOR LARGEMOUTH BASS

THE BEST BAIT RIG FOR MONSTER CATS

HOW TO KILL A CALL-SHY GOBBLER

FIND THE MOREL MOTHER LODE

SPRING FEVER
12 TACTICS TO HUNT AND FISH LIKE AN EXPERT ALL SEASON LONG
Spring Fever

Everything renews this time of year, including your outdoor sporting options. Our expert tactics will help you land a lunker bass, lure a strutting tom, and call in or stalk a trophy bear.
As a union member, you understand the value of unions. You know it's because of unions that Americans no longer work 16-hour days in unsafe conditions without health care or job security. You know your union brothers and sisters have your back when times get tough. You also know that unions and union members continually give back to the communities where they live and work.

It's no secret that the American public has misconceptions about unions and union members. Despite the fact that union members band together for workers' rights, we are often wrongly depicted merely as picketers and protesters and unfairly stereotyped as being anti-gun and anti-sportsman.

As a community of union members who share both union values and a passion for hunting, fishing, shooting, and conservation, the Union Sportsmen's Alliance is working to change the public's perception.

We couldn't have said it better than Andy Chapman of IBEW Local 317 in a letter he sent to us: “Too many times, we get pulled down by those who are jealous of the bar we set in benefits, quality of life, and the justice and equality to all men and women of the middle class. Your group portrays us for who we really are... We are fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers who work hard and love the outdoors and our great nation. We take pride in what we do and do the things that others wouldn't to put forth our fair share in this great nation... Whether you know it or not, you guys are paving a new road for us.”

Our sporting clays shoots, magazine, website, and conservation projects are undeniable evidence that being a union member and being a sportsman or -woman can go hand-in-hand. USA's national TV show, Brotherhood Outdoors, showcases hardworking union sportsmen and -women who go above and beyond to give back to others: people like Jake Lovato of UA Local 412, who volunteered his welding skills to rebuild an orphanage in Haiti after the earthquakes; Leroy Shull of IBEW Local 124, who organizes an annual Fishing for Freedom event to bring healing to wounded veterans; and Bradley Richmond of IUOE Local 150, who hosts an annual catfish tournament to raise funds for St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Our Work Boots on the Ground conservation projects are not only improving outdoor access, conserving wildlife habitat, renewing America's parks, and passing on our outdoor heritage to youth, they are also getting long overdue media coverage for the contributions union members make to their communities. Volunteering and giving back is nothing new to union members, but it's time your good work is seen and heard by the public. The USA can be one of the best PR tools for the union community. Just keep doing the great things you do, and share your stories with us. Together, we'll show all of America what it really means to be a union member.

Fred Myers
Executive Director/CEO

HELP PROTECT OUR OUTDOOR HERITAGE

Through our Work Boots on the Ground program, union members are volunteering their time and skills to enhance outdoor opportunities for us all. We also need your financial support to fund projects that make a difference today and tomorrow.

$100 Sporting Heritage Supporter
- USA logo Carhartt duck jacket ($80 value)
- USA logo Buck knife ($30 value)
- 2-year subscription to the USA magazine ($20 value)
- USA auto & hard hat decals

$45 Conservation Supporter
- USA logo Buck knife ($30 value)
- USA logo ball cap ($20 value)
- 2-year subscription to the USA magazine ($20 value)
- USA auto & hard hat decals

$25 Friend of the Outdoors
- USA logo Buck knife ($30 value)
- 1 year subscription to the USA magazine ($10 value)
- USA auto & hard hat decals

To donate, go to www.UnionSportsmen.org/donate OR Call 1-877-872-2211 OR Complete & mail in the form below.

I would like to donate to the USA by being as:
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- $45 Conservation Supporter
- $25 Friend of the Outdoors

Mail completed donation form to:
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3340 Perimeter Hill Drive
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I Want to Donate Today!

Looking Forward

The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance: Best PR Tool for Unions

“I love the USA for bringing together union sportsmen and showing the world that just because we are union, it doesn’t make us anti-gun and a threat to hunting and fishing. We support the outdoors as much as we support our organized work.”
— Clayton Knepp III, Boilermakers Local 83

“It’s so refreshing to be able to chat with other USA members about hunting and fishing adventures one minute and then labor issues the next, with the reassurance they’ll understand where I’m coming from.”
— Jim Pruner, IAM Local Lodge 99
TRIPS THAT SUPPORT CONSERVATION

BY KATE CYWINSKI

In September 2013, Remington Arms Company, LLC, announced the launch of Remington Country Outfitters (RCO), a premier service that aligns sportsmen with the finest outfitters for first-class hunting and fishing experiences.

