

OPINION

Long primitive arms deer season is upon us

With the shotgun deer season coming to an end this Saturday, Dec. 13, many hunters are eager to break out their black powder rifles, and start a two-week deer season in Massachusetts that is often very productive.

The long primitive arms deer season in Massachusetts ends on Dec. 31. There are many deer left for the primitive arms deer hunter, and as the season is winding down, the deer are not as elusive. Less pressure on the local deer herd during the primitive arms season and accurate shooting guns make for a more successful rate of deer harvested. It took sportsman a long time to convince Mass. Fish & Wildlife to allow hunters to use inline guns with rifle barrels. For many years deer hunters were only allowed to use flintlock guns with smooth bore barrels, and changing the regulations was not easy, as diehard flintlock deer hunters were adamantly opposed to any changes. It would take away from the experience of hunting the old-fashioned way, they claimed. There was no question that the old flintlock guns tested the skill and marksmanship of hunters harvesting a deer the old-fashioned way, but too many deer were being lost because of the inaccuracy of the flintlock guns. Not many deer hunters shot the old



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guns well and too often, the powder got wet and failed to discharge when a hunter attempted a shot. There were many meetings and long debates over the years, as deer hunters tried to make changes to the flintlock only regulation. When some changes were finally being considered by Mass. Fish & Wildlife the Thompson Center Arms Company offered to make a .56-caliber smooth bore gun to meet the needs of Massachusetts sportsmen. The bill was finally passed and harvest figures started to improve as well as participation by local deer hunters. It took a number of years to make more changes that brought the Massachusetts deer hunters in line with other states in reference to types and models of guns being used today. Muzzleloaders no smaller than .44 caliber or larger than .775 caliber can be used during the primitive arms season. Hunters may use modern muzzle loaders, hinge action muzzleloaders, muzzleloaders with telescopic sights and sabot rounds. In line ignition systems are permitted, but all guns must



Courtesy photo

This week's picture shows a 15-point buck taken in Massachusetts last week and it could be a new state record.

be loaded from the muzzle of the gun. This is a big change from the old-fashioned flintlocks. However, those that wish to use them can still hunt with them, but there are few deer hunters that want anything to do with them. A primitive arms stamp is required to hunt in Massachusetts.

The first week of the shotgun deer season in Massachusetts had many nice bucks harvested, and some of the antlers were very impressive. Deer exceeding 200 pounds field dressed were common

throughout the state. Actual numbers for the first week of the shotgun deer season in Massachusetts were hard to acquire as Mass. Fish & Wildlife had little information released at the time of this writing. Deer hunters can go back online to register their harvested deer during the muzzleloader season.

With the Christmas season fast approaching, children will be out for vacation. This is a good time to have a talk with family members about the dangers of thin ice on many of our lakes and ponds. Avoiding a tragedy of a family member drowning after falling through thin ice can be alleviated with a brief discussion about the thin ice dangers. A family tragedy happens every year because of unsafe ice. The family dog also needs to be restrained and only allowed out under strict supervision. Crossing frozen lakes and ponds during the winter months should only be done by experienced outdoors men and women. Constant checking of ice thickness with a good ice chisel is extremely important, especially on first ice. Ice fishing could happen any day now and anglers are eager to enjoy some time on their favorite pond or lake.

Take a kid fishing and keep them rods bending!

Another round of reader tips!

Thanks to all those who took time from the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations to share their favorite tips and tricks! From kitchen tips to holiday gift ideas, the latest submissions are geared to cut down on holiday season hassles.

Remember readers, send in your hints and you could win dinner for two at the Publick House!

A reader discovered an inexpensive and eco friendly alternative to pricey floor pads!

Here is a helpful hint for the Swiffer sweeper. Instead of buying those expensive wet pads or dry pads for the Swiffer, I use an old face cloth that fits perfectly on the swiffer and spray a cleaner on it. After the floor is washed, I toss the face cloth in the wash and it is ready for the next job.

Kim Casella
Charlton, Mass.

This reader really uses her noodle! Here is a hint that was passed on to me by a local retail shop owner. Pretty clever as I never thought about this one. To secure shape of your tall winter boots you can use a "noodle" (swimming pool noodle) and cut to size of boot. It will help in keeping the boot in good shape and condition.

MC

Sturbridge, Mass.

This cleaning tip helps rescue a kitchen catastrophe!

