

# Jim Casada Outdoors

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## January 2017 Newsletter

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### This Month's Special Offers

As is likely all too obvious to those who have read my newsletters for some time, I'm an avid reader with wide-ranging tastes. I enjoy mysteries (especially by British masters of the genre), biography and autobiography, history, about anything connected with my native Appalachia, books by explorers and about exploration, works on virtually any type of hunting and fishing, those related to nature or living close to the earth, and tales of adventure. In the latter context I have long been a fan of the prolific South African writer, Wilbur Smith, and just as is the case with Louis L'Amour's works on the American West, I've read everything Smith has written. A couple of years back I discovered the works of an Australian writer, Tony Park, who bids fair to be the "new" Wilbur Smith. Like Smith his books are set in Africa, and they are also similar when it comes to impeccable historical accuracy even though they are works of fiction.

**I've gone through all Park has produced to this point, and my shelves simply don't have room to hold what I've read. Accordingly, I'm going to offer these books (they are all in paperback form) at a price of \$5 apiece.** That really just pays my shipping costs, for the packaging, and maybe leaves \$.50 to a dollar clear. Here are the titles, and it will be first-come, first-served.

- *African Dawn*
- *African Sky*
- *Dark Heart*
- *The Delta*
- *Far Horizon*
- *The Hunter*
- *The Prey*
- *Safari*
- *Silent Predator* (two copies available)
- *Zambezi* (two copies available)

Look for a similar offer in my February newsletter featuring paperbound volumes by Wilbur Smith. The March specials will focus on books on turkey hunting, and **don't forget that you can always visit my website and click on the "[BOOKS](#)" tab to access a whole bunch of lists of works on the outdoors.**

### Four Special Turkey Hunting Volumes

I've been doing a lot of housecleaning, study reorganizing, and book collection rearranging. One think that has come out of this flurry of house work has been the discovery of a good many book duplicates, and four of those in my personal turkey collection were sort of special simply because they were signed and inscribed to me. Since

I had two copies so signed and inscribed, I decided to sell one of them. In a sense you'll have something from the author and a connection to me (what booksellers call "association copies").

**They are listed below and are obviously one of a kind, first-come, first-purchased. I will, if the buyer desires, sign and inscribe the book as well or, alternatively, provide a letter of its provenance. The books will require \$5 shipping and handling in addition to the listed cost.**

- Dick Alford, *Let's Cool Down a Turkey*. Paperbound. Fine. \$35
- Stewart J. Bristol, *Hunting Wild Turkeys in New England*. Paperbound. Near fine. \$25.
- Lovett E. Williams, *Hunting the Gould's Wild Turkey in Mexico*. Paperbound. Very fine. \$30.
- Lovett E. Williams, *The Ocellated Turkey in the Land of the Maya*. Hardbound. Very fine in dj. \$40.

To purchase or for more information contact :

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### Jim's Doin's

I've got precious little of note to report from my personal life of late (and in truth much the same could be said of the almost 75 years leading up to now). I'm beavering away on book projects and have spent considerable time going through my personal library trying to bring something approaching a semblance of order to near chaos. The special offers above are one tiny aspect of this as I try to clear some shelf space, dispose of books that are duplicates or that I do not need for research purposes, and the like.

I've mailed a bunch of boxes for the collection of the National Sporting Library in Middleburg, Virginia. After having spent a few weeks there as a research fellow, I realized that their collection and facilities, to a far greater degree than any other holding or location I knew of, was ideally suited to preserving our nation's rich sporting heritage for posterity. You might want to check the [National Sporting Library and Museum](#) out on-line, and if you are ever in the Middleburg area I strongly recommend a visit.

Otherwise I'll have a profile of a mountain personality, one of an ongoing series, in the upcoming issue of *Smoky Mountain Living*, and look for a piece on the lure and lore of turkey calls in an upcoming issue of *South Carolina Wildlife*.