“There is no experience more enlightening or educational than a hunting or fishing trip itself,” says Scott Blackwell, President of Remington. “Now we’re excited to take the next step and help our consumers find the right outfitter for their hunting and fishing needs. Whether sportsmen are looking for a whitetail hunt out West or a fishing expedition in the South, Remington Country Outfitters is the premier choice for booking any outdoor adventure and creating an experience to last a lifetime.”

Affiliation with RCO is limited to a select group of hand-picked hunting and fishing outfitters. These outfitters are chosen for the depth and breadth of experience they bring to sportsmen and anglers around the globe. Factors RCO considers in choosing an outfitter include safety, meals and lodging, facilities, and hunting and fishing quality.

“Remington Country Outfitters will represent only the most trusted and proven outfitters across the globe,” says Carl Brown, founder of RCO. Brown advises sportsmen to choose a respected booking agency for hunting and fishing trips because they will help locate and secure the right outfitter to ensure that all expectations are met. Clients deserve straight answers, and that’s what RCO is all about.

“A good booking agency will know their outfitters on a first-name basis,” says Brown. “They will know what species they offer and what you can expect in the quality and quantity of animals you are hunting. They will make sure that you are treated fairly and that everyone has a chance of filling their tag while having an enjoyable experience on their hunt.”

Thanks to a partnership between the USA and Remington Country Outfitters, USA members can now take advantage of this resource while supporting conservation, because RCO will make a donation to the USA as part of every booked package.

“The USA is excited to partner with Remington Country Outfitters to bring the experience and professionalism of one of the industry’s most trusted travel groups to our members for individual and group bookings,” says USA Executive Director/CEO Fred Myers. “Now our members can book hunting and fishing trips with the confidence that they’ll be getting the best deals and working with some of the best outfitters in the business.”

To learn more about Remington Country Outfitters, visit remingtoncountryoutfitters.com or call 888-283-7336.

MICHAEL PRONCHIK

A longtime resident of Philadelphia and journeyman with Remington Country Local 30,pronchik entered the USA’s “Carhartt Camo & Country Giveaway” for the chance to win gear when he saw the USA was giving away some of Carhartt’s new line of U.S.-union-made camouflage. That entry earned him the Grand Prize, a three-day trip for two to The 47th Annual Country Music Awards in Nashville. I t was very exciting to win,” says Pronchik. “I’d just hoped to win the jacket!”

Pronchik enjoys fishing and hunting and says he’s had his eye on items from Carhartt’s new line ever since it launched. In addition to the trip, the Grand Prize also included Carhartt camo bibs, overalls, pants, and the coveted jacket. Pronchik says he hopes Carhartt expands the line, “especially since it’s made here. They make good clothing that lasts.”

Pronchik, who had never visited the Music City, invited guest Candi Garrison, also of Philadelphia, to come along. “It was a very nice affair,” he says. “We had a really good time.”

Pronchik has been a member of the USA for six years, having joined just a few months after it launched. He enjoys getting to hear stories from other members as well as reading recommendations on great gear.

“I enjoy the camaraderie,” says Pronchik, who had never visited the USA for six years, having joined just a few months after it launched. He enjoys getting to hear stories from other members as well as reading recommendations on great gear.

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With a membership base that recently surpassed 200,000, we are more excited than ever about the positive impact we can have on conservation,” says USA Executive Director/CEO Fred Myers. “Michael Pronchik put his support behind the USA when we had little more than 100 members, as we are thrilled that his commitment paid off with an exciting trip to Nashville.”

In recognition of USA’s mission to unite the union community in preserving North America’s outdoor heritage and the organization’s many noteworthy projects over the past year, the theme of this year’s Conservation Gala, held on February 13 at the AFL-CIO headquarters, was “Mission in Motion.”

“With more than 6 million AFL-CIO union sportsmen and sportswomen across North America, we can build solidarity through the outdoors to confront the challenges facing our outdoor sporting heritage and reconnect working men with the age-old pastimes of hunting and fishing,” says USA Executive Director/CEO Fred Myers. “The Conservation Gala provides an opportunity to celebrate our conservation achievements over the past year and get energized for the year ahead.”
RAISING THE ROOF

The Lake Delton Sportsman Club gets a new storage facility thanks to union volunteers

BY LAURA TINGO

It’s been officially “retired” for six years now. Still, when Larry Volkey, Vice President of Bricklayers Local 34 in Wisconsin, received a call from the Lake Delton Sportsman Club in Baraboo last June asking him to handle the renovations of its outdoor storage facility, he signed right up.

