

Fin, Fur and Feather



Wants Weasels Eliminated
Dear Fin, Fur and Feather:

Summer before last as we sat at our breakfast table, we counted twenty-two rabbits frolicking around on our lawn at our Centermoreland farm.

Two weeks later there wasn't one to be seen. On two occasions I saw a weasel loitering in the tall grass at the edge of the lawn. It disappeared when I approached with my gun.

You can't have hunting or rabbits when weasels are around. The question is, "What can be done about it?" Won't you sponsor, talk-up and write-up weasel killing clubs out Centermoreland way? It would do a lot of good.

Respectfully
John R. Hughes
24 Park Place
Kingston, Pa.

I have discussed your letter with a number of local sportsmen and they all agree that the return of the bounty on weasels might encourage youngsters to trap or kill them.

In this connection it was interesting, however, to get the comment of local game protectors. One said that a friend who trapped twenty-three weasels last season, has caught none this year although he has twenty-five traps set. The \$1 bounty, as you probably know, has been off for about eight months.—Editor.

State Hunter Casualty Report for 1954

The Game Commission has completed the record of Pennsylvania's casualties by hunter firearms in 1954. The figures are based on reports required by State Law of persons involved in human shootings while hunting or trapping for any species of wildlife.

In the Commonwealth last year 21 persons were killed in the hunting field by sporting arms. Injured in some degree by hunters' gunfire were 508. Two persons were injured by hunters' arrows.

Encouragingly, the 1954 fatal shootings numbered 13 less than the previous year, when 34 persons (an exceptionally high number for the State) met death in the hunting field through the discharge of their own weapons or that of another. In 1954, the number of injured, 510, was one higher than in 1953.

Injuries or deaths due to heart failure, those that occurred enroute to or from the hunting field and others caused by any incidental happening, are not included in this report.

Proving that hunting, as a rule, is a safe, healthful sport when the common sense rules of safety are observed, most of the near-million hunters in Pennsylvania enjoyed their sport last year without a mishap.

As usual, the facts surrounding so-called hunting accidents indicate that in most instances a basic rule of safety was violated, either by the shooter or the victim.

Proof of this are these items taken from the 1954 Pennsylvania record. Nine of the fatalities were self-caused; 73 of the injuries were by the weapon in the hands of the person hurt. Two persons were killed and 12 were injured by guns placed in a dangerous position. Guns accidentally discharged in the hands of hunters caused the death of 6 persons, caused injury in 64. The "hunter slipped and fell (with safety off)" category, accounted for 5 deaths and 25 woundings. Shot in mistake for game caused 5 fatalities, 13 non-fatalities.

Surprisingly 7, or one-third the persons killed by hunter gunfire last year, were in open fields and two others were on public highways. Three hunters met death in daylight, none in dusk, dark or fog. Ten met their end during clear weather, removing the "did not see" excuse. The injury rate ran correspondingly high.

Classified as to persons shot while hunting certain birds or animals, the following: Deer, 3 persons shot fatally; 29 wounded. Bear, no fatalities; 3 injured. Upland small game, 14 killed; 433 injured. Woodchucks, 3 fatalities; 32 non-fatalities. Predators, 1 person died; 1 was wounded.

The shotgun caused 13 hunter deaths and 445 injuries. The rifle, 8 fatalities and 57 non-fatalities.

So the record goes, pointing to the fact most of these casualties by hunting arms need not have been. Any firearm can bring pleasure, pain or death, dependent on the handler.

Two divisions of Pennsylvania's 1954 hunter casualty report are thought-provoking. They show that youngsters between the ages of 12 and 21 years caused 8 of the deaths and 77 of the injuries. The number of youths killed in that age bracket was 4; the number wounded was 45.

Unfortunately, about all the gun training many boys receive from parents is the admonition, "Be careful, don't shoot yourself or anyone else." There is little need to worry about boys who have been trained in the careful use of guns. There is often cause to worry about the "experienced" hunters in whom familiarity with firearms has bred contempt.

There will always be human casualties in the hunting sport. But educators, sportsmen and wildlife administrators are increasing their efforts in the program to teach the rudiments of gun handling indoors and the application of the principles in the open. Understanding of firearms' potentialities, in respect to humans as well as wildlife, and the practicing of emotional control while hunting will pay dividends in lower-than-would-have-been hunter casualties in the future.

Idetown

Douglas Black, who is a student pastor of the Princeton Presbyterian Seminary, Princeton, N. J., will be the guest speaker next Sunday at all three points of the Lehman Charge.

Official Board will meet in the Church on Friday evening. Rev. Clayton Bostic, in charge.

Mrs. Walter Smith spent the weekend with Mrs. Alice Smith of Wilkes-Barre.

Mr. and Mrs. George Casterline returned to their home on Thursday

after spending several months with relatives and friends in Bethesda, Md.

