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**Issue 219**

**June 2012**



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TIPS**

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Updates**

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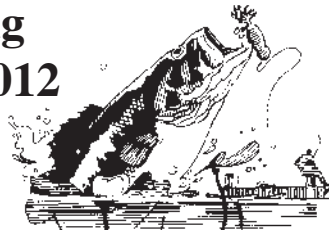
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## Cover Photo

Fishing at night with a Jitterbug fishing lure, Ralph Cale landed this impressive largemouth bass. It weighed 8 pounds, four ounces and was 24 inches long. He was fishing in a farm pond in Preston County.

Fishing overall in WV has been very fruitful. The Ohio River has been giving up numerous bass to the serious river fishermen. Enjoy the fishing this season! *This magazine is online each month*  
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## Possible Record Striped Bass

Rodney Ply, a native of Diamond City, Ark., caught a mammoth striped bass on Bull Shoals Lake back in February. Weighed lake-side at 125 Marina with several witnesses present, the fish weighed 68 pounds. Ply then contacted the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to witness the weigh-in. After considerable time out of the water spent searching for an AGFC adequate scale, the fish later weighed 58 pounds after puking up shad and

other forage.

The AGFC recently sent Ply a letter stating his fish is not going to be certified as a state record because post-catch protocol was not followed.

Ply is now taking his case to The International Game Fish Association, which has certified the scale at 125 Marina. The IGFA is satisfied with the sworn statements from others who witnessed the catch and weigh-in. The remaining question



Rodney Ply landed what may be a world record striped bass - 68 pounds.

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pertains to the method in which Ply caught the striped bass. The fish was caught on a homemade umbrella rig.

Even more compelling is that Ply registered for Mustad Hooks "Hook-a-Million" contest, where a state record catch is worth \$100,000 and a world-record catch is worth \$1,000,000. While Ply's bass will not be an Arkansas state record, it could be a world record as the current benchmark for freshwater striped bass is 67 pounds, 8 ounces.

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## Hall Of Fame Tommy Martin

ATHENS, Texas – Tommy Martin, the renowned bass pro from Hemphill, Texas will be inducted into the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame on Saturday (June 2) at the state fish hatchery in Athens, Texas. A 2011 runner-up, Martin's induction celebrates an accomplished career spanning more than four decades. With a Bassmaster Classic victory notched in his belt, Martin has recorded five top-10 finishes and won \$139,080 in FLW competition.

Formerly a bass guide in the early days of Toledo Bend and nearby Sam Rayburn Reservoir, Martin said he entered the professional bass tournament scene somewhat later than most.

"I didn't get into bass fishing until I was about 28," Martin said. "I grew up on the Texas Gulf Coast and I fished saltwater for many years. I moved inland about the time (Toledo Bend) and Sam Rayburn were filling up and I basically learned to fish (for bass) on my own because there weren't any experts or anybody back in those days to teach you anything."

As he progressed in his bass knowledge, he learned much about  
continue to the next page



Keith Tyler, from St. Albans, landed a 23 1/4" largemouth bass.



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his new career by fishing local tournaments and studying the exploits of industry icons like Bill Dance, Bobby Murray and FLW Tour pro Roland Martin. He joined B.A.S.S. at its outset, but tempered his ambition with a plan of preparation.

"I had my sights set on becoming a pro fisherman but I told myself that I'm going to practice really hard and I'm going to guide and I'm going to fish some small tournament just like I was going to college," Martin said. "I'm going to learn to be a professional fisherman before I jump in a fish the big leagues with the big players.

"I wanted to learn everything I could so I spent five years doing that. I didn't fish B.A.S.S. until 1974, but by the time I got in, I felt like I was ready. In the first tournament I fished, I finished third and then I won a (regular season) tournament and then I won the Bassmaster Classic that year. I guess I was ready. I worked hard at it – just as I do today."

Martin, who points to deep jigging as his signature technique said his five years on the FLW Tour and EverStart Series have been a pleasant chapter in his storied career: "FLW is a great organization. They're a wonderful group of people and they run great tournaments. I wish they had been around earlier when I was a younger fisherman, but they've been very kind to me."



Christopher Eagle, from Frankford, hooked a 22 1/2" rasinbow.