“I wanted to do it for the club because they do so many good things throughout the year here for so many people,” says Volkey. A past member of the club, he coordinated the project from start to finish.

Over the following couple of months, Volkey volunteered his time and talents to get everything ready, from building the door frame to collecting the necessary construction materials donated by the club.

Next, Volkey rallied volunteers from his local and the club to turn out on a late September morning to get the storage building built in a day. Ten skilled union bricklayers and laborers joined together to build a new scaffolding frame, lay brick, and carry loads of supplies.

At the end of the day, the club’s new facility was insulated, heated, and enclosed with quality masonry to provide dry and secure storage.

“The BAC and LIUNA locals in Wisconsin have stepped up for conservation on a number of occasions, including this project in Lake Delton, our Take Kids Fishing events in La Crosse and Eau Claire, and the paver project at the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Area in Onalaska,” says Tim Bindl, USA Conservation Coordinator. “It goes to show that their hard work extends beyond the job site to helping their local community.”

Volkey says the renovations not only make the club nicer for retired and active members to work together and enjoy activities, but they also make it a prime venue for Bricklayers Local 34 to host its 2014 Wisconsin Bricklayers District Council Apprentice Contest.

“Now we can utilize the facility from the banquet to the awards,” he says.

WRAPPING UP The last phase of a USA conservation project that began on Aug. 21, volunteers from Electrical Workers Local 666, Plumbers and Pipefitters Locals 10, 540, and 110, the Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council, Virginia Pipe Trades, Carpenters Locals 613 and 389, and the Plasters and Cement Masons Local 891 came together at Virginia’s York River State Park on Nov. 18 to pour and finish a popular concrete walkway.

When volunteers first arrived on the scene in August, the original pavement—built down in the 1980s—was buckled, cracked, and uneven from invasive tree roots, preventing access to amazing scenic views for some park visitors.

“Replacing the damaged sections of the accessible Blue Bird Loop Improves access for the physically challenged, enabling them to enjoy the beautiful views of the York River from the park garden,” says Jonathan Tustin, Park Manager of York River State Park. “We are extremely grateful to the USA for their generous support.”

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

A USA-built custom deer blind creates safe hunting access for kids with mobility challenges by Laura Tingo

A NEW, CUSTOM-BUILT deer blind in the Texas Hill Country has set the stage for kids with mobility issues to experience the thrill of the hunt. The blind, affectionately named “Hugo” for Hugo Kraft, the USA member who solely constructed the park apparatus, was built to meet the needs of youth hunters dealing with a range of mobility issues, from needing a wheelchair to using canes, crutches, or braces.

The project began last year, when the Houston-area union community came together for a conservation dinner organized by longtime USA member and project co-chairmen Michael Cramer and Mike Shelton. In October, many of the same union tradesmen attended a second dinner and saw the finished blind.

“This truly was a labor of love,” says Cramer, Financial Secretary of USA Plumbers Local 68 in Houston. “It was a cooperative effort that is good for the community, good for youth with special needs, and good for labor.”

“Not only does it feel good,” says Jerry Warden, Executive Director of the Texas Youth Hunting Program, a division of the Texas Wildlife Association. “It was a huge victory for us. We realized we had a need for a specialized hunting blind and provide a mobile blind that exceeded our highest expectations.”

Says Hugo Kraft’s final request to the conservation committee—to purchase a trailer to allow the blind safe transport between hunting needs, and good for youth with special needs, and good for labor. “Any time you can help people with disabilities, it makes you feel good,” he says.

Top: Harrison Fortner, 11, of San Antonio, Texas, takes aim from the special-needs blind. Below: Mike Cramer (left) and Hugo Kraft proudly display the new ground blind and travel trailer at USA’s Houston Conservation Dinner.

GRAND PRIZE! 2014 Chevy Silverado 4x4
2ND PRIZE! Laser Z X-Series Riding Lawn Mower
3RD PRIZE! Fishing Escape to Costa Rica!
4TH PRIZE! Guided Whitetail Hunt in North Idaho!
5TH PRIZE! Custom PSE Bow!
THE BIG SHOW

USA member aims for the Super Bowl of fishing tournaments

by LAURA TINGO

SA member Joe Sancho has fished on the pro circuit for more than two decades. His personal best is a largemouth bass that weighed a stunning 10 pounds 1 ounce; his best smallmouth, a whopping 6-pounds-plus. He doesn’t credit anyone with teaching him how to fish, but he still appreciates the welcoming gesture of one special elder who invited him to belong—years ago, when he was just a boy.

