

The Hunter's Fable

Joe Divan always considered himself a great hunter. Even in his early childhood in Michigan, Grand Rapids I believe, he had hunted. He made his own rifle. He also made his own bullets. He poured the lead into the molds, he added the powder to shells which he also made. He was truly a self sufficient hunter.

In his early years, he could go out his cabin door, stand on his porch, and pull the trigger on his single shot rifle. Game would fall. His table was always full of food. Sometimes he even had to throw away some of the game he got because it was too difficult to be skinned and cleaned.

Hunting was so good, Joe only needed one rifle and one type of bullet. He did not even have to go into the woods very far. Nor, did he even have to aim the rifle. Game was so plentiful, he only had to point his rifle in a general horizontal direction and pull the trigger. Sometimes, with only one shot, he would hit deer, turkeys, and wild pigs.

Others saw Joe's success and also began to hunt. This created a problem. The game was more difficult to get close to home. This made his hunting trips longer. He had to lug his rifle and bullets further into the forest to get the game. When he found game, he had to get it home. This cut into his enjoyment of the game he found because of the time required to get to the hunting area, call the game, kill the game, and get back home. This forced Joe to hire bullet makers.

In addition, Joe had to develop new game calls to get the game in killing range. Joe also had to learn to aim his rifle. Life for Joe was becoming difficult, and down right unenjoyable. Joe had to work harder than he wanted to run the bullet plant, hike into the woods, call the game, find the game, kill the game, bring the game home, and prepare the game for consumption. Like most of us, Joe had a bit of a lazy streak.

Ralph Retailer had watched Joe's success from afar. Aiming the gun, calling the game, and finding the game was not a problem for Ralph. He came from a large family called Roebuck. The Retailers were a great family and spread across a great developing country which had a boundless amount of game. Ralph Retailer went to Joe and made a proposition. He said, "Joe, if you will make me the tools to hunt with, the rifle and bullets, I will pay you for them and do the hunting." Joe was elated! He could stay home, stay dry, enjoy the fruits of hunting without having to call the game and aim the rifle. He only had to make the rifle, and the bullets.

Because the bullet maker employees and the rifle maker employees got expensive and hard to come by, Joe and his family moved to North Carolina. He grew and prospered in North Carolina. Making the rifle and the bullets was great. Joe enjoyed his prosperity. Some of Joe's kin even moved to Mississippi and started to make rifles and bullets. These were considered inferior products by the "real" rifle and bullet makers in North Carolina.

As he was not in the field hunting every day, Joe began to lose contact with the game he hunted. His reliance for this information came from his new friend Ralph.

At first this was not a problem. There was simply so much game that all of Ralph's hunters did well. As the hunting continued, the game became harder to find. Ralph had to go further into the woods. Sometimes when he shot, he did not hit anything. Ralph's friends suggested he must change his methods to kill more game.

Ralph developed a new game call he named "SALE". This helped greatly. Game came within hunting range, and life became easier for Ralph.

Several people, including the rifle makers and bullet makers Joe had hired, decided to also commence making rifles and bullets. There was such a demand for the rifles and bullets, that most prospered.

Ralph had the same situation. There was so much game that Ralph's family split into other hunter groups. One of the best known was a clan called Monk Ward. Another was called Hal Myers. And, of course, there was Fred Federated. But, game was plentiful as the hunting fields were growing and developing rapidly. All prospered greatly.

Little thought was given to the game they hunted. After all, Joe knew how to make the bullet and the rifle. Ralph knew how to call the game with his SALE game call. There was plenty of game. Life was good. Real Good!

Joe and Ralph decided, along with their friends and family, to go to Grand Rapids and discuss great hunts, and great kills using the SALE game call. Later the meetings were moved to Chicago where there were so many hunters and rifle makers that you could not walk down the halls of the building they called the Merchandise Mart. It was a grand affair.

After a while, problems arose. There were other hunters out in the woods. They used different methods to call the game. Andy Auto's hunting party closely bound the hunting tool makers with the hunters. They both studied the game, what they ate, where they were, what they liked and didn't like. Due to Andy's research, a most effective game call was found. This call sounded something like "IF YOOOOU DON'T COME TO US, YOU WILL NEVER BE SUCCESSFUL, ATTEND GREAT EVENTS IN A TUX, OR HAVE A GREAT SEX LIFE." Game heard the call and moved to Andy Auto's killing ground. They moved away from Ralph's arena.

Ralph found calling game much more difficult. He tried new game calls such as "60% OFF SALE." He tried the "NOTHING DOWN SALE" game call. HE tried "39th ANNUAL GOING OUT OF BUSINESS AND FIRE SALE" game call." However, the game did not respond. Almost nothing could beat Andy Auto's game call.

Then, Henry BigHouse started hunting with his call “IF YOU DON’T HAVE A BIG HOUSE, YOU HAVE NO COMMUNITY STATUS.” Ralph thought this was good. He could get the game in Henry’s hunting area also. They could hunt together. Ralph could have the game after Henry got his. This worked for a while until later when Henry killed most of the game and left very little for Ralph.

Hunting for Ralph got tougher and tougher. At the meeting in Chicago, Ralph told Joe that he needed to produce new styles of guns and ammo. What they had was simply not good enough. And, ‘Oh-by-the-way’, the new guy manufacturing ammo and rifles had cut the price.