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# Improving Plum Creek's Trout Fishing

LEWISBURG, W. Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) and Plum Creek today announced they are expanding a public-private partnership effort to increase the state's trout population and extend its range. With the expansion, the effort will now focus on enhancing the quality of 51.6 miles of streams on Plum Creek land and many more miles down-stream. The private timber company and state originally began the effort in 1999, and it since has grown and seen significant results.

Through the effort, Plum Creek performs stream liming, a process that usually begins in late March and involves adding limestone sand to the watershed over several months. The limestone sand reduces the acidity of the water caused by acid rain. The DNR conducts

regular fish surveys of the streams and more through the partnership. Over the past 13 years, Plum Creek's stream-enhancing project has resulted in a significant increase of the biomass of fish found in the watershed, including trout and other non-game species.

"We are very excited to continue and expand the partnership between Plum Creek and the West Virginia DNR," said Steve Yeager, senior resource manager for Plum Creek's West Virginia operations. "Our teamwork has produced remarkably successful results, and we hope to breed even more success in the future."

Plum Creek donates most of the limestone sand and maintains the many delivery sites needed to add the lime each year. The West Virginia DNR provides addition-

al limestone sand, manages the  
continue to the next page



Young Schmidlen brought in a big gobbler. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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many delivery sites needed to add the lime each year. The West Virginia DNR provides additional limestone sand, manages the streams as stocked or wild trout fisheries, monitors water quality and conducts research and stream surveys. Those reports and recommendations are then incorporated into Plum Creek's forest management planning and activities.

The expansion was announced May 4, 2012, at the South Fork of the Cherry River and documented by the signing of a new partnership agreement between the state and Plum Creek. The project will now extend to include an additional 3.2 stream miles and two new liming stations.

"As we head into the height of fishing season and with liming just under way for this year, the expansion of the program comes at the right time," said DNR Director Frank Jezioro. "The long-term efforts of Plum Creek have made a huge positive difference in the surrounding aquatic habitats, and we are glad to help the effort expand."

According to Jezioro, past liming efforts by Plum Creek and the DNR have already resulted in the three-fold increase of fish biomass, which is the amount of living matter or aquatic life in the streams.

The DNR's acid stream restoration program has received national attention, being highlighted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the 75th Anniversary of the Sport Fish Restoration Program.

As a participant in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®), Plum Creek is committed nationally to conserving fish and wildlife

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Bill "Quick Draw" McGraw landed a 39" musky on a buzz bait. They landed 4 that day on an unknown lake in Jackson County.. *Photo courtesy of Old & New Sports in Ravenswood.*

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Looks like a battle of the beards. Brandon Cox shot a nice gobbler. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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Richard Harris used a bow for this nice bear. Photo courtesy of Waterfront Sporting Goods in Alderson.



Austin Slack got a Wirt Co. black bear. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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Details On Page 3

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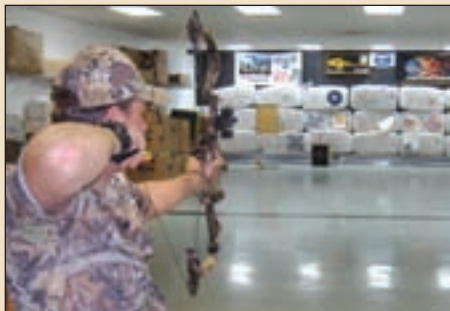
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## Turkey Results

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Preliminary harvest figures for the 2012 spring gobbler season are in and West Virginia hunters checked in 8,332 bearded director of the Division of Natural Resources. This year’s harvest is a 10 percent decline from the 2011 harvest and a 15 percent decline from the previous five-year average.


Biologists have long recognized that the brood counts two years prior are fairly accurate predictors of harvest since most of the kill is composed of two-year old birds. Brood production in 2010 was 28 percent lower than 2009; therefore, the 2012 spring harvest was lower because fewer birds were available. Brood production was higher in 2011 but still below the long-term average.

“Because future harvests are dependent on brood production and survival, let’s hope for a dry June and a more normal spring in 2013, if there is such a thing,” said Jezioro.

The 2012 spring kill is the lowest since 1989, when 7,245 birds were harvested by hunters. While all the other districts saw a decline in harvest, hunters in District 1 (northern



Kurt Starcher shot a gobbler. Photo courtesy of Jarrett’s Bait in Elizabeth.