He fondly remembers going to a meeting at his local fishing club “old-timers,” he bravely made his case about why he wanted to sign up. “They said ‘Hooked’ is an understatement for Sancho, who joined the USA last fall. To his credit, Sancho has fished big tournaments for 20 years. Last fall, when he received word that he qualified to compete in the 2014 Bass Master Elite Trail as one of the top 100 anglers in the country, he set his sights on winning. “I want to win,” he says. “That’s the competitor in me.”

His first time out, he earned his spot in the top five in the Northern Open on the James River in Virginia, Oneida Lake in New York, and Lake Erie’s Sandusky Bay in Ohio. This year, from March until late August, he plans to fish, fish, fish in several states along Cayuga Lake and the Delaware River to land in the top 36—and with it, the chance to compete in the Classic. “It’s the Super Bowl of fishing tournaments,” he says.

He first learned what pride of membership in the USA means when he attended a USA shooting event in New York. “There are more sportmen in construction than we realize,” Rick Adams said. “Maybe there’s a guy out there who doesn’t know how to fish or hunt,” he says. “We can share all that stuff. The USA offers a unique way to get involved with sportsmen to unite us.”

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YOU ARE THE USA

YOU ARE THE USA

by LAURA TINGO

of fishing tournaments

if they were to let him into the club, it would be

and thought it was awesome,” says Sancho, a member of Electrical Workers Local 533 in New York. In front of the group of neighborhood fishing club “old-timers,” he bravely made his case about why he wanted to sign up. “They asked me to leave so they could vote.”

He learned later that the consensus was that if they were to let him into the club, it would be

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Right on Target

The son of two USA members shows natural shooting ability by Chris Cogley

IT’S ALWAYS EXCITING to see young hunters get involved with competitive shooting. It’s even more exciting when they do it in the kind of dramatic fashion that Drake Adams did at the Union Sportsmen Alliance’s 5th Annual Boilermakers Kansas City Sporting Clays Shoot on September 23, when he nailed 77 out of 100 clays during his first-ever shooting competition.

“I was very proud of him, but I wasn’t surprised at all,” says Drake’s father, Rick, a member of Plumbers Local 533. “I’ve hunted with him for years, so I know what a good shot he is.”

Rick says that 15-year-old Drake has been hunting and shooting birds for more than 10 years. He had never entered a shooting competition but had always expressed interest. So when Drake’s mom, Renee—a member of Painters District Council 3—said that there were still a couple of openings on her team for the Boilermakers Shoot, Rick and Drake signed up. Renee didn’t shoot during the tournament, but she was captain of the team that Rick and Drake competed on and shared in Drake’s victory.

“It was really special for her to see her son get so much recognition shooting for her union,” Rick says.

Drake’s score earned him the Highest Overall Youth Shooter award and inspired the crowd to decide unanimously to offer him the one-year membership that Powder Creek Shooting Park was raffling off, as a way to help him pursue the sport. “We were all very appreciative of their selflessness,” Rick says. “When people go out of their way like that to support youth hunters and shooters, it not only helps keep these kids involved, but it gives them a great example to follow so that when they’re adults, they’ll know how important it is to support the next generation of sportsmen.”

While Drake has always expressed interest in shooting sporting clays competitively, Rick imagines that there’s probably a little more fuel thrown on that fire now. “I’d really like to see him compete more,” he says. “I think he’s got a great shot at getting some scholarships. And, besides, he loves it.”

If he continues to post scores like he did at the Boilermakers Shoot, it’s a safe bet he’s going to love it even more.

Drake Adams won the top youth shooting award at USA’s Kansas City Boilermakers shoot.

by LAURA TINGO

of fishing tournaments

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SOLUTIONS FOR THE UNION WORKPLACE | INSURANCE | INVESTMENTS
Since 1903, hunters have been using Hoppe's No. 9 solvent to clean their firearms. The company recently updated this American icon with a new synthetic blend that retains the cleaning power (and the cherished scent) of the original, but is now non-flammable and biodegradable. This new blend will still remove carbon, lead, and copper fouling, but it is now safe for use on modern firearms materials such as anodized aluminum, titanium, steel, chrome, nickel, plastic, polycarbonate, and rubber. The new No. 9 is available in sizes that range from 2 ounces to one gallon, selling for $5 to $100.

