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OUT-OF-DOORS STUFF

By Lane Leneve

Well, here is another sportsman who has joined the circle of the campfire:

"This is Merle Pettit, hardware merchant speaking. My favorite outdoor sports are hunting and fishing. My favorite indoor sport is basketball. My ambition is to be a successful hardware merchant. A Remington 12 gauge shot gun is my favorite. A Winchester 30-30 is my choice of rifle. As to revolvers, I don't use 'em. Peters ammunition is my favorite brand. Sixes and 7 1/2's are my favorite size shot. I prefer fly fishing and a gray hackle red body fly, while a Bear Valley spinner is my favorite spinner. Have hunted and fished for 20 years."

And here comes another one: "Penny Sturdivant speaking. As to outdoor sports I enjoy all of 'em. As for indoor sports, I enjoy watching a boxing match and as for myself I like pool, cards and everything. As for my choice of a shot gun I believe that all standard makes are good and I have no choice outside of any modern 12 gauge. Winchester ammunition is my favorite brand and I prefer No. 4's size shot. Fly fishing is my favorite and Bear Valley is my preference in spinners."

Thanks to both your fellows.

I wish to convey my thanks to Pata Collier and his son, Bob, for furnishing us a bit of news for this column. The two of them caught 34 beautiful trout on the East Fork. Amongst the catch was one 10-pound, 25-inch summer salmon. The latter fish was shown to me and I can testify as to its size and length.

There were hundreds of fishermen out Sunday and I have received a report from only one to date. Why not phone or write in your fishing trip? It will be appreciated.

Here's a little huntin' story for you for this week:

"OLD LUCKY"

There's a lot of luck connected with the hunting game, it seems to me, and, as you know, you who have followed the wilderness trails in pursuit of game, the luck breaks both ways, sometimes with the pursued, in fact more often so than with the pursuer. If luck breaks right, you wend your way homeward with a brace or so of nice fat birds or on weary feet, stumbling along beneath the weight of a lordly buck.

One of the most interesting lines of the hunting game is the pursuit of predatory animals with good varmint dogs. It is in this work that the breaks come in the most persistent manner, either in your favor, or in favor of the varmint you are pursuing.

I have combed a territory for days at a time with hounds and not even got a start and becoming discouraged would be about to move out, when—hingo! up would go several bobcats within a short time.

I have also hunted country that was full of bobcats, cougar and bear with just now and then a coyote, but each morning as regular as clockwork the dogs would open up on a measley coyote, run themselves down, and away would go a glimmering all chances for connecting with a cougar, bobcat or bear. Those were cases where luck was breaking entirely with the last mentioned animals.

The story I am about to relate concerns "Old Lucky," the largest bob-cat I have ever seen and I have had the pleasure of killing dozens of them.

I bestowed the name "Old Lucky" upon this big cat myself and believe that he was well named, inasmuch—well, here's the story, judge for yourself:

In June of the year, 1924, while employed by the Oregon State Game Commission, I shouldered my pack-sack, one day, which contained a ten-day grubstake and penetrated far back into the rugged country of Southwestern Oregon, near the three lines of Douglas, Coos and Curry counties.

The weather was very dry, making tracking for Cap, my varmint hound, most difficult. The only runs I could get were on coyotes and they were a hard proposition for a dog in that rugged country. On the morning of the tenth day my grub was running low and I decided that it was time that I had better start for civilization. And the same morning, along about eleven the dog picked up the track of the big cat that I later named "Old Lucky."

He struck the spoor in a dusty trail and I had no trouble in making out the big footprints of the cat. And what a track it was! A toe was missing from one front foot, showing that the old warrior had at one time been caught in a steel trap, no doubt near the borders of civilization and becoming wary of the ways of the white man had sought out a new domain in the very heart of the wilderness.

The dog was able to cold trail along for a half mile, when emerging from the green timber into an open space he lost the track, for here the sun had gotten in its work and dried up the spoor.

That was lucky escape number one for the cat. I decided to stay over another day in spite of the condition of my grub. The next morning Fate again took sides with the big cat. Just at daylight I was on my way and the dog opened up on a cold trail. There were the footprints of the cat and I figured that his hide would ac-

company me back to civilization. The spoor was becoming stronger, the dog giving tongue more often, when the sky suddenly became overcast, thunder muttered low overhead, lightning flashed and then the very hills rocked as the thunder opened up in earnest and within five minutes I was drenched by a downpour of rain. The cat's tracks were wiped out, a very disgruntled hound crept to the feet of a very disgruntled hunter and cursing my luck I hit for civilization.