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counties) registered a 7 percent increase over last year. The southern districts saw the greatest reduction

in harvest, with Districts 5 and 4 declining by 25 and 21 percent, respectively.

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## DNR Stocking Catfish

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) is stocking more than 8,000 catchable-size channel catfish during the week of May 14, according to WVDNR Director Frank Jezioro. This popular stocking program provides fishing opportunities at popular and accessible lakes across the state.

Lakes to be stocked are: Anawalt Lake (McDowell Co.), Barboursville Lake (Cabell Co.), Berwind Lake (McDowell Co.), Cacapon State Park Lake (Morgan Co.), Cedar Creek State Park Lake (Gilmer Co.), Chief Logan State Park Lake (Logan Co.), Conaway Run Lake (Tyler Co.), Coopers Rock Lake (Monongalia Co.), Edwards Run Pond (Hampshire Co.), French Creek Pond (Upshur Co.), Handley Pond (Pocahontas Co.), Hurricane Lake (Putnam Co.), Indian Rock Lake (Nicholas Co.), Krodel Lake (Mason Co.), Laurel Lake (Mingo Co.), Little Beaver State Park Lake (Raleigh Co.), Mason Lake (Monongalia Co.), Mountwood Lake (Wood Co.), North Bend State Park Pond (Ritchie Co.), Pendleton Lake (Tucker Co.), Pipestem State Park Lake (Summers Co.), Tomlinson Run State Park Lake (Hancock Co.), Wallback Lake (Clay Co.),

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and Wirt County Farm Pond (Wirt Co.).

As part of a cooperative effort with West Virginia State Parks, a total of 400 tagged channel catfish will be stocked into eight state park lakes, including: Cacapon State Park Lake; Cedar Creek State Park Lake; Chief Logan State Park Lake; Little Beaver State Park Lake; North Bend State Park Pond; Pipestem State Park Lake; Tomlinson Run State Park Lake; and Pendleton Lake at Blackwater Falls State Park.

Anglers catching a tagged catfish and following the tag instructions

for reporting the catch will receive a “tagged fish reward.” The reward is a choice of a ride to Whittaker Station at Cass Scenic Railroad or a ride to Blennerhassett Island on the sternwheeler, The Island Belle.

*continue to the next page*



Crystal Jacobs hooked a 36” musky on a dough ball. *Photo courtesy of Jerry’s Sporting Goods in Horner.*



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Anglers who catch a tagged fish are asked to return the tag or tag number along with information on the date of capture, if the fish was kept or released, and the name and address of the angler to WVDNR, 2311 Ohio Ave, Parkersburg, WV 26101. Anglers also can call in the information (304-420-4550) or provide the information via e-mail [dnrfishtags@wv.gov](mailto:dnrfishtags@wv.gov).



Scott Light got a great 11 point with a bow.



Tammy Darby is pleased with this big flathead catfish.

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# WVDNR Serches For Old Issues

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Since its inception in 1937, when it was called West Virginia Conservation, readers have treasured the monthly issues of Wonderful West Virginia magazine. Many people have saved back issues for generations. Now, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, which publishes Wonderful West Virginia, is asking for help in finding copies of about 65 specific issues to be included in the magazine’s official archives.

“People tell us that their dad kept every issue of the magazine; we just can’t throw them out,” said Mike Bryant with WVDNR. Noting that most issues have been archived on



Breda Greene, from Ravenswood, landed a souther redfish.

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the [www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov) website under the link “WWV Magazine Archives,” Bryant is issuing a request for help from subscribers.

“We’d like them to look in those boxes of treasures stuffed under

beds and in attic corners for older issues of Wonderful West Virginia Magazine. The digital archive requires scanning of an actual magazine issue and there are several  
continue to the next page

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issues we just don't have to complete the entire archive. About 900 issues have been published over the past 75 years. We're hoping families that have held on to the magazine throughout the years are willing to part with specific months that we're searching for so we can complete our digital files."

Wonderful West Virginia magazine shares stories, information and images of the Mountain State. The photography in the magazine illustrates what words sometimes fail to describe – the beauty found in the Mountain State.

Beginning as West Virginia Conservation from 1937 -1967, in March 1967 the magazine was re-titled Outdoor West Virginia and retained that name until January 1970, when the name changed to Wonderful West Virginia and it is still printed under that name today.