Another current effort involves writing a foreword for a reprint of Sam Hunnicutt's classic work *Twenty Years Hunting & Fishing in the Great Smokies*, which is to be published by Western Carolina University (WCU). That effort will also include a talk to the institution's Friends of the Library group, the first-ever presentation in what is intended to be an annual event, on April 13 at 4:30 p.m. in the Hunter Library's Reading Room. The Reading Room is presently being renovated and my talk will do double duty as dedication of the space.

Somewhat parallel, inasmuch as it is also associated with WCU, is a contribution on Horace Kephart as a writer on firearms to a planned anthology of his work. The co-editors of the work are a WCU professor, Mae Claxton, and recently retired WCU archivist, George Frizzell. I have launched initial research for an anthology of great whitetail stories similar to the one I recently edited on classic quail tales.

Efforts of this sort, along with daily visits to my dear wife and mundane things such as cooking (which I greatly enjoy) and house cleaning (which I greatly disfavor), keep me plenty busy. In idle hours, as has ever been my practice, I read. In an average week I'll go through four or five books.

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I'm going to make a practice, as I have noticed many public figures do (mind you, I'm anything but a "public figure"), of listing my calendar for the entire year. **Here's what lies ahead in 2017 that is now on my schedule.**

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- Jan. 26, Noon—Presentation on Archibald Rutledge in the Speaker at the South Carolina Center for the Book in Columbia (1500 Senate Street) Series. **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Free.**
  - Feb. 3—The Fly Fishing Show in Atlanta, GA. I will be present to make two brief presentations connected with a trout Hall of Fame being established by *Southern Trout* (an on-line magazine). Jim Gasque, who wrote *Hunting and Fishing in the Great Smokies* (I provided an introduction for a reprint of this book done by the University of North Carolina Press), is one of six inductees who were "grandfathered" in, and while I'm no expert on him, my knowledge of his career is probably about as extensive as that of anyone living today. Gasque devoted an entire chapter in his book to Mark Cathey, a distant cousin of mine who is arguably the most legendary of all southern Appalachian anglers, and "Uncle Mark" was one of six inductees elected by on-line voting. Unlike the situation with Gasque, I'm intimately familiar with his career and have written extensively about the man. For details on the show in general visit [www.flyfishingshow.com/atlanta](http://www.flyfishingshow.com/atlanta) and for information on the Hall of Fame ceremonies, visit [Southern Trout](#). **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Admission charged for the Fly Fishing Show.**
  - Feb. 25-26—Deckle Edge Literary Festival in Columbia. Specific time and subject matter tentative at this point—details to follow in February newsletter. **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Free.**
  - Mar. 25—9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. I will be at the *South Carolina Wildlife Magazine* booth at the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic at the State Fairgrounds in Columbia to sign books, shake-and-howdy, share a tale, and in general enjoy the company of tens of thousands of visitors and hundreds of exhibitors at South Carolina's biggest hunting, fishing, and outdoor show. If you have books of mine you'd like signed,

bring them by, and I'll have a solid selection of my titles on sale as well. Details on the Classic, which runs Marc. 24-26, are available at [psc@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:psc@dnr.sc.gov). **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (Admission charged).**

- Mar. 31-Apr. 1—Dogwood Weekend at King University in Bristol, TN (my undergraduate alma mater). I currently serve on the institution's Alumni Advisory Board and try to make every event possible at a school which gave me a wonderful education (or at least that portion of it of which I took advantage). **PRIVATE.**
- Apr. 7—Back in Bristol for the inauguration of Alexander W. Whitaker, IV as president of King University. I'll also be arriving a couple of days early to get in some east Tennessee turkey hunting. **PRIVATE.**
- Apr. 13—4:30 p.m. talk at Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC. **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (I'm checking on this to be sure). Free.**
- Sept. 28-Oct. 1—South Carolina Outdoor Press Association annual conference in Florence, South Carolina. **PRIVATE.**
- Oct. 19-22—Attending annual meeting of the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association in Kentucky. I have never missed a meeting since becoming a member of this organization well over 30 years ago. **PRIVATE.**
- Nov. 11—Talk to a small group of donors who have participated in a shooting weekend that will serve as a major fundraiser for the National Sporting Library and Museum. **PRIVATE (and my participation is tentative at this point).**