June of the following year found me again in the same territory as I had received word that the cougar were killing deer in that district. The very first evening I struck the track of the big cat. Yee, it was he, no mistaking that big footprint, even if it had not been minus a toe.

It was growing dark when the dog opened up on the track and I could not call him back. It was a hot track, leading through the roughest part of the country, around the edge of rimrocked canyons, through deep gulches and up steep mountain sides.

Then when the voice of the dog was almost lost in the distance, there came that sound so dear to the heart of the hunter—the dog's voice at tree.

Darkness had settled down by now and I could hardly see my hand before my face. A small spring was gurgling near the side of the trail and I sought it out and made camp, satisfied that the faithful dog would stay at the tree during the night.

I went to sleep with his voice rolling to me from across the rocky canyons. I was awakened just before day-break by the cold muzzle of my dog shoved against my cheek. It was the only time I ever know him to desert a tree under forty-eight hours.

That morning I started him on the cold trail of the night before, believing that he would lead me to the trail where he had had the cat up the night before and it would be clear sailing from there on.

Once again Lady Luck stepped in and as before she favored "Old Lucky." The big cat's mate evidently seeking him had hit his trail since the dog's return and soon he opened up on a hot track and within a few moments I was squinting through the sights at the big cat's mate, perched upon the limb of a big cedar.

I put in a week in that vicinity, killing one more cat but never met up with the big boy again. So thus I christened him "Old Lucky."

But just a minute—the story has a sequel:

A year later, being connected with the Forestry Service, I was assigned a special mission over in the Eden country and one of the trails I must

traverse led through "Old Lucky's" stamping grounds. I had never been quite able to erase from my memory the thoughts of that big-footed cat and the sting of defeat still rankled strong within me.

It was necessary for me to go to Coquille for final instructions concerning my mission and as I returned to my station I stopped off in Myrtle Point and consulted with my friend, Lloyd Jarvis, who then owned some of the finest hounds in the West. The result of the conference was that when I again headed toward my station, beside me on the seat sat Grit, the finest varmint dog in my friend's pack.

The next morning by daybreak found Grit and me on our way into the wilderness. The trip was uneventful going into the Eden country, a distance of some thirty miles. However, I found "Old Lucky's" track in the dried mud of the trail in almost the exact spot I had seen it luring my previous trips.

The track was too old to even interest the dog but I felt somewhat elated to find that the old warrior still frequented that part of the woods.

As I started homeward from Eden Valley it began to rain lightly and with the coming of the rain all thoughts I had concerning the taking of "Old Lucky" vanished like the mists about me.