Joe had to meet the new price for ammo and his rifle. Joe got busy and developed new rifles and ammo. Joe had a HUGE ego. He knew what to develop. After all, many years ago, his family had been great hunters. But, to be safe, he invited Ralph to his factory to get Ralph’s input.

Ralph knew that the hunter across the street, who also used the SALE game call, did well with bullets painted blue. So Joe made blue bullets.

This caused some problems in Joe’s production, but Ralph would change bullet suppliers if he raised prices, so he lowered his margins and continued on. Much to Joe’s consternation, his friend Ralph did buy from other suppliers. Joe figured he must develop new hunters to sell rifles and bullets to. So he started showing his hunting equipment in places such as Atlanta, Dallas, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and particularly on his home turf Hickory and High Point. His kin in Mississippi, who Joe thought of as second class anyway, started their market in Tupelo.

The hunters who used the SALE game call got tired of spending money going to see all the new bullets and rifles markets, so they only attended a few markets. The others dried up.

As time progressed and hunting became more difficult, the SALE game callers now asked for bullets in hundreds of colors. They wanted not only different rifles, they wanted shot guns, and even some were asking for bows and arrows.

Joe made them all.

Ralph could buy his hunting tools anywhere. There were many manufacturers. Of course, there were no price increases to cover the costs of making the additional varieties of hunting tools.

When Joe wanted to sell part of his company to finance an expansion, he got little for it due to his low margins. Borrowing money for new technology was also scoffed at by the lenders. After all, who in the financial community would loan money to “No Margin” Joe?

As for the “SALE” game callers, their life was becoming even more difficult. Cynthia Cruise, part of the Vacation clan, had started a hunting group. Her game call sounded like “IF YOOOOOU DON’T CRUISE, YOUR SEX LIFE WILL BE FOREVER DIMINISHED, AND YOU WILL NEVER HAVE FUN.”

Next the poor “SALE” game callers were faced with the most devastating of all. This was the Clara Computer clan. Their game call was awesome. It sounded like, “IF YOOOOOOU DON’T HAVE A PC IN YOUR HOME, YOUR KID WILL MOP FLOORS FOR A ‘NO FUTURE’ LIVING.”

The SALE game callers were attempting to find a way to weather this devastating game call. They thought they would concentrate on the “Boomer” game when a old hunter appeared named Mike Mutualfund. Although Mike was old himself, he had developed a new game call which sounded like: “IF YOOOOU DON’T COME TO US, YOU WILL RETIRE TO LIVE IN A CARDBOARD BOX AND EAT DOG FOOD ‘TILL YOU DIE.”

All these new game callers, Andy Auto, Henry Bighouse, Cynthia Cruise, Clara Computer, and Mike Mutual had moved much of the game to their hunting areas. This left little game for the “SALE” game callers.

The SALE game callers devised a new plan. They would ask their hunting equipment manufacturers for more models and styles of guns and bullets. Not only ask for more guns and bullets, but for new hunting clothes, and new equipment to take them further into the woods. And, ‘Oh-by-the-way’ delivery of the items was to be with in weeks or days of order placement.”

Second, they would come up with a new “SALE” game call. One member of the “SALE” hunters said that a “NOTHING DOWN NO PAYMENTS FOR EVER SALE” game call would get the job done. Game would flock to their area. Some of the other “SALE” hunters disagreed. So they settled on a “NOTHING DOWN, NO PAYMENTS OR INTEREST FOR A YEAR SALE” game call.

By this time, the manufacturers of hunting equipment for the “SALE” game callers were becoming more concerned. The “SALE” game caller hunters were banding together in increasing numbers, and demanding more and more from the beleaguered manufacturers. The manufacturers responded with more and more product. Bullets were now in thousands of colors and sizes. The rifles came in any length or bore desired with hundreds of stocks in hundreds of types of wood. The hunting clothes, hunting transportation, bows, arrows, and now cross bows and arrows tipped with any device were available. Not only available, but available in two weeks of order placement.

Neither the hunters or the manufacturers bothered to study the game. Both had HUGE egos and absolutely knew how to get the game. Why should they spend money and energy studying the game. They knew if they had enough different guns, different ammo, different hunting clothes, and different transportation, eventually they would hit something.

Surely the “SALE” game call was not at fault. After all, this call had worked miracles 20 or 30 years ago. Why should it not work today?

Twice a year, the manufacturers would pay large amounts of money to lease spaces in the various markets. They would spend fortunes to prepare more hunting equipment to show to the hunters in hopes of selling to a new hunter account, only to find fewer and fewer hunters even bothered to go to the shows. The manufactures made less money on their sales. The hunters also made less money on their game. The industry of hunters and manufacturers continued to consolidate so that those remaining might be able to survive a little bit longer.

The Auto hunters, the Bighouse hunters, the Cruise hunters, the Mutual hunters, and the Computer hunters continued to expand and have increasing success in their efforts. The “SALE” hunters and manufacturers did not even get enough game to afford the expertise to figure out a game call which works.

Morale of the Story

Before you go hunting, study your game, and find a new game call that works.

This Fable was written in response to a call for ideas by the President of AFMA, Mr. John Bassett, III who recently formed a committee of furniture manufacturers to learn what could be done to obtain a larger share of the consumer spending dollar. The next Fable will offer some ideas for a new hunting call.