## Fading Features of Yesteryear

Periodically my mind is prone to go wandering down rabbit trails that lead nowhere in particular other than to have an association with the past in some way or other. Yesterday, while bustling around the house trying to do some long overdue organizing of books, I got to thinking about things I took for granted as a boy and now miss mightily. That was all started by dusting off a book by the former Georgia politician, Zell Miller, entitled *Purt Nigh Gone*. It's no secret I have about as much use for politicians in general as I do for ticks, cottonmouths, welfare baby breeders, any type of laziness, and most university professors (keep in mind I was one of those), but I always admired Zell as a man of the people. His book is a delightful excursion into a world we are rapidly losing.



Mind you, some of the loss for me personally is nothing more than the dictates of advancing years and geographical location, but much of it is truly a reflection of a changing and not necessarily better world. With that in mind, I thought it might be interesting to share some memories of activities or parts of life that seem to have vanished, at least from my existence, like thistle down caught in a strong wind storm.

Depending on your age, where you live, and life's experiences, I suspect you will look longingly back, as I am doing, on these fast fading features of a world that may not have been as technologically advanced as ours is. Yet

I would argue that a goodly portion of those simpler days and simpler ways belong to what I would describe as a better time. At any rate, let's ramble down memory lane, and if you are a bit younger and find some of these things as alien as rotary dial telephones and party lines, a bit of indulgence in history assuredly won't hurt you any.

- **Hog-killing days.** Recently I asked, at three different meat counters, if I could get a package of backbones-and-ribs. In two of the three cases I was met with blank stares. The third butcher knew what I was talking about but simply said: "We don't work hogs up that way anymore." Of course few people raise and butcher their own pigs these days, and I guess there's more money to be made from bone-in pork chops than there is from tenderloins and backbones-and-ribs. Yet in my youth hog-killing day, with the whole extended family involved, was a big deal. It involved lots of hard work but the rewards were worth all the labor and more. Oh how I loved fresh fried tenderloin or a big pot of backbones-and-ribs with sweet potatoes, cornbread, and greens on the side.
- **Quail hunting.** The explanation for the disappearance of this sport, except in the form of "hunting" released birds on a shooting preserve, is as simple as it is sad. The noble little quail, once an integral part of the mountain scene with whopping covey rises in the wintertime and melodious singing of courting bobwhites in the spring, is all but gone. This isn't the place to go into detail, but suffice it to say that thanks to a combination of factors ranging from changed habitat to a veritable host of enemies, the bird one writer described as "five ounces of feathered dynamite" is now almost as scarce as hen's teeth or native American chestnuts.
- **Grouse hunting.** There are still some grouse in the high country of North Carolina where I grew up, although their numbers there (and I gather, elsewhere) aren't nearly as high as once was the case. Lack of habitat is probably the primary explanation, and of course when birds are few in number that means only the hardest, most dedicated of souls will hunt them. Also, and this is more an afterthought than anything else, I personally think that hunters of today lack some of the gumption of hardy souls from yesteryear like Mark Cathey and Sam Hunnicutt, two mighty Nimrods from the Swain County, N. C., where I grew up. Hunting grouse in mountainous terrain takes an abundance of gumption.
- **Sliding or sledding on broom sedge.** Dry broom sedge, where it grows thick, is almost as slick as ice or, to use a mountain colloquialism, "slick as a mole's ass." A hillside laden with the plant will give a thrilling ride to someone atop a big piece of cardboard or even a home-made sled with wide, smooth wooden runners. Of course broom sedge still grows in highly acidic soil which isn't being cultivated, but you find far less of that kind of situation that was once the case.
- **Making and shooting slingshots.** Ask yourself: "When was the last time I saw a boy with a real slingshot?" (Not one of those store-bought substitutes for a good fork of dogwood fitted out with the proper accompaniments). Chances are it has been a long time, yet in my youth having a slingshot was commonplace for boys, and many of them could shoot one with deadly accuracy.
- **Carrying a pocket knife.** In my younger years everyone toted a pocket knife, but with these quintessential tools banned on airplanes, in public buildings, and elsewhere, the practice is in abject decline. Still, nostalgia associated with this trusty tool remains. A recent blog I wrote for "Sporting Classics Daily," a rewrite of an awarding-winning piece I did a few years back for *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine, apparently drew even more interest than the frequent gun pieces which appear on the Daily. At least that's what the editor tells me, and that nostalgia for knives tickles my fancy.
- **Boys just being boys**—wandering in the grey woods of winter, sometimes carrying a gun with a pretense of hunting but in reality just plundering about. It was (and is) a wonderful way to be at peace and ponder whatever might be on your mind. Or there were those times, many of them, when hunting didn't even enter the picture. Walking aimlessly yet in quiet delight you might find an icicle to suck on along the way, a wild grape vine to serve as a swing, some limber saplings to shinny up and then "ride" to the ground as they bent, some puff ice to step in and then admire your footprint's impact, or a patch of frozen water on a small pond or in a swampy area that just invited a slide or two across it in your shoes (no one had blade