Individuals wishing to help the WVDNR to complete the digital archives by donating missing issues may contact Mike Bryant at 324 4th Avenue, South Charleston WV 25303 or email mike.d.bryant@wv.gov. Wonderful West Virginia is published monthly by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

Specific Issues of West Virginia Magazine Needed for Archives  
1937 – 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1941  
continue to the next page

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Jared Sturgeon had success with this 6 pound, 5 oz. largemouth.



Chester Moore, from Walton, hooked a 20 pound, 8 oz. musky.

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1942 – January, February, March, and April  
 1943 – June  
 1945 – January, February, March  
 1946 – January and February  
 1947 – All issues  
 1948 – February  
 1949 – April, June, July, August, September, December  
 1950 – February, March, May, June, July, October, November  
 1951 – August  
 1952 – May  
 1953 – October  
 1954 – March  
 1955 – January, February, May, June, July  
 1956 – March, May  
 1957 – August  
 1958 – January, October  
 1961 – April, June, October

Issues contributed to this project will not be returned. Individuals assisting in recovery of these select issues will receive a small gift of appreciation. To learn more about or to subscribe to Wonderful West Virginia Magazine, visit [www.wonderfulwv.com](http://www.wonderfulwv.com) or call 304-558-9152.

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Bill Longwell hooked a 43" musky at Burnsville Lake. *Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks on the lake.*



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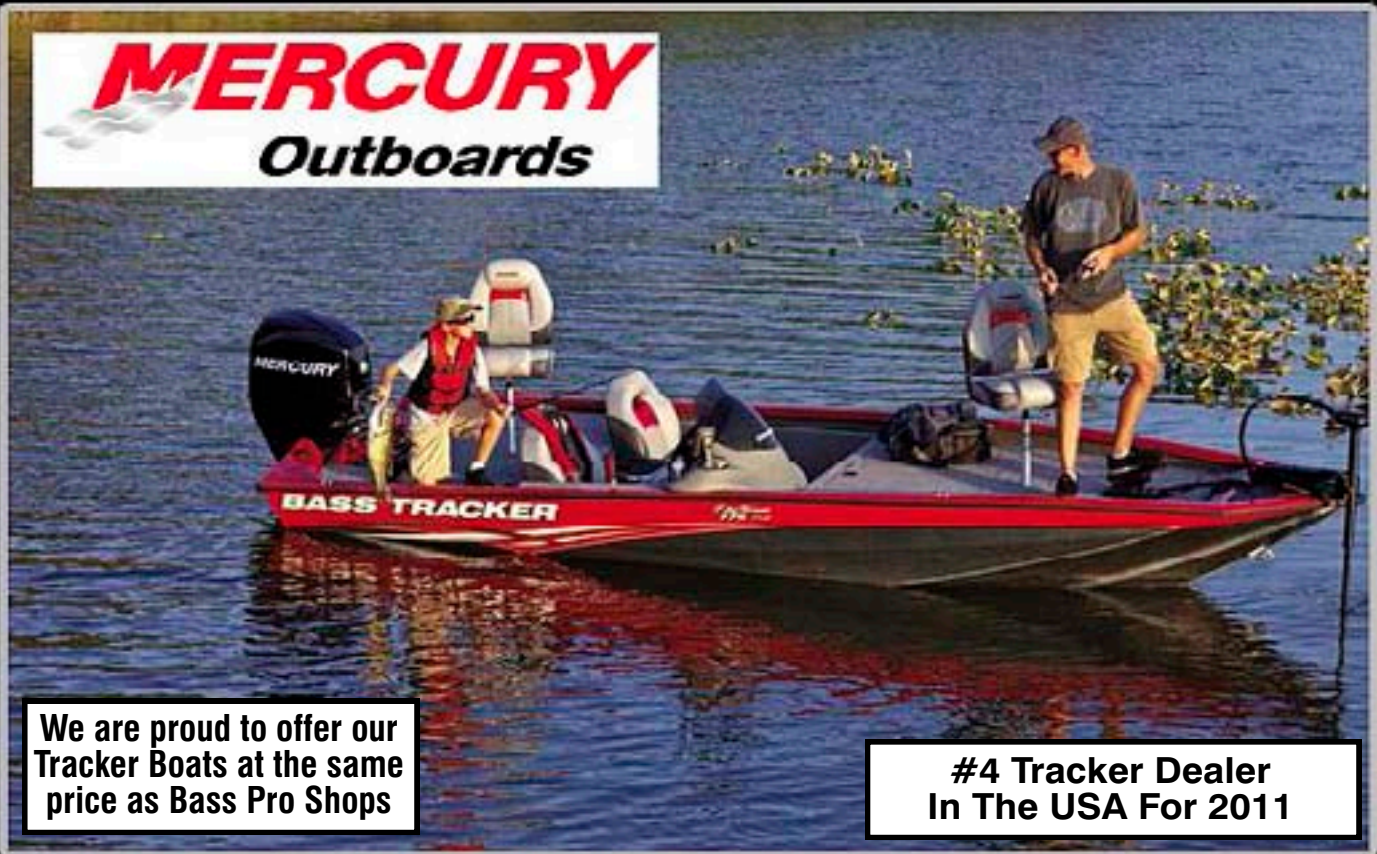
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Ronnie Huffman landed a whopper catfish. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.



