

Jim Casada Outdoors

September 2016 Newsletter

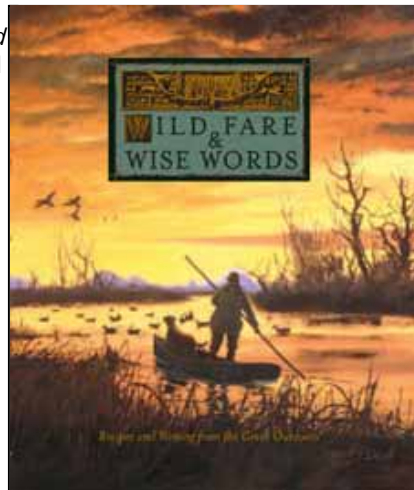
Jim Casada
1250 Yorkdale Drive
Rock Hill, SC 29730-7638
803-329-4354

Web site: www.jimcasadaoutdoors.com
E-mail: jc@jimcasadaoutdoors.com

[Click here to view this newsletter in a .pdf with a white background for easy printing.](#)

This Month's Book Special

Several years ago Ann and I edited a cookbook entitled *Wild Fare & Wise Words*. It featured favorite recipes from writers, mostly in South Carolina but with contributions from a few other states. In truth over half the recipes were ours and I wrote all the narrative material introducing each section. It's a lovely cookbook in hardbound form with an eye-catching cover illustration by wildlife artist Bret Smith. It was a joint project of the S. C. Outdoor Press Association (SCOPE), the Harry Hampton Wild Fund, and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).



Sadly, thanks to the ineptitude and obstinacy of one DNR employee connected with the undertaking and her failure to promote the book in the agreed upon fashion, it did not do particularly well. On top of that, the portion of the print run that SCOPE owned was destroyed in a fire. As a result I ended up with some of the stock and I have, over the years, sold almost all of them. I have a couple of cases left and figured this was a good time to sell them.

The books would make an ideal Christmas gift or hostess gift, and **at a price of \$15 postpaid they are a bargain.** For once I had a bit of foresight and had my wife, Ann, sign copies while she was still able to do this, so you'll get signed and inscribed copies.

[Add to Cart](#)

Jim's Doin's

This month and the next will be busy ones for me. There's a book signing; a dove shoot with a grand game supper afterwards; attendance at the annual meetings of two organizations to which I've belonged for decades (the [Southeastern Outdoor Press Association](#) and the [South Carolina Outdoor Press Association](#)); a number of magazine assignments due; an eagerly anticipated bird hunting trip to [Highland Hills Ranch](#) in Oregon with Linda Powell of Mossberg, a longtime friend (we'll be shooting a couple of new Mossberg shotguns); the opening of deer season; the induction ceremonies for the [Fly Fishing Museum of the Southern Appalachians](#) Hall of Fame (to my great delight not only am I being inducted but the event is to be held in my home town of Bryson City, N.C.); and a high school reunion.

In between travels and time at the computer, I'll be spending considerable time afield scouting and getting ready for the opening day of deer season in mid-October.

Add to that the annual ritual of getting in a fall garden (Hurricane Hermine finally brought us just over an inch of much-needed rain, so I can run the tiller without moving along in a cloud of dust), and it

Several of you have been kind enough to ask about her and alas, I'm afraid I can't offer much good news. She continues to decline at a rapid rate and went under hospice care about a month ago. She's comfortable and pain-free, and at this point that's about all I can ask. I see her daily and she still recognizes me, but that's about it. Her health is something that's difficult and depressing for me to talk about, but enough folks have inquired for me to feel I ought to offer an update. Thanks for all your thoughts and prayers. They mean a great deal to me.

makes for a busy few weeks. That's just dandy with me, because I cherish the cooling nights and days that are warm but not stifling hot.

[Back to Top](#)

September's Sweet Song

To me, September has always been a magical month. Perhaps not quite as appealing as October or May, my two favorite months of the year, but right alongside April in the close runner-up position in the "finest of months" sweepstakes. Here are some of the many and varied reasons I treasure September.