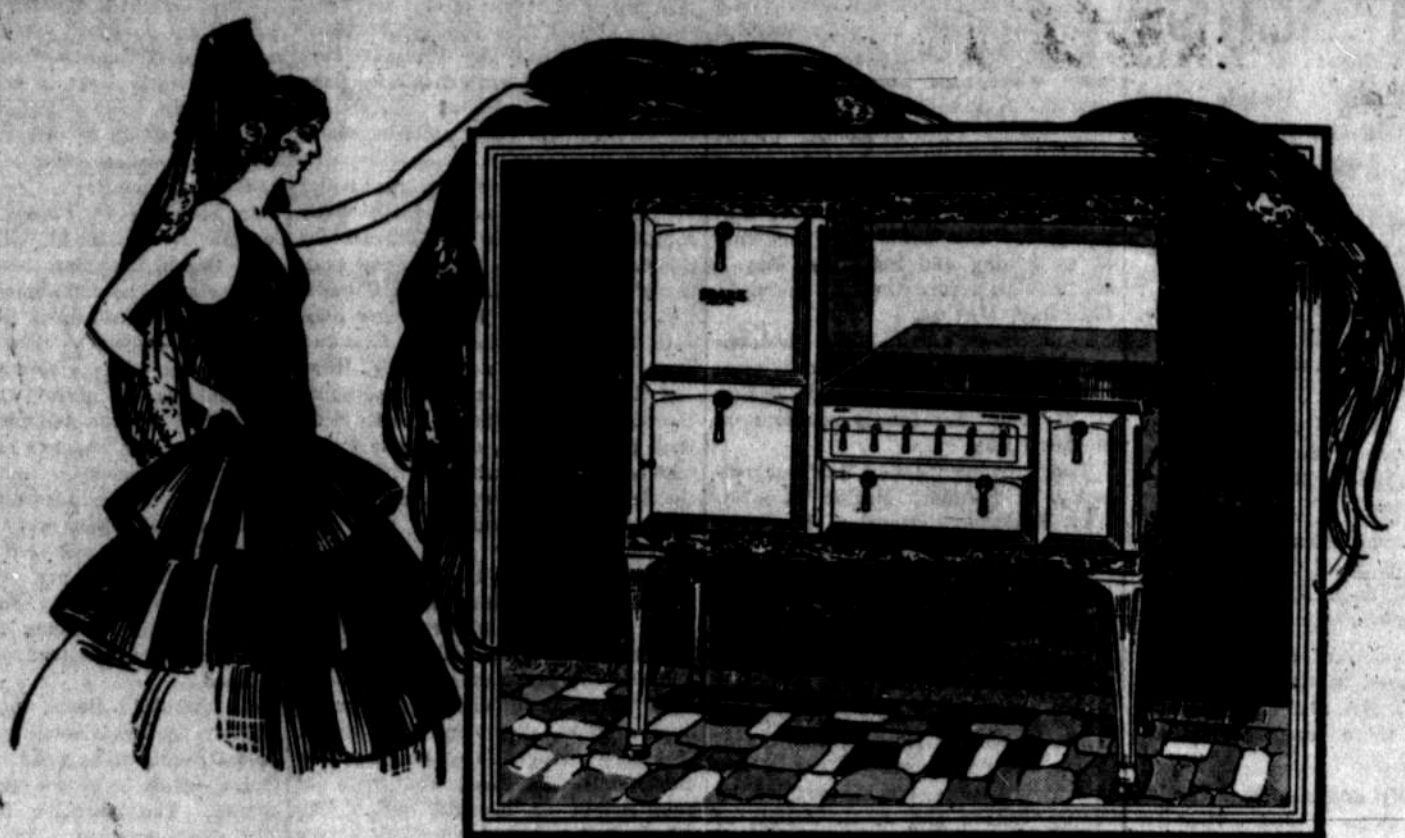
As I struck that part of the trail which was no doubt a regular crossing for the big cat, old Grit was away like a shot, his voice sounding as clear as a bugle in the mountain air. It was a short run he made for he was as fast as greased lightning and he had hit a hot track. From the head of a little draw his voice came ringing down to me—and he had treed!

He was barking up a giant fir. I spent at least twenty minutes looking the tree over. I knew the cat was up there for that old dog never lied. At last a slight movement on a bushy limb betrayed the animal's whereabouts and hidden in the dense foliage I made out the outline of the animal's body.

It looked to be the size of a yearling panther. I could see the tips of its ears, so drawing a fine bead an inch below them I let drive. The animal stiffened on the limb, rolled on its side and just as it started on a nose dive toward the ground I planted another bullet through its neck for it appeared so large I believed an untimely death beneath the limb to be a cougar.

When I got to Grit he was musing the animal up considerable and I

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stood there gazing at the largest cat I have ever seen. I knew even before looking for that missing toe that "Old Lucky" had at last been deserted by the luck that had so long been his.

As I end this little yarn my thoughts revert again to that vast stretch of wilderness where I spent so many enjoyable days with my faithful companions, Cap and Grit, and it is with a feeling of the deepest sadness that I realize that never again will the ringing voice of either one of these wonderful dogs be heard on a hot track. Poor old Grit suffered of an auto driven by a speedster while Cap met his death at the hands of a poison slinger. But as long as I live I shall always be able to recall the cherished memories of

hunts I have enjoyed in company with these two noble animals.

Boy Killed on Elk River

David Snyder, a 17-year old youth from California, who had been visiting the Wm. Hurst family on Elk river, was killed at 4 o'clock last Sunday afternoon when his car overturned on that narrow Elk river road. Snyder had jumped from the car but it rolled over on top of him and crushed him. Two fishermen were the only witness of the tragedy.

Dr. J. E. Richmond, orthodontist specialist in the straightening of teeth, is making regular monthly trips to Coquille and will be in Dr. Rietman's office Monday, May 11th. Examination and consultation free.

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