Chris Hatfield will not be sharing this rainbow with any McCoy's.



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AJ Starcher landed a 35 pound flat-head catfish. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*



Dwayne Bowman hooked a 6 pound largemouth bass.



Bethany Wolfe caught a 4 1/2 pound smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.*

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Maddy Birchfield landed an Ohio River hybrid bass.



Kim Birchfield likes to go to the New Martinsville dam to catch big Ohio River hybrid bass. This was a very large one.



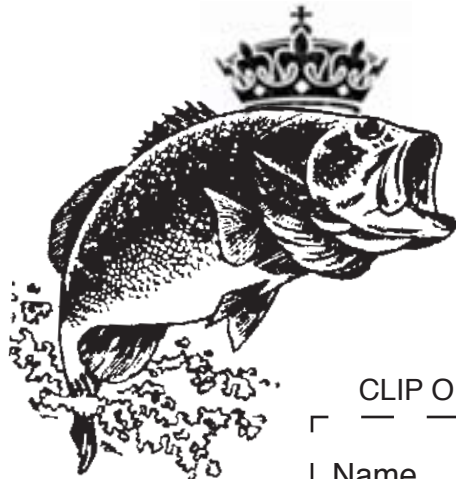
Ben Thaxton went to Salt Creek Preserve in Ohio for a boar.

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# Wheeler's Family Affair

By Jim Wilson

In the mid-fifties Jim Wheeler met Marlea Miller while attending Lost Creek High School in Harrison County. Jim graduated in 1958 and married Marlea after she graduated in 1959. "Jim was my one and only suitor in life," she says with a twinkle in her eye.

They set up housekeeping in Mt. Clare, in Harrison County. Jim drove a truck for National Auto for



Josh Compton went to Marshall County for a big gobbler.

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some 11 years. One day a friend of Jim's named Buck Fulks said that he knew of a small business that might be for sale in Elkins. Fulks knew that Wheeler hungered to go into business for himself.

It turned out the business was a small sporting goods shop located across the street from the Federal Building in downtown Elkins. It was, in fact, for sale. Wheeler and the owner, Buck Currence, worked out a deal. Currence agreed to stay for 30 days and teach Wheeler the "ropes."

While he was learning the business, the Wheelers put their Harrison County home on the market. "Buck was a wonderful mentor to Jim. And Jim was so enthused and excited he 'ate, slept and drank' the 30 days that Buck stayed on." says Marlea.

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Their home in Mt. Clare sold and the Wheelers moved to Elkins. An apartment above the store was part of the deal between Wheeler and Currence. So Jim, Marlea and their two young sons, David and Brian, took up residence in the apartment.

In reflection, Jim muses, "At this point we didn't have two pennies continue to the next page



Matt Romine landed a 26" drum in the Little Kanawha. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeeth.

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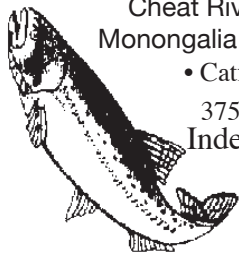
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to rub together. Every penny we had was put into the business. We didn't know a soul in Elkins. It was either succeed or starve. But I was excited - - having my own business was a lifelong dream. I wasn't going to fail!”

