



Todd Thorndike and Al Crawford with Todd's first day caribou.



A wide flaring, heavy beamed caribou for Larry Guise.

Charley Ormond returned for his fourth trip to Turnagain looking for a 60" moose. He had to shorten his hunt by 3 days at the front end or we might have stood a better chance so he had to settle for a 50" bull.

The final hunt had Al and Roy heading back to Jim Beam camp with Karl Rauchenberger and Otto Elmecker from Austria, who were looking for a couple of moose and a grizzly. Karl connected with a big bull on the way in but never could catch up to a grizzly. Otto turned down a couple of shots he didn't feel comfortable with mid way through the hunt and missed a nice bull on the final day. A moose is big but because of its size can throw you off when judging the distance if you are not used to looking at them. A bit of a language barrier can also add some confusion but these hunters were true gentlemen and spoke highly of their guides and the experience.

In anticipation of some possible cold weather at the end of the season I took our Cessna to Watson Lake to have the floats removed. Jason and Shane had trailed the horses from Turnagain to Serpentine so Bruce flew Nick Kemp, Rick Brown, Greg Rodriguez and I there to start the hunt. We hunted moose and grizzly around there for a day without success then trailed to our hunting area and got camp set up.

The next morning was a perfect fall hunting day, full of promise. And those promises were fulfilled by the end of the day when we had 3 tremendous moose down. Nick and I spotted a huge antler back in the timber that we knew would easily be Boone & Crockett. We called and got the bull to step out in the open and we saw...one antler! The other had been broken off fighting. We then put a great stalk on the bull that probably broke that antler and Nick ended up dropping a 56" bull at 50 yards. Just as we were field dressing ours we heard Rick and Jason get one and as we arrived back at camp we heard Greg dropping his. There was a mild celebration that evening.

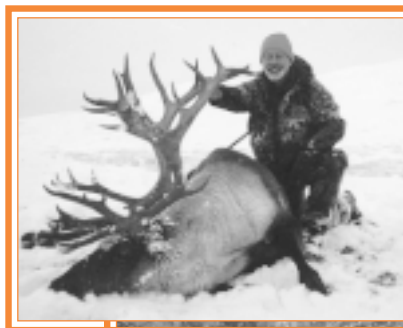
We all spent the following day, Tuesday, packing in meat and caping with a lot of admiring and a bit of measuring and bragging thrown into the mix. I received the bad but not unexpected news that evening that my Mom had passed away in Nova Scotia at the age of 91 and that the funeral was on Friday.

In a totally characteristic way, Shane told me to call a helicopter and get on my way. This was at the end of the season with hundreds of details to be taken care of and about the same number of hours of work required in the next few days. I can't give enough thanks to show my gratitude to the way he and Jason handled everything or to the way Nick, Rick and Greg took it all in stride and dug in to help out. I took a 12-minute helicopter ride out while they rode for 9 hours to hit the highway at Dease Lake.

I want to also thank Jim Reid at Pacific Western Helicopters, Bill Hesse at Northern Thunderbird Air and Doug McCrea at Central Mountain Air for their generosity in helping me get home in time for the funeral. And especially to my wife Joan who had to bear the burden of the bad news for a couple of days and try to reach me by whatever means since I had forgotten to turn the sat. phone on at my usual time. By the time I arrived in Prince George she had all flight arrangements made for me to get home and most importantly a strong but soft shoulder to comfort a grieving son.

It was a real damper to an otherwise outstanding season but my Mother had visited my old guiding area a number of times and had a real appreciation of what I was doing. As she so often gleefully told her friends when I was around "Now this is my son Keith and he's a big game hunter. But the rest of the family is normal!" Thanks Mom, I'll miss you.

Time does march on so as I write this I am making plans for a deer hunt with my sons Brian and Rob. If your future plans include a great hunt keep us in mind. Success is preparation meeting with opportunity. We are prepared. Take the opportunity.



George Naugle shot an outstanding caribou and a "darn good" moose.



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