You buy a gun safe for three important reasons. First, to prevent theft; second, to keep firearms out of the hands of children; third, to protect your firearms (as well as any other valuable personal property) from natural disasters. The Cannon Commander Series 43 is built to meet all three conditions. The line has a fire rating of 90 minutes at 1,200°F, and the construction includes anti-pry bars to keep the bolt secure as well as six layers of hardened steel to protect the lock against any tampering. In addition, oversize (4-inch-long) locking bolts make it extremely difficult for an unauthorized person to gain entry.

If you’ve used a DPMS LR-308 in the past, the first thing you will notice about the brand-new GII is that it is considerably lighter. Much of that weight reduction came through redesigned upper and lower receivers, improved machining operations on the receivers, paired with a 7075 forging, allows the GII’s upper receiver to be smaller and lighter, yet stronger, than the current LR-308 design. DPMS also improved the bolt geometry to relieve stress lines, crafting an 8620-forged monolithic impingement carrier with a Carpenter 158 bolt. Other GII features include a steel feed ramp, an improved extractor, a new extractor spring, dual ejectors, smoothed edges on all receiver surfaces, and a titanium firing pin. It is available in three models—Carbine, Recon, and Hunter. The Hunter has a 20-inch barrel, a good choice for deer and hog hunters.

If a new turkey hunter has time to learn only one call before going afield, it should be the yelp. A hunter who learns that has the potential to bring just about any gobbler within range. Thank Quaker Boy for flattening out the learning curve: The company’s Easy Yelper can help a novice sound like a hen right off the bat. This simple friction call is really no more than a box with an inserted dowel. All you need to do to mimic a hen is push the dowel; the box does the rest. Easy single-handed operation also serves to reduce any extraneous hand movements, which have been known to spook many a wary gobbler.
FROM BASS TO BEARS, TROUT TO TURKEYS, THERE’S PLENTY TO KEEP OUTDOORSMEN BUSY—AND HAPPY—THIS SEASON. HERE ARE 12 EXPERT TACTICS TO HELP YOU SUCCEED.
Nothing can keep sportsmen from the woods and water come spring—not even the most miserable allergies. All season long, new hunting and fishing opportunities spread through the outdoors. There’s the trout opener and the spawns for bass and crappies. Gobblers strut their stuff and respond to scratched slate. Even the big-game crowd can look forward to stalking black bears. This collection of skills and tactics should be enough to keep you outside and having fun all season long—and that just happens to be the very best cure for spring fever.

EARLY TO RISE

It’s not too soon to cover bass to the surface

BY MARK HICKS

Most bass fishermen wouldn’t bother to cast a topwater bait before water temperatures climb above the 60-degree mark. It may surprise you to learn, however, that even as early as April the bite can be very good. Best of all, start plaguing the surface when the water reaches 50 degrees or so and you’ll have the action all to yourself.

COLD HOTTOPS

For this tactic to work, you need calm, clear water, and you must target very specific areas. Look for bluffed bank walls on the main lake that plunges into deep water, or find creek-channel, chunk-rock, and gravel banks in the arms of reservoirs, focusing on any woody cover.

Lakes that support submerged aquatic vegetation such as milfoil, coontail, and cabbage also yeild topwater action now. Target the backs of grassy coves where the water is 6 to 10 feet deep. TOPS ON TOP

My favorite early-spring surface lures are Cordell’s Fat-A-inch Red Fin Minnow and Rebel’s 1/2-ounce Pop-R and Rico. The Red Fin responds with a slow, rolling action when you twitch it, giving lethargic coldwater bass plenty of time to react. Work the Rebel poppers with extra-long pauses—up to 10 seconds or more. The feathers on the rear treble hooks move slowly and coax fish when the lure is at rest. Should a bass miss the bait on its first effort, try not to move the popper. Those subtly waving feathers can encourage second strikes, too.

These baits may not put as many fish in the boat as the best traditional coldwater lures do now, but there’s nothing like catching bass on top to welcome spring.