skates). The latter activity cost me heavily in my early teens. A bunch of us boys were skating on a frozen pond and a friend pushed me from behind unexpectedly. I fell face down on the ice without getting a hand out to break my fall at all. My four upper front teeth were knocked back in my mouth and while a genius of a local dentist who was far ahead of his time managed to save them, eventually all required root canals and other work.

- **Finally, and this probably says more about one of my favorite aspects of the season than anything else, where are the traditional sweets of the season**—chocolate-covered cherries, orange slice cake, black walnut and oatmeal cookies, persimmon pudding and persimmon bread, applesauce cake, and the like? These all carried over from Christmas into January and were treats after a long Saturday of hunting or when I got home from school. I loved all of these sweets, and have always had a “tooth” for such delectable delights.

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**Meanwhile, if while reading you have taken even a tiny step down memory lane, whether in one of the areas noted above or in others, I’m happy and you should be as well. With that in mind, it’s time to head to the kitchen to prepare something tasty and filling. This time of year, for me, that means soup, stew, or a hearty dish of some type of wild game.**

### SIMPLE VENISON SPAGHETTI

Jar of Prego spaghetti sauce  
 1 ½ pounds ground venison  
 1 onion  
 1 garlic clove, minced  
 2 stalks celery  
 2 carrots  
 Olive oil  
 Red or black pepper and salt to taste  
 1 can diced tomatoes (or I use tomatoes I have quartered and frozen)

Brown venison in a large skillet using just enough olive oil to keep it from sticking (may not be needed if you have suet added to your venison when it is processed). In a separate skillet, with a bit of olive oil, sauté onion, carrots, and celery (all of which should be chopped into fairly small pieces) along with minced garlic clove. Once venison is browned and vegetables are sautéed, combine with venison in a large pot and add tomatoes and Prego sauce. Allow to simmer on very low heat, checking occasionally to make sure there is no sticking, until carrots are tender and flavors have married nicely. I prefer a very thick sauce and more simmering is the way to achieve this.

Once the sauce is ready (or you are ready to eat), prepare spaghetti noodles, drain, and immediately top with sauce and sprinkle liberally with grated Parmesan cheese. This makes a substantial amount of sauce but it freezes beautifully and can be taken from the freezer, thawed, heated, and added to just-cooked noodles for a quickly prepared meal.