Did you ever burn a cooking pot dry and the inside was black, black, black? Just spray the inside with oven cleaner and soap and hot water. Let it sit. Then use a cloth to wipe it out.

Phyllis Choate
Uxbridge, Mass.

Does extra special holiday food translate into extra weight? Try this reader's remedy:

I'm not sure if these counts as tips and hints, but a tip to lose weight while shopping. Park as far away from the building as possible. That extra bit of walking helps. A tip to save money while shopping. If you're going to get only a few things, try to avoid using a shopping cart. It is so much easier to pick up things you don't really need, like novelty goods, or end cap specials when you use a shopping cart. Instead grab a basket, that way you can feel not only the weight of what you will be carrying, but you will develop a sense of how much of a hit your wallet will end up taking!

Thomas Dell
Wales, Mass.



TAKE
THE
HINT

KAREN
TRAINOR

Quick silver (polishing) to the rescue!

For a quick polishing of silver jewelry, rub with toothpaste. It does a great job when you're in a hurry!

Bobbie Hirshberg
Webster, Mass.

Here's a tip worth tucking away until spring:

If an army of ants is putting a damper on your outside (or inside) activities, battle them the easy way with this environmentally safe concoction.

Ingredients: Two thirds cup water; one third cup white vinegar two to three tablespoons dish soap.

Instructions: Mix together and pour into a spray bottle. It works as well as commercial sprays to keep ants under control and is much safer.

Bob Bourdeau
Fiskdale, Mass.

Congratulations to Bob Bourdeau, of Fiskdale, Mass., whose name was drawn as winner for Dinner for Two at the Publick House in Sturbridge. He offered the ant spray recipe above.

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House — Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month will win a fabulous dinner for two (a \$60 value) at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

Do you have a helpful hint or handy tip that has worked for you? Do you have a question regarding household or garden matters? If so, why not share them with readers of Stonebridge Press publications? Send questions and/or hints to: Take the Hint!, c/o Stonebridge Press, P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550. Or e-mail kdrr@aol.com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn. For more great hints, tune into Take the Hint! one minute snippet tips aired on NASH Icon 98.9. And for more tips and talk, be sure to listen to my live hour-long show Fridays from 9 to 10 a.m., on WARE 1250.

Cub Scout Pack 316 celebrates accomplishments

DOUGLAS — The Douglas Cub Scouts from Pack 316 recently celebrated their accomplishments during their November Pack Meeting.

The purpose of a pack meeting is for all the dens to come together and be recognized for their achievements and the progress they've made toward their rank advancements. Dens include Tigers (first graders), Wolves (second graders), Bears (Third Graders), Webelos (fourth graders), and Arrow of Lights (fifth graders).

The meeting began with the Wolves leading the pack in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Cub Scout Promise. Then, the newest members of the pack were presented Mohegan Council's "Blast into Scouting" rockets. New scouts who received rockets were: (Tigers) Zachary Chiasson, Brayden Larson, Benjamin Yorke, Jackson Valanzola, Kyle Foisy and Ryan Morrisette, (Bear) Noah Burrows, and (Webelos) Matthew Freeman, Evin Kaye, and Tyler Scully.

The individual dens were recognized for the progress they'd made on their rank requirements. Activities that were highlighted included the Tigers visiting the Northbridge Cable Access Station, learning about fire safety, and making marshmallow launchers to learn about fulcrums and levers; the Wolves learning about flag etiquette and how to properly care for and fold the American Flag; the Bears hiking at River Bend Farm and learning about the Industrial Revolution;



the Webelos completing their Citizen and Fitness Activity Badges, as well as making hand models that appear to be three-dimensional by curving lines for their Artist Activity Badge; and finally, the Arrow of Lights performing science experiments and learning about Bernoulli's principle, Pascal's law, and Newton's first law of motion as required for their Scientist Activity Badge.

The highlight of the evening was



Courtesy photos

a performance by Eric Girardi from Bending Gravity. Eric is a world-ranked yoyo player. He also brings other objects to life as art in motion. He awed the Cub Scouts with his juggling, yo-yo tricks, top spinning, and performance with Chinese yo-yos and devil sticks.

The meeting culminated with the scouts, who sold the most popcorn

during the pack's recent fundraiser, throwing pies in the face of their favorite leaders. This is always a favorite incentive for the scouts. Ryan Lockhart, Dale Boudreau, Colin Deres, and Luke Lightbown all had the opportunity to throw pies while the pack cheered them on.

To learn how you can join the fun, e-mail info@douglaspack316.com.