- It's a month of fulfillment, with the rewards for a summer of gardening visually obvious in the form of stacked freezer shelves or, as was once the case, row after row of quart canning jars filling shelves with all sorts of fine eating for the months to come.
- It's pumpkins and candy roasters, persimmons and pawpaws, showing the colors of maturity and promising satisfaction for the sweet tooth in the deep, dark days of winter.
- September is a fresh run of fox grape jelly on the kitchen counter waiting for seals to pop, and it's a cathead biscuit straight from the oven, slathered in butter, inviting a liberal application of a portion of that run of jelly set aside for immediate consumption. After all, it makes perfectly good sense to have a hint of the goodness to be enjoyed at breakfast a few months down the road.
- It's hogs being fattened for killing time a couple of months down the road, with rations of Hickory Cane corn from a fine summer crop, armloads of pigweed from sere September fields, and maybe cull pumpkins or apples thrown in for good measure.
- September is a boy wandering after school, maybe feasting on a hand full of ground cherries at one point, stopping to suck the sweet pulp from around the seeds of wild apricots (maypops) at another, and as he heads to the woods to check out hickory and oak mast in anticipation of the coming squirrel season pausing at a pawpaw patch to see if there's any satisfaction for his perpetual hunger to be found there.
- It's that self-same boy grumbling about the resumption of school after three months of summer freedom, although in truth he's delighted to be around his buddies on a daily basis once more.
- The sweet of summer yielding once more to fall is black walnuts falling to the ground and folks who know the incomparable delights their nutmeats can offer in cookies and cakes gathering tow sacks of them to cure, safe from bushytails, before the husks are removed, the nuts cracked, and the meats picked out come late fall or early winter.
- It's a popcorn popper of a dove shoot, with grey-winged speedsters coming from every point of the compass and cries of "behind you" or "mark right" ringing out across recently cut fields of corn or millet. The heady perfume of burnt gunpowder drifts on the late afternoon thermals and somehow you know that all is right in the world because hunting season is once more at hand. No wonder a longtime friend of mine calls a fine dove shoot "Christmas in September."



- September is field pea vines twining around withered stalks of corn, yellowing in the sun while awaiting picking and shelling; or it's colorful Indian corn or Indian beans, a vivid reminder of mainstays of life for the Cherokees who lived in and around the areas in the Smokies where I grew up.



- It's a city cousin visiting on the weekend and learning the hard way that just because a persimmon is a bright, beckoning orange doesn't mean it's ripe.
- It's huckleberries ripening at 5,000 feet in elevation and beckoning the picker to gather some for a breakfast of berry pancakes at a remote backcountry campsite.
- The tail end of dog days is bird dogs and beagles, carrying too much weight and too little fitness after a summer of languor, rejoicing in early morning or evening outings preparatory to the serious business lying a couple of months down the road.
- September is serious business at the shooting range, getting ready for the deer season to come, or perhaps shooting 25 arrows a day at a target just to make sure your eye is in and your muscles in tone.
- It's cookouts to finish up the last of the previous season's venison, maybe partnering burgers and chili with hors d'oeuvres in the form bacon-wrapped dove breasts from a successful opening day shoot.
- It's muscadines and scuppernongs, full of sugary sweetness and paying rich rewards for long ago January pruning, hanging from vines to be picked and eaten on the spot, made into juice, used in hull pies, or for a run of homemade wine.

- It's a sense, indefinable yet all too real, of the turn of another season. You can feel and smell fall in the air, and if you aren't familiar with such sensations I would seriously suggest that you are out of tune with nature's rhythms. In truth almost all of us are, to a far greater degree that was true only two or three generations ago. My Grandpa Joe was so observant at this time of year, and seldom would we spend an hour together that he wouldn't drop a tidbit or two of wonderful information showing just how observant he was and just how close to nature his entire life had



been. He might pull a dried ear of corn from a yellowed stalk (he always left the corn in the field to dry until October) and pull back the shuck. "Look how thick and tight that shuck is," he'd say. "We're in for a cold winter." Or he'd point to a big hornet's nest high up over the river and comment: "Hornets have built mighty high this year. We are going to have a passel of snow and some bitter weather."