Marlea worked side-by-side with Jim for the next 12 years. Marlea



Brad Fortner hooked a big catfish at this pay lake. *Photo courtesy of Catfish Paradise near Marietta, Ohio.*

made her schedule bend around the boys schooling and parental needs. She and Jim would take the boys to the river every chance they had. And the boys enjoyed being around the store during business hours. This especially pleased Jim as he wanted to pass the business on to them at some point in time.

Wheeler proved to be a true visionary in the retail business. He realized that Elkins was the hub of just about everything that had to do with the “outdoors world.” He foresaw a market to sell hunting and fishing supplies on a large scale to the public. He received a commitment from his youngest son, Brian, to strive towards this goal.

Through the 1970's and 80's Wheeler's was a very successful enterprise. Jim had learned that to succeed in the retail business required long hours, wise buying, competitive pricing and a complete knowledge of your products.

By the early 90's Wheeler's Sport-

ing Goods had outgrown its location. Jim bought property on Route 33 East in Elkins. The Wheelers sold the store including the apartment. They bought a home and in 1995 Wheeler built a new 8000 sq. ft., two story building.

The new facility opened in October, 1995. The 4000 sq. ft. mail floor showroom was chock full of brand name hunting and fishing supplies.

First time shoppers at the new  
continue to the next page



Junior Golden went to Florida for this big bass. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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store were dazzled when they came through the doors. Before them were aisle after aisle of well stocked merchandise. Some would browse for an hour or more. Jim says with a wry smile, "Customers would tell me they felt like kids in a candy store."

In that era one of Wheeler's best selling merchandise was black powder products. Pistols, long rifles, black powder and powder horns. Wheeler says, "We were the largest Tradition brand distributor in the state. We stocked over 400 muzzleloaders and in excess of 300 powder horns. We also had 87 numbers of reloading powder on hand. We were ready for the serious black powder enthusiast."

The upstairs 4000 sq. ft. was used for inventory.

Let's get back to Marlea (we'd best not let the Big Boss linger too long in the background!). After working next to her husband from 1972 to 1984, Marlea had a secret yearning of her own. She desired to have her own retail business - - more specifically, a ladies apparel store.



Cole Braskey, 8 years old, shot his 1st bird. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.

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"The boys were old enough to help Jim. I had \$12,000 seed money saved up. To be completely honest, it was just going to be a hobby. We were pretty much financially secure by then. So I had Jim's blessing to give it a go."

It would turn out Marlea was a visionary in her own right. She foresaw a need for a "moderate to better" quality apparel store in Elkins.

She found a small empty building in a strip mall just off Elkins' busy north-south five-lane. She signed a lease and named her store: Marlea's. She stocked her store with brand name clothing such as Columbia, Woolrich and Tribal. It was a success almost from the start. "I had absorbed so much re-

tail knowledge working with Jim that it was easy - - no breaking in stress, just fun. Elkins did indeed have a demand for a cut above apparel."

Marlea soon outgrew this building and leased the one right next door that had two stories and more than triple square footage as her old store.

The new store was too much to handle for one person, so Marlea hired what would prove to be her Girl Friday, Lynda Stottlemeyer. "Lynda has now been with me for 16 years. She knows the business upside-down and sideways, and she's a worrier. I tease her for worrying, but I couldn't do without

continue to the next page

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her.”

Back to Jim and Brian. Wheeler’s was also finding more success as time went on. In the early 2000’s Jim leased out his 8000 sq. ft. building and built a new 12,200 sq. ft. structure on his own property right next door to the old store.

Since moving into the new location Wheeler’s has flourished, mainly with the addition of a couple new lines of products.

Jim says, “Eight years ago, Wal-Mart made a corporate decision to stop selling hand guns in its locations nationwide. A light bulb went off in my head.”

Wheeler was not required to have a federal firearms permit to sell black powder muzzleloaders, but would need one in order to sell firearms. So he acquired a firearms license and promptly ordered 87 pistols and rifles. Since that initial order he bought 8000 pistols, shotguns and rifles - - and sold over 7000. Presently they keep 1400 firearms in stock at all times.

