

# Newsletter – March 2019

It is almost two years to the day that I hunted my last animal, a Lord Derby's eland in Cameroon. Along with me admitting that, in my 70<sup>th</sup> year, this would be my last hunt, I made a few other admissions, namely, that:

1. I would sell all my firearms.
2. I would resign my hunting association memberships.
3. I would stop writing for hunting magazines.
4. I would stop writing/editing/publishing hunting books.
5. I would close my websites after two years and pulp whatever books of mine that remained unsold.

So, how has it been? Honestly? I confess I have not missed hunting as much as I feared. I still enjoy listening to my friends discuss their hunts and hunting plans, the situation on their game ranches – for those that have them – and looking at their photos. Every now and then it is true that I experience something akin to a man who has lost a limb who and sometimes feels as if is still there. Or like a confirmed smoker who gave up years ago and catches a whiff of cigarette smoke and has a sudden, powerful yen for a puff but knows he dare not.

And then I still read whatever comes my way about hunting and its inseparable partner, conservation, although I have reduced the number of hunting magazines to which I subscribe to three. In fact, it is the conservation of the wonderful wildlife and wildlife habitat on this continent that these day fascinates me, on the one hand, and concerns me most, on the other hand, and dictates many of my interests. Not quite the “penitent butcher” which retired hunters of yesteryear were accused of being, as conservation has been a passion of mine for many years, in fact ever since I understood the vital role that hunting played in its foundation and support.

Yes, it was a bit of a wrench to sell my firearms, especially my .375, which my good friend, Derek Carstens, christened, Bertha, all those years ago. It was a fabulous workhorse and served me flawlessly over nearly 40 years and could still shoot a 1 ½ inch group at 100 metres when I sold it. Having said that, another good friend, Eben Espach, bought it and has said that, if ever I want to use it, I have only to say the word. Even so, it was the one firearm I was tempted to keep.

I resigned my membership of all my South African hunting associations but still remain a life member of DSC and SCI.

As regards not writing for hunting magazines, I did make an exception and said that, if they asked, I would continue to write for those editors for whom I had written for many years. Amazingly, a couple have asked and I have written two articles on giraffe – the new favourite of the animal rightists – for Neels Geldenhuys, the publisher and editor of African Outfitter, which I have long felt was the finest hunting magazine in Africa. Gerhard Damm, the co-editor along with Derek Carstens of Conservation Frontlines, a brand new conservation/hunting magazine, also asked me to write an article asking and answering the question, “When Is It Time to Stop?” I think the article will appear in their May/June issue. If you are interested in when you could/should/might want to stop hunting, the ezine is free. You only need to log onto their website and subscribe.

#### [Article: THE GEOPOLITICAL GIRAFFE](#)

Gerhard was the founder and editor for many, many years of the popular, worldwide ezine, African Indaba, which was taken over and is still published by CIC, The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, although Gerhard has resigned from both the organisation and editorship of the magazine. I wrote many articles for him over the years and enjoyed the fact that he was far too busy to edit my articles too heavily and gave me a relatively free hand on the topics on which I

wrote. Speaking to him recently, I understand that Conservation Frontlines will follow a similar format to African Indaba.

Probably the biggest change in my writing is, firstly, that I have not written a new book for over a year and it has felt as if I have almost been on holiday over this period. Much as I loved writing, editing and publishing eight books in ten years, the last two, [Hunting the Spiral Horns – Bongo & Nyala – The Elite African Trophies](#) and [Hunting the African Buffalo – Nature's Debt Collector – The Six Subspecies](#), turned what had been a much loved pastime into a six to seven day a week hard grind and job. I no longer enjoyed book production – as opposed to the writing and editing – but knew enough to know that I would always want to keep on writing. However, I was not sure about what exactly.

Up popped Daily Maverick, which has become the biggest eNewspaper in South Africa, much read and admired for its fearless exposure of corruption, its willingness to take on controversial topics, show both sides of particular issues and, most importantly for me, deal with the subjects they tackled in depth and employing experienced, well-informed journalists and writers to do so. They also regularly publish articles by avowed animal rightists (ARs) and anti-hunters (AHs) but, unlike most other publications, are prepared to publish the other side of the story.

I began writing what they call Opinionista pieces for them on a variety of subjects – from threats by the government to remove the accreditation of the law school at the University of Cape Town, the top rated university in Africa, to cheating at cricket – I also wrote a number of pieces challenging the emotive and fact less allegations of ARs and AHs.

Here are a list of recent hunting magazine article and those on hunting and conservation published by Daily Maverick for those who might be interested.

- [Does Trophy Hunting Really Benefit Conservation and Local Communities?](#)
- [Kruger Lions: Who really cares about conservation?](#)
- [Kruger Park Lion Debate: Animal rights activists are just plain wrong](#)
- [Why can hunters and animal rightists seemingly never agree?](#)
- [Theodore Roosevelt – Killer or Conservationist?](#)
- [Pinnock vs Vegter](#)
- [Hunting Facts versus Animal Rights Fiction](#)
- [Conservation on the Continent](#)

A surprising number of people have asked me to publish a book on the Hippotragines – Sable, Roan and the Oryx which, at one stage, I considered producing after the Buffalo Book. I have not completely excluded this from my future plans but, as I am only too aware, *anno domini* has a way of making any future decisions at this stage of life iffy to say the least. Put another way, man proposes and God disposes.

I was proposing to close my website and pulp my unsold books in October but my distributors have asked me not to do so. I owe them so much that I feel it is only fair to let them dictate the date of the closures and pulping. They have, however, proposed a sale of my books later in the year and again I will let them dictate the date and terms.

I think it is true, therefore that, like soldiers, old hunters never die, they simply fade away. But, while I am fading, I remain fascinated by all things that conserve the wonderful wildlife and wildlife habitat that have ruled my life for so many years and will continue to try and play a positive role in this regard. If and when I feel I have something relevant to say on this topic I may well have the temerity to drop another Newsletter in your mailbox.

Kind regards  
Peter