THE JAVACAN ANCHOR

If you foul up cover with a small boat or canoe, here’s how to make one that’s easy to handle, easy to attach to a rope, and easy on the finish of your boat. Since you fish, we’ll assume that you’re a coffee drinker! First, clean out an empty can. You want one of the large plastic containers (to protect your boat’s hull) that has a built-in handle (to make handling simpler). Fill the can with cement (hold the cream and sugar). Let the cement dry. Fasten a length of rope to the handle with a clinch knot, and it’s ready to go overboard. Just try not to spill your morning mud when you set the hook on that lunker as you’re anchored over your favorite sweet spot. —Ed Carter

THE TURKEY HUNTER’S MUSHROOM

Find the morel mother lode in your woods BY PHIL BOURJAILY

1 Watch the Thermometer

Mushrooms typically appear when nighttime lows reach the 40s and daytime highs hit the 60s. Soil temperatures of 50 to 60 degrees provide ideal growing conditions for this easy-to-identify mushroom. Once temps are right, rain triggers more growth. When daytime highs reach the 80s, the season ends.

2 Learn Your Trees

Certain trees are reliable indicators of morels. In much of the morel’s range, dead elms (with the bark slipping off) or apple trees—even apple tree stumps—mark a likely spot. Look around while ash and tulip poplars in the South. In the Mountain West, morels typically grow among Douglas firs.

3 Search Tweets

I learned this sneaky trick from the website mushroominfo.info. Use Twitter’s search feature to find keywords from the area you want to scout. Morel hunters usually won’t divulge their top-secret mushroom locations, but you can figure out where and when people are finding morels.

4 Find the Pattern—or Fire

The woods are full of microclimates. Think of morel hunting like bass fishing. You cover ground until you find one, then you focus on similar areas—drelations, contours, exposures—as you hunt. Also, the years after a fire can be banner. Keep an eye out for brush fires or controlled burns in your area.

BOWL GAMES

If gobblers go call-eh, set up at their favorite dust bowl. Here’s what to look for and how to call one in

BY M. JOHNSON

LOCATION

Sandy soil and light, powdery dirt make the best dust bowl. The only way to find them is to watch birds—and scout your property. Wide erosion cuts or dry runoffnels in sloping pastures often hold potential.

SIGN

Active bowls will show fresh tracks (3 inches or larger points to a gobbler), droppings, and feathers lost as the birds roll in the dust. Three-lined strut marks here and there are another good long-beard indicator.

BLIND

Set a pop-up blind within range of the bowl, and make yourself comfortable, because the wait for a tom might be long. The best times to hunt are late morning and early afternoon.

DECOYS

Set a single feeding hen a couple of steps from the bowl, and a breeding hen in the bowl itself. Position both to face your blind location. Gobblers should work around in front of your fakes.

CALLING

Subtlety is key. Soft clucks and purrs and short yelps work best to attract a gobbler. Listen closely for toms to spit and drum, as birds often approach such situations silently.

THE COVER STORY

SPRING FEVER

+ UP SERVICE A proper can produce 5-pounders like this, even in April.
Make a strong (and cool) turkey carrier just in time for spring

By Mark Hicks

1. Through the outside curve of the antler, drill a hole that’s the same diameter—1/8 to 1/4 inch—as the nylon rope you’ll use. Next, widen the hole by using a 1/4- to 3/8-inch countersink bit to drill about 1/4 inch deep.

2. Run a length of nylon rope through the hole. Melt the bottom end of the rope, and allow it to harden and form a lip that will fit into the countersink. Form a loop in the rope 6 inches down and fix it with a bowline knot.

3. To use, fold the end of the loop over itself to form a smaller loop and place it over the talons, above the spurs. The bird’s weight will pull the loop tight for a secure and more comfortable over-the-shoulder carry.

If you spent the winter months after whitetail season hunting sheds, here’s a fun project to tackle before the turkey opener: a D.I.Y. turkey carrier made from a palm-size length of antler and some nylon rope. The antler is tough, looks great, and fits nicely in your hand.
ON THE ROCKS

The 12 best spots to catch trout in fast, broken water

High-gradient terrain and rocks—lots of them—are what put the pockets in pocket water, and successful anglers target them for the same reason that Willie Sutton robbed banks: That’s where the money is. Compared with the more orderly riffle-and-pool trout river, pocket water is a form of barely controlled chaos, with countless variations on the single theme of current and obstruction. Visualize this kind of stream as a series of discrete, localized trout habitats, waters that must be fished one little thing at a time. Planting your feet and throwing a long line over localized trout habitats, waters that must be fished one little obstruction. Visualize this kind of stream as a series of discrete, localized trout habitats, waters that must be fished one little area particularly in spring, when high water and heavy currents push trout to the edges. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts to the top of the rocks, then re-cast to alternate sides. Begin low down, and systematically extend your casts up to the edges of the boulders. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank.
**FLIES ON THE POND**