Around the same time as the firearms transition, Brian had been dabbling in automobile sound systems. This was on a personal basis as he had trouble finding equipment for



Jerrad Terral hooked a smallmouth bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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his own use. Soon after, the retail mantra of supply and demand took over. At first Brian ran his sideline business out of his home. Father Jim was so impressed with Brian’s success that he ask him to move everything into the new store. Presently 1800 sq. ft. of the main store showroom of 6100 sq. ft. is Wheeler’s Audio. Brian carries top line sound systems which include Rockford, Fosgate and Memphis Car Radio.

In 2004, Jim told Marlea, “I’m tired of you paying rent. I’m going to build you a new two-story store  
coninue to the page 33

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Reese Bonnett, from Mt. Nebo, hooked 2 nice smallmouth bass.

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Caleb Richards hooked 3 big drum in the Little Kanawha River. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*



Josh Compton, from Ritchie Co., went to Alaska for a silver salmon.

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Young Briar Higgins, with Matt, caught a 5 1/2 pound rainbow trout. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



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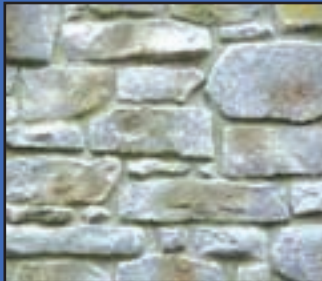
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Don Salisbury went to Florida for an Osceola turkey. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



Mark Powell hooked a 6 1/2 pound Little Kanawha walleye. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*

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Chris Edwards caught a nice catfish. *Photo courtesy of Catfish Paradise outside of Marietta, Ohio.*



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Leah Adkins hooked a 4 pound largemouth bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.



8 year old Payton Gwynn shot his first turkey. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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cattycorner to us.”

In 2005, the new 3500 sq. ft. building was ready for business. Marlea’s cash register looks right out at Wheeler’s parking lot. “He did that so I can tell when he’s really busy so I can come over to help. The only problem is he doesn’t reciprocate.” Marlea laughs. Jim confirms, “I know nothing about women’s clothes.”

When asked about the secret of Wheeler’s success, Jim reflects and finally says, “Well, besides long hours and hard work and attention to detail, I do have a little secret. For the last several years whenever we receive a shipment - - no matter whether it’s big or small, I cut a check to the supplier the next day. This keeps our suppliers very



Young Jordan Bender hooked several trout. *Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.*



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happy and allows us to take advantage of bulk deals, price breaks and when anything new comes along our suppliers will contact us first about the feasibility of a particular product being a big seller - - ground floor stuff. Also, a fully backed up inventory is a must in our business. No one likes to special order a product if we’re out of stock. The Wal-Mart proven way - - keep those shelves stocked full and up high.”

Marlea has a niche not too many  
continue to the next page



Fred Dennison, from Canvas, killed a 345 pound black bear - his 1st.

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people in Elkins are aware. She carries a full line of quality men's clothing. She says, "It doesn't matter if men in the area are unawares - - their wives and girlfriends buy their clothing anyhow. Men just don't shop." Having been married over 50 years and falling well into the category of "senior citizens" has not steered either of them into thoughts of retirement.

Jim sums it up, "We both love what we're doing. If and when it ever gets to the point we don't, then that's the time to consider hanging it up. I love this business so much I am up at 5 am every morning. I go to the store shortly afterwards and work on the books. Then I roam the isles and make gut decisions about what to order. I am energized every day of my working life."

Wheeler's and Marlea's are undoubtedly two of the most successful retail businesses in the bustling Elkins area, called the Gateway to the Potomac Highlands.

And yet neither businesses - - wait please - - don't tell me - - yes, neither one uses a computer in their business! They do it the old fashion way, and do it very well, thank you! They don't even have one at home.

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Yes, this family affair has come full-circle, or at least full-catty-corner.



Margaret Byers hooked a 34" carp  
Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton..



Eli Prehoda, from Beverly, shot a big gobbler.

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## Fishing With Tubes

Soft plastic lures have been truly revolutionized only twice since they were introduced in the 1950's. The Slug-Go soft plastic jerkbait changed the way we view, and use, soft plastics. Variations of that bait continue to be designed and produced by many manufacturers as anglers rely heavily upon its fish catching ability.