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Smith, of Pottstown, spent the weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Williams. Mrs. Smith is doing general duty in the Pottstown General Hospital.

Mrs. Elmer Hoover spent several days recently with her daughter, Roxie, who is secretary in the Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey.

Mrs. Thelma Lamoreux attended the capping exercises of her niece, Jean Hendershot of Luzerne, at the nursing class at Williamsport Hospital. The capping was held at Ly-

coming College on Friday night.

Mrs. Frances Hizzard of Lehman, and Luella Carrs, of Dallas, were recent visitors at the home of Mrs. Thelma Lamoreux.

Mrs. Mae Newberry of Fernbrook was guest of honor at a birthday dinner which was held at her home on Sunday.

STATE POLICE SAY

The driver who takes safety rules lightly may end up with a heavy heart after an accident. No jury can clear a guilty conscience.

"Good Vision Is Vital"

Dr. A. S. Lisses
OPTOMETRIST

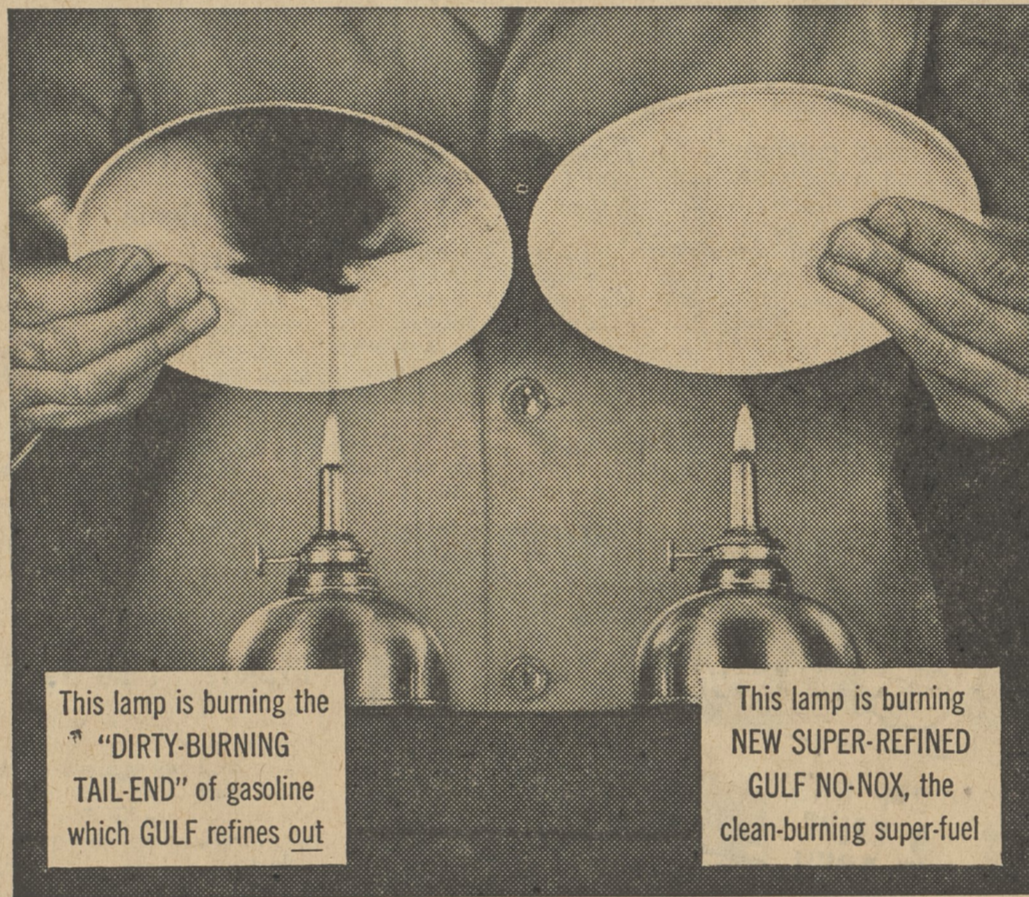
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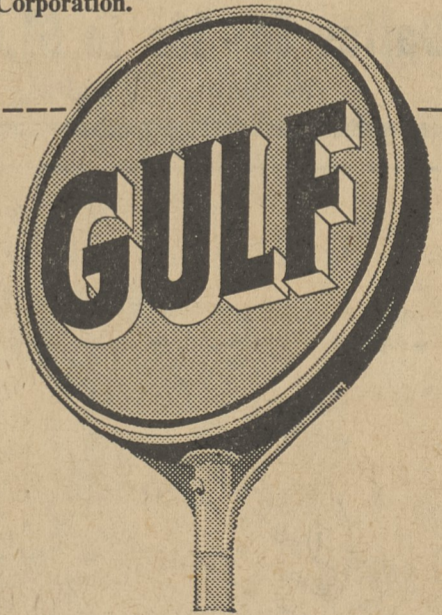
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