Warm spring days may trigger your instinct to beat a path to the river, but in many places, streams aren’t quite ready for prime flyfishing. Cool water temperatures keep trout sluggish, runoff makes currents high and dirty, and most good insect hatches need more daylight to reach their peak. But don’t let any of that stop you. Some of the season’s best flyfishing can be had on faster-warming ponds and small lakes. Fishing flat water can be technically challenging, but it doesn’t have to be, because you can use a wide variety of techniques to score. Here are my favorite approaches, in order:

**FLIES ON THE POND**

Rivers and streams too high and cold for flyfishing? Hit still waters for great spring action by KENDRICK

**STAY DRY**

The predominant waterbug now are midges, which can provide fabulous dry-fly action. Don’t make the mistake of trying to match these tiny insects exactly with matching patterns. Midges like to cluster, and trout love it, too. Use a midge or bug protein. Try a Griffith’s Gnat or a Grizzly Cluster in size 18 or 20. Use a light tippet, starting with 5X or 6X and working smaller if necessary. You don’t want to make much commotion, so cast only to rising fish. Imagine your target 3 to 5 feet above the surface: Cast to that spot, and your fly will float gently onto the water.

**GET DOWN**

Trout eat most of their food below the surface, especially at this time of year. That’s why nymphing can be deadly. Focus your attention on vegetation and structure, such as timber, rocks, and weeds. Don’t mess with heavy weights or strike indicators. Cast to your target, let the fly sink, and then work the fly with deliberate 2-inch strips. A size-16 soft-hackle Pheasant Tail or Hare’s-Ear usually gets the job done. Sometimes, for no reason at all, spring trout prefer darker flies. I always carry a few black A.P. nymphs in my box.

**GO UGLY**

The right streamer fly can bring out trout even in early-spring trout. Try a tandem rig. Start with a large, white, attention-getter, like a size-10 Zonker. Tie a foot of tippet onto its shank and add a trailing “stinger” fly, like a size-12 black Woolly Bugger. With a floating line, your leader should be at least 6 feet long. With a sink tip, you can go down to just a few feet, let the flies sink after your cast. Mix up your retrieves until you crack the code. Trout often turn on the bright fly, then inhale the stinger. Set the hook when you see a flash or boil and experience some heart-pounding action.

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**BEARS TWO WAYS**

How to call in or stalk your trophy bruin by DAVID DRAFTER

This month, black bears should be out in force as they emerge from their dens to refuel on spring greens and the remnants of last autumn’s berries. Spotting these hungry bears is usually the easy part; just look for black spots dotting sliding, clear-cut stands of mountain meadow, or marching along logging roads. Once you’ve located a suitable bear, choose from this pair of pulse-pounding tactics—for both bow and rifle hunters—or both.

**1 THE CLOSE CALL**

Any bears I had about the effectiveness of predator calls on bears were put to rest on a hunt in New Mexico with Backcountry Outfitters (bacoutfitters.com), where we called in three bears in as many days. The key was spotting the bears first. Blind calling just led to boredom, but when we saw a bear and called to it with sustained, pleading squeals, each came to us as if on a string. If you can, move downward of the bear and start calling quietly, increasing the volume until the animal turns your way.

**2 THE LONG WALK**

It bear doubts I had about your calling—and some will—go after it. A bear often will stand off in a good food source for an hour or more, giving you time to walk into position. Memorize key landmarks and note which way the bear is feeding. Pay attention to wind direction as well. While bears have bad vision, their sense of smell and hearing are acute. If you get close, but not close enough, turn to your predator call. In tight quarters, a few soft squeaks may be all it takes to bring a bear the few yards into range.

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USA's shoots and dinners generate funds to make conservation projects possible

by Kate Cywinski

Uniting the union community through conservation to preserve North America's outdoor heritage: That's the mission of the Union Sportsmen's Alliance, and as sportsmen and -women, we all recognize the importance of preserving the outdoor heritage we cherish. Uniting the union community is vital to achieving that goal, and the USA's most effective tools for uniting union members from different trades and different cities all over the country are its on-the-ground sporting clays and trap shooting events and its conservation dinners.

