Points East

By: Ike Adams

Last week I had business in Richmond late in the day and on the way home found the main road blocked because of an accident. The cop said it might be as much as two hours before traffic was let through on 52 and that if I had an alternative route, I could make a u-turn and head back in the other direction.

I told him that if is was all right I'd just turn onto the little road where he had us flagged down and figure it out from there and he waved me onto what I believe was Peytontown Road but I wouldn't take any bets that I'm right about that.

"Anyway, I was just glad to be on a road that seemed to be going somewhere, because I'd rather be moving than sitting still and I knew if it didn't dead end I was going to be much happier that I was up on the main road so off I took into parts unknown. The sun was setting in the west like it always does behind my house and I figured all I had to do was follow it and, sure nuff, in a matter of minutes I figured out where I was.

I love taking the back roads home and don't do it nearly as often as I should. I was enjoying the scenery and admiring old homesteads off the beaten track when I came around a bend that leveled out into the middle of maybe 200 acres or so of bottom land where corn had been raised last year.

The fields were at least 400 yards wide and went out of sight in both directions upstream and downstream of a bridge that crossed the creek.

The field on the right was covered black with what I first thought to be buzzards. I stopped my truck and got out to get a closer look and discovered it was turkeys. And I'm talking several hundred turkeys.

I started looking for an electric fence, thinking that maybe somebody was raising them or had them penned in the bottom when all of a sudden they started taking to the air in all directions.

It was like I'd dropped a stick of dynamite in the middle of this flock of turkeys because they flew off in every single direction of the compass for maybe a minute and a half. It sounded like an Air Force Base and they were gobbling and squaking as they flew and then, as suddenly as it all began, the field was empty and not a turkey to be seen. The only evidence I had of their being there was a couple of huge, steaming splotches on the hood of my truck and one on the windshield.

If a wild turkey has never flown over and #@!% upon you, take my word for the fact that you have not missed out on something important to the understanding of nature. (Unless you enjoy being !@#* upon by pigeons, in which case you should multiply that experience by 20.)

I figure these wild turkeys were having a convention in the middle of Madison County to get ready for the season which opens April 14 and fattening up on kernels of corn the picker missed last fall.

That's right. Season is open on these birds (April 14) that Ben Franklin lobbied hard to have named the national symbol instead of the bald eagle. I have no idea why Ben was so big on turkeys instead of eagles unless he tried eating both and discovered that an eagle was more palatable than a turkey and that the tougher bird should get top honors.

A few years back I bought a turkey call and a video tape on how to use it. The call consisted of a piece of slate and a little cedar dowel with a screwdriver handle on it that could be scraped on a piece of slate to mimic a hen turkey. I was up for hours in the middle of the night, for weeks, watching the video and learning to talk turkey and finally the big day came.

Opening day of Spring Gobbler Season found me atop a ridge between Hamilton Valley and Harmon's Lick nestled in the root cavity of a huge, century-old, dead oak overlooking both sides of the valley slope with my turkey call and my Browning 12 gauge magnum shotgun with its 30 inch, full-choke, barrel and 4 3-inch shells loaded with BB shot (literally, I'd taken out the regular shot and replaced them with copper-coated, steel BB's) and I forgot how much powder was in the charge but the original shell was made to shoot geese. At high altitude. I reloaded the shells so that they would bring down low-flying air-craft.

"Prouk, Prouk Prouk----Prouk". You basically wobble the dowel and scratch it on the slate so that it makes a turkey sounding noise and after you practice a bit you can sound exactly like a hen turkey lost in the woods. Of course, if there is no male turkey in the vicinity you can "prouk" to high heaven to no avail and that's exactly what I expected to happen.

So I'm sitting high on the hilltop and it's a perfect place to be and I've used my flashlight to get up there about an hour before daylight and off in the distance a rooster crows and I figure it's time to ease out my turkey call. I figure there's not a wild turkey in ten miles of where I'm sitting , but I've been practicing so why not enjoy the moment.

"Pourk, Pourk, Pourk", I scrape it off the caller and think to myself that there's not a hen turkey in the world that ever sounded sexier and about that time- "BOOGGITTYY! BOOGITY! BOOGGITY!!!!!" A gobble, maybe 500 feet away, echoed off everything that would turn sound. Bark off my old dead-oak shelter fell down upon me. Dogwood and redbud blossoms that could have held another day or so tumbled to the forest floor as if shot dead. And then there was silence.Remember "Jaws"? "B O O O O O O O O O k i t y BOOOKITY BWAPPPPEPPP. Kaaaaansort Whomp whomp whomp whomp whomp. THUD!!! " (The sound of a mad turkey flying off the roost and hitting the ground.) (Remember this because it may be important to your survival one day. A wild boar makes far less noise. A wild boar and a grizzly bear in mortal combat is almost half as loud though) (Write all this down in the "notes" section of your field guide for future reference on the off chance that you have a future).