- It's "you can see forever" bluebird skies after a cold front moves through, and if you are lucky enough to have the proper kind of vantage point, such as the peaks of the Great Smokies where I grew up, hills and valleys roll away before your eyes until they gradually merge somewhere on a distant horizon.

- It's a section of the garden cleared, tilled, and planted in fall crops—mustard, turnips, lettuce, kale, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, and the like. Seeing the green of these cool weather crops is almost a type of renewal you associate with spring, although deep down inside there's re realization that these are winter crops, hardy as the mountain people who grow them.
- It's a boy wandering past a mountain cemetery, lovingly cared for by people who realize that a key mark of decency is respect for those who gone before. He whistles in the gloaming, not really believing in ghosts but still making some noise just in case haints need to be kept at bay and to boost his spirits. Chances are, although he would deny it in the company of others, his step is a bit quicker and his pulse a bit faster.
- It's the last of the summer tomatoes, small yet scrumptious, clinging to vines, even as their diminutive cousins, tommatoes and pear tomatoes, continue to bear like there's no tomorrow.
- It's the earlier of the fall apples ripening and windfalls beginning to litter the ground, a signal for some sessions of serious sauce making and fruit drying with delightful desserts to come from these efforts with winter's arrival.
- It's an apple cobbler hot from the oven, with a hint of cinnamon smell mingling with the fragrance of the fruit. Drenched in cream, it's a dessert for the gods and for the Godly people living close to the soil.
- It's a row of preserves made from hard, gritty cooking pears somehow turned magical thanks to the gifted hands of a kitchen wizard.
- It's an evanescent sense of sadness, impossible to pinpoint yet as real and enduring as the turning seasons, as you realize another time of earth's bounty is coming to an end.
- Most of all though, September is a time of sweetness, and if you can't find something to love about September you are too urbanized, sissified, or at a distant remove from the verities of connectedness with the good earth.

[Back to Top](#)

Recipes

CROWDER PEA/SPINACH/VENISON KIELBASA SOUP

I've always been a great one for experimenting in the kitchen, and many of my experiments involve situations where I've got a surplus of some garden truck or need to clean out the freezer a bit. I'll readily admit that not everything works, but this recent effort was one I found mighty pleasing. I can't give precise measurements for the simple reason I didn't measure anything. That being said, there's lots of leeway depending on your tastes and what you have available.

Cook a big pot of crowder peas until they are tender. You can cook them in water but I find using chicken broth or putting a tablespoon of chicken base in the water preferable. In this case I did the latter. When the peas are done, add some water and dump a bunch of fresh spinach (kale will work just as well) in the pot and simmer until done. At that point cut up a sizable link of venison kielbasa (use store-bought beef kielbasa or turkey kielbasa if you don't have venison) in small chunks and add to the pot. Add more water if needed. Simmer until the flavors mix and marry nicely and serve with a big chunk of cornbread. You can turn this from a soup to a stew by using less water, but the broth from the cooking peas will give it plenty of richness even if you add considerable water.

DOVE PILAU



Doves are arguably at their succulent best when breasted, marinated, wrapped in a strip of bacon and grilled. But it should not for a moment be assumed that they aren't delicious in other ways. Here's a personal favorite, and if an outing later today brings modest success it's a dish I'll be making in the next day or two.

3 or 4 doves per person
 Rice (follow package instructions for amount per serving)
 Salt and black pepper to taste
 1 or 2 onions, diced



Breast out the doves and remove from the bone. Save the heart as well. Cook the doves in a stew pot until tender, remove from the pot and cool (retain the broth for cooking the rice), and once the meat can be handled, de-bone. Cut the meat into small chunks and set aside.

Sauté the onion in a bit of olive oil until translucent and set aside with the de-boned dove breasts.