**NOTE:** This sauce is excellent for really hearty (and really sloppy) Sloppy Joes.

### WILD TURKEY AND RICE SOUP

Dark meat from a wild turkey—legs, thighs, medallions on lower back, wings, neck, and if you wish, the giblets  
 Chicken stock (or make your own stock from the wild turkey)  
 3 or 4 carrots  
 3 celery stalks

Black pepper and salt to taste

Rice (wild rice, brown rich, "cook in a bag" Uncle Ben's, or whatever your prefer will work)

Prepare turkey by cooking the dark meat in a stew pot, simmering for several hours. Then remove the meat from bones and chop into small pieces with a knife or ulu (one of my favorite kitchen tools). Discard the bones and save stock, adding canned chicken stock if you wish or using store-bought stock only. Place stock, turkey, carrots cut into small slices, and diced celery in the stew pot and add salt and pepper. Simmer until vegetables are tender. Prepare rice separately and when it is ready add to the stew pot. Allow to simmer 15 minutes longer, adding additional water if needed (the rice, even after having been cooked and drained, will absorb moisture). Serve with saltines, garlic toast, or a toasted cheese sandwich if you want a soup-and-sandwich meal.

### SQUIRREL AND HASH BROWNS

2 cups cooked squirrel, chopped

3 medium potatoes

1/3 cup bacon drippings

1/2 cup finely diced sweet onion

1/2 teaspoon salt

Serve with freshly ground black pepper

Stew or parboil squirrel (whole or quartered) until meat is easily removed from the bones and then chop into pieces. Peel and coarse grate potatoes (you can buy prepared hash brown but I think doing it from scratch is tastier). Put bacon drippings in large skillet and heat, then slide potatoes into the

Pan. Sprinkle onion, squirrel, and seasonings over potatoes. Cover and cook moderately fast until potatoes are nicely browned on one side. Stir to blend, turn over, and brown on other side. Serve immediately. Rabbit can be prepared the same way.

### BACON SQUIRREL

It's hard to go wrong with bacon, and it blends wonderfully well with lots of game. The drippings impart flavor to the recipe above as well as this one, and dove breasts or duck breast nuggets, not to mention venison backstrap, nicely wrapped in bacon, make for mighty fine grilling options.

Bacon drippings

2 squirrels, quartered

1/2 cup flour

1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/4 teaspoon paprika

1 1/2 cups bread crumbs

1/2 teaspoon basil (optional)

Cook bacon and strain drippings, setting aside the meat to crumble and use atop a salad (a spinach salad is an ideal accompaniment for this dish). Pat squirrel dry with paper towels and then roll in flour mixed with garlic salt, black pepper, and paprika. Dip in bacon drippings and completely moisten. Dredge in bread crumbs (seasoned with basil if you wish). Place squirrel in a baking dish and bake at 375 degrees for 30-45 minutes on one side; turn and bake on other side for 30-45 minutes more or until well browned and tender.

### APRICOT DUCK APPETIZERS

1 cup flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Breast from one large duck (if wood duck, use two) cut into bite-size pieces  
2 tablespoons olive oil 2 tablespoons butter (the real thing)

Place flour, salt, and pepper in a bag or zip-loc. Add duck pieces and shake thoroughly to coat with the seasoned flour. Lightly brown duck in olive oil and butter at medium high heat. Do not overcook; The bites should be pink on the inside. Serve immediately with apricot sauce (see below).

### Apricot Sauce

1 cup apricot preserves  
¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice  
¼ cup water  
2 teaspoons cornstarch  
¼ teaspoon grated lemon peel  
1 tablespoon sugar  
2 tablespoons brandy

Place apricot preserves, lemon juice, water, cornstarch, lemon peel, and sugar in a saucepan. Cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly, until thickened. Remove from heat and add brandy. Place in a chafing dish flanked by duck bites.

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