This was, I thought, the turkey from heck, and it intended to eat me and all of a sudden the booookity bookitys were coming from all over and I was apparently the only hen.

To make a long story short, I pourked and clucked a few more times and did a few more sety hen calls and saw turkeys in the dawn that I would not have believed to there had they not appeared.

I passed up shots (remember I had the shotgun from heck itself) at an old gobbler with a long beard to get a shot (after my knees stopped knocking) to shoot a jake (young tom) that morning. The rules say "short beard" (young) is legal and I'm not the type of person to mount a hand- full of turkey feathers (long beard) on a plaque. I'm still a firm believer that harvesting game means putting it on the table and I have no respect for anyone who goes out shooting for the so-called "sport" of killing.

What I've discovered is that, even among the youngest of wild turkeys, an old, size 12, Reebok or Nike running shoe probably has less gristle, more real meat and ultimately tastes better than a spring gobbler. But that's beside the point.

The point being that the turkeys need harvesting and I hope that when the season begins you will be responsible enough, if you hunt, to make sure that harvest gets on the table.

God help us all if the turkeys harvest you.

Mt. Vernon firefighters had to extinguish a Hellig-Meyers delivery truck, which caught fire while traveling on Hwy. 461 last Wednesday. The fire from the truck, ignited the grass around it and caused several acres to burn, before the blaze was extinguished. The furniture and the truck were a total loss.

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

Forty-three percent of American parents report spanking or hitting their child within the last 12 months, thirty-seven percent report insulting or swearing at their child, and two percent report having kicked, bit or punch their child. More than three million children were reported to child protective services agencies as alleged victims of child abuse or neglect in 1998, and approximately one million of these reports were confirmed.

The physical and emotional abuse of children yields harmful consequences for society: a growing body of evidence links child abuse and neglect with drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, youth violence and chronic health problems. It is therefore critical to focus on preventing child abuse and neglect before it starts. That's what April's observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month is all about. Placing an emphasis on positive parenting is an important component to the prevention of child abuse. As a community it is essential that we support parents and families. As parents, we must strive to respect and nurture our children.

Here are a few tips on how to be the best parent you can be:

1. **Be a nurturing parent.** Children need to know they are special and loved. Educate yourself about a child's development process so you can have reasonable expectations about what your child can and cannot do.

2. **Help yourself.** When the big and little problems of everyday life pile up to the point where you feel overwhelmed and out of control, take time out. Don't take it out on your child. Take a deep breath, turn on some music. Know where you can turn for help when you need it.

3. **If your baby cries...** It can be frustrating to hear your baby cry, especially when nothing you do seems to work. Learn what to do if you baby won't stop crying, but, never shake a baby.

4. **Monitor your child's television and computer use.** Watching violent films on TV or playing violent computer games can harm young children. Not only does it scare them, it also teaches children that aggression is a good way to handle frustration and solve problems.

5. **Spend time playing with your children...** or read to them instead!

6. **Report suspected abuse or neglect.** Keeping children safe is the responsibility of every adult in our community. If you have reason to believe a child has been or may be harmed, call Community Based Services, Protection and Permanency at 606-256-2138.

April's observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month is an appropriate opportunity to remind ourselves of our collective responsibility to prevent the abuse and neglect that robs so many of our society's children of their childhood, their sense of security and well-being and their future. Imagine a world without child abuse. Together, we can make it happen.

For more information about how to prevent child abuse and neglect, visit http://pcak.net.

Sincerely,
Rockcastle Child Abuse
Prevention Committee

Email the Signal at mvsignal@sun-spot.com

Twilight Absolute

Auction

of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Caldwell Jr.'s

House and Lot

Fri., April 6th • 6:00 p.m.

Dailey Avenue, Fairground Hill section, Mt. Vernon

Location: Turn off West Main Street onto the Old Somerset Road. Turn right off the Old Somerset Road onto Dailey Street. Follow auction signs.

Since Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell have done quite a bit of work on the property, they have decided to sell it for the absolute high dollar.

The pictured 1 1/2 story house has 1,896 square feet of living area and features: three bedrooms (two upstairs), one bath, living room, kitchen, family room, and utility room. Other ammenities include: almost new carpet and roof, washer/dryer hookup, city water and city sewer and a concrete wrap around porch. In addition; there is also a garage building.

This home is situated on a lot measuring 130x100.

Auctioneer's Note:

If you're in the market for a good home conveniently located in the city limits of Mt. Vernon, then be sure to mark your calendar to attend this twilight absolute auction on Friday evening, April 6th at 6 p.m.

Note: The purchaser of a single family residence built before 1978 has a maximum of 10 days to inspect the property for the presence of lead base paint. The period for inspection begins March 27th through April 5th. The successful bidder must sign a waiver of the 10 day post sale inspection period.

Terms: 20% down day of sale, balance in 30 days.

Announcements day of sale take precedence over printed matter.

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