Cook rice according to instructions and when ready drain. Place the drained rice, onion, and dove meat in a suitably sized pot and stir in seasoning. Add a cup and a half of chicken broth and heat the pilau until most of the liquid has been absorbed, being careful to stir and avoid cooking too dry. Serve piping hot.

GROUND VENISON DISHES

It's football watching time of the year, although I'll confess that I have minimal interest in the college game and absolutely no interest in the thug-riddled buffoonery of the NFL. That's likely not going to sit right with some readers, but given the amount you pay for this newsletter there's a wee bit less of the customer is always right scope for complaint. Besides, I'm not saying you shouldn't enjoy the sport. I'm simply saying the pro game, at least, has to take a back seat when I've got other things awaiting me such as pruning my toenails. With that off my chest, I recognize that sports watching and things like grilling or enjoying pizza go hand-in-hand, so here are some recipes for such culinary doin's that should help you clean out any ground venison remaining in the freezer as you get ready for another deer season.

CHEESEBURGER VENISON PIZZA

½ pound ground venison
 ¼ cup chopped onion
 3 slices bacon
 1 pizza kit
 8 ounces mozzarella cheese (in addition to cheese in kit)

Brown venison and onion in a skillet. Cook the bacon in a microwave on paper towels. Place sauce on crust. Top with kit cheese and then spread browned venison atop the cheese. Crumble bacon and distribute evenly. Top with the additional eight ounces of mozzarella cheese. Bake at 425 degrees for eight to ten minutes or until crisp and cheese is melted and golden. This is quick and simple (and scrumptious).

HALF-A-YARD PIZZA

1 loaf (18 inches long) French bread
 1 pound ground venison, browned and drained if suet was added when processed)
 18-20 slices pepperoni
 ½ pound venison kielbasa, cooked and thinly sliced

1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
 1/3 cup chopped onion
 1/3 cup chopped green pepper (optional—I don't like green pepper and omit this)
 ¼ cup chopped ripe olives
 ½ teaspoon oregano
 1 package sliced mozzarella cheese, halved diagonally

Cut bread in half lengthwise and set aside. Combine the remaining ingredients except the cheese and stir well. Spread evenly on the bread halves and place the bread on ungreased cook sheets. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and top with cheese. Continue baking until cheese melts. Serve immediately. Serves four (and the recipe can be doubled).

ONION BURGERS WITH BASIL MAYO

1 pound ground venison
 4 teaspoons beefy onion dry soup mix
 ¼ cup water

Place ¼ cup water and beefy onion soup mix in a glass measuring cup, stir well, and microwave for one minute. In a medium bowl, combine ground venison and soup/water mixture. Mix lightly but thoroughly and shape into four patties. Grill over charcoal, turning only once.

Basil Mayonnaise

3 tablespoons mayonnaise
 1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves
 ¼ teaspoon dried parsley leaves
 ½ teaspoon garlic salt
 ¼ teaspoon black pepper

Combine all the ingredients and mix well with a wire whisk. Use about a tablespoon of mayonnaise mixture per burger. Serve with lettuce, slice tomatoes, and onions as toppings.

SIMPLE CHILI FOR HOT DOGS OR SLOPPY JOES

No cookout is really complete without a good hearty chili to top hot dogs, burgers, or maybe to eat by itself. Here's a simple, easily prepared recipe that is just the ticket.

1 pound ground venison
 1/3 cup chopped onion
 1 package Sauer's Chili Seasoning (or create your own)
 1/3 cup water
 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce

Brown venison and onion in a skillet. Add seasoning (if you make your own chili powder and cumin are key ingredients), water, and tomato sauce. Simmer 10 to 15 minutes until thick. Serve with hot dogs or hamburgers.

[Back to Top](#)

Thank you for subscribing to the Jim Casada Outdoors newsletter.
 Feel free to contact Jim with your comments, questions or suggestions at jc@jimcasadaoutdoors.com.

[Home](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Links](#)

[Search](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Archives](#)

Send mail to webmaster@jimcasadaoutdoors.com with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 2004-2011 JimCasadaOutdoors.com. Last modified: 09/06/16.