Perhaps just as trend setting and every bit as duplicated and modified, the original Gitzit tube lure has generated a tremendous amount of fanfare since its introduction in the mid- 1980's. If imitation is the greatest form of flattery then Bobby Garland, inventor of the Gitzit, has been greatly honored.

Virtually every soft plastic manufacturer offers a tube lure design. Some have combined a crawfish or salamander shape with the hollow body design of a tube to create a unique product. Other companies have produced jig heads, hooks, rattles and trailers designed specifically for use with tubes.

Truly one of the most versatile of all soft plastic designs, tubes continue to catch bass from the surface to the bottom in shallow and deep water year round. An individual angler's amount of creativity is the only limitation when it comes to rigging and fishing tubes. They are commonly Texas-rigged, Carolina-rigged, drop-shot rigged and even fished weightless.

The most basic rigging method involves inserting a jig head into the hollow body of a tube. This method is commonly used when fishing the smaller, 3-inch tubes on spinning

tackle. With the jig head tucked inside the tube, this rig works great as a finesse lure in clear water. It also skips exceptionally well, making it a good choice for fishing boat docks and shorelines with overhanging vegetation. The action of a  
continue to the next page



Andy Jackson, from Sinks Grove landed a citation largemouth bass.

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tube can be greatly affected by the position of the jig head inside the body. With the jig head pushed all the way forward, tubes tend to fall faster with less spiral. To slow the fall and increase the amount of spiral, position the jig head back from the "nose" of the tube.

While tubes appeal greatly to largemouth bass, they may be even more preferred by smallmouth and spotted bass. Virtually all smallmouth enthusiasts consider tubes to be a primary lure in their tackle box.

For added attraction, anglers insert a variety of items into the body of a tube. Alka Seltzer tablets are broken into pieces and inserted in order to create bubbles and a fizzing effect when exposed to the water. It's also popular to soak a cotton ball in fish attractant to enable the attractant to slowly ooze out of the tube's body. Styrofoam can be added to make a tube float high when Carolina rigged or fished on the surface. And of course, rattles are commonly inserted, especially when fishing stained water or

heavy cover.

A casting spoon can be greatly enhanced by inserting it into the body of a tube, then adding a swivel by running the snap through the walls of the tube and the line tie at the top of the spoon. This increases the action, adds buoyancy and creates a soft textured lure that can be cast a great distance. The same can be done to improve the performance of a jigging spoon.

Bass anglers have, at times, been known to remove the silicone or



Chris Newell shot a gobbler. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.

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rubber skirt from a spinnerbait and replace it with a tube.

Tubes can also be rigged weightless and worked across the top of weed beds or fished just below the

continue to the next page

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surface in the same manner as a soft jerkbait.

The latest craze in tubes involves pitching and flipping the larger 4- and 5-inch versions in heavy cover. Several manufacturers offer large flippin' tubes with a solid plastic head to accommodate Texas and Carolina rigging or for threading onto a jig head.

While very effective at attracting strikes, many anglers complain about missing bites and losing fish on Texas-rigged tubes. The large amount of plastic tends to "ball up" in the bend of the hook, preventing the hook point from fully penetrating the plastic. To address this problem, Oldham Lures recently designed a heavy-duty tube lure jig head that features a fiber weed guard and a Gamakatsu flippin' hook. When rigged, the jig head is concealed inside the body of the tube. The quality hook enables anglers to use heavy line in combination with their jig rod when flipping tubes to heavy cover. Oldham's new flippin' jig head is fitted with the screwlock attachment and is perfect for flipping tubes and other types of soft plastics in grass.

The fiber weed guard on these jig heads can be customized for every situation. When flipping heavy cover such as brush or standing timber, the fibers of the weed guard can be spread out in a fan or V-shape. A good bit of the weed guard can be removed when fishing weed beds or sparse cover.

Tubes have an application to fit almost any fishing situation. With virtually unlimited rigging and presentation options, they deserve a top shelf location in every bass angler's tackle box.

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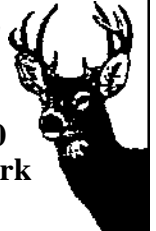
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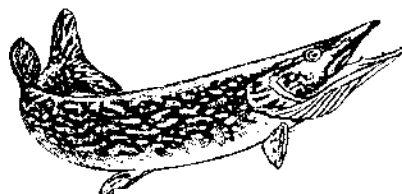
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