Our magazine, TV show, website, and social networking presence are important in helping us all get to know one another, but nothing compares to meeting each other face-to-face. Not only do USA shoots and dinners raise critical funds to support the USA's mission and daily operations, but they also educate union members about the organization and recruit volunteers. To put it simply, these events act as building blocks for the USA's conservation projects.

The USA’s Puget Sound shoot led to a USA Work Boots on the Ground project in which 40 members of Painters District Council No. 5 and Plumbers and Pipefitters Locals 26 and 32 constructed large gates for hunter walk-in access roads in Washington State, and our Minnesota shoot was the foundation for our annual Get Youth Outdoors Day. A conservation dinner in Dallas, Texas, raised funds for a project at Texas’ Cedar Hills State Park in which volunteers repaired three bridges to ensure the safety of park visitors, while a dinner in Houston resulted in a custom-built hunting blind for youths with mobility issues.

And a dinner in Richmond, Virginia, raised the funds needed for union volunteers to complete a trail restoration project at Virginia’s York River State Park. As the USA’s shoot and dinner programs continue to grow, so will the opportunities they provide for union members to get connected and directly engaged in conservation efforts.

Since the USA held its first shooting event in 2009, we’ve had nearly 11,000 attendees at our shoots and dinners and raised more than $6.2 million, before expenses; the growth from year to year has been nothing short of incredible. In 2013, USA shoots raised nine times the funds they did in 2009 and welcomed eight times the number of shooters—such growth in just five years! The money raised at the USA’s 2013 dinners increased fivefold and attendance tripled.

If you attended, sponsored, volunteered at, or helped spread the word about any of USA’s events, you were part of that success, and we can’t thank you enough!

This year, we hope to enjoy a great meal with you at one of our conservation dinners and bust some clays with you at a shoot. And when the end of December rolls around, we want to celebrate crushing our 2014 goals with you and the many conservation initiatives made possible by that achievement.

For information about hosting, attending, or helping organize an event near you, contact Nate Whiteman, Shooting Events Manager; 440-867-8229; nwhiteman@unionsportsmen.org; Heather Taxalaar, Event Analyst; 615-831-6779; heather@unionsportsmen.org; Walt Ingram, Conservation Banquet Manager; 740-542-0470; w Ingram@unionsportsmen.org.

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

USA EVENT REVENUE & PARTICIPATION

FRIDAY, MARCH 14
Ohio AFL-CIO Conservation Dinner
COLUMBUS, OH

SATURDAY, MARCH 15
West Virginia Conservation Dinner
CHARLESTON, WV

DFW Metroplex Sporting Clays Shoot
DALLAS, TX

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19
Greater Kansas City Building & Construction Trades Dinner
KANSAS CITY, MO

SATURDAY, MARCH 22
Nashville Area Sporting Clays Shoot
NASHVILLE, TN

SATURDAY, MARCH 29
Oklahoma AFL-CIO & BCTC Conservation Dinner
TULSA, OK

SATURDAY, APRIL 5
Southern Florida Sporting Clays Shoot
DORAL, FL

SATURDAY, APRIL 12
So. Illinois Sporting Clays Shoot
SPARTA, IL

Louisiana State Sporting Clays Shoot
NATCHITOCHES, LA

SATURDAY, MAY 3
SMART New Jersey Sporting Clays Shoot
PORT REPUBLIC, NJ

FRIDAY, MAY 30
AFL-CIO Capital Area Sporting Clays Shoot
QUEENSTOWN, MD

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Share your best shots with your brothers and sisters of the USA. Visit UnionSportsmen.org/photos to check out additional photos and to submit your own for a chance to win a Buck Knife.

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USA PHOTOS

When Shane Lewis (right), a member of the Bricklayers and a union tile contractor, was diagnosed with ALS, Matthew Eleazer (left), a member of Bricklayers Local 1, helped him fulfill his dream of catching a salmon by putting a special rod holder on his sled to allow him to reel fish in while seated.

Donna Shaver, a member of Steelworkers Local 3657 from New London, NC, celebrated Veterans Day by harvesting this 10-point with a muzzleloader. It green-scored 153¼ with a 21½-inch inside spread, and weighed 197 pounds.

Mike “Sparky” Sparks, a member of Fire Fighters Local 29 from Chattanoou, WA, took this monster bull on M2D CAMO Properties in Idaho.

Darren Jones, a member of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 344 from Guthrie, OK, took his daughter on her first hog hunt. Priceless!

Tony Christy, four-year-old great-grandson of Painters Local 146 member Ralph Southern, reeled in this 17-inch bass. He loves fishing with his papa!

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