



# Goat Tracks



*Journal of the Working Goat - Winter 2017*  
*Until You Have Loved an Animal, Part of Your Soul Remains Unawakened.*



**The Boys are Go'in for the Top!**  
**Another great hiking story from Karen Bean, Maple Falls, WA**  
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## Goat Tracks

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### Publisher

Larry Robinson

### Editor & Contributors

Carolyn Eddy

Larry Robinson

### Training Consultant

Carolyn Eddy

### 4H

### NAPgA News

NAPgA Board

### Contact Information

Correspondence and phone calls to:

Larry Robinson

13 Norwood Place

Boise, ID 83716-3283

(208) 331-0772

[larry@goattracksmagazine.org](mailto:larry@goattracksmagazine.org)

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# On Track with Goat Tracks

by Larry Robinson



2017. Only a happy memory, at least for hikers in Idaho. The closeout of this year will be described in greater detail in the Spring 2018 issue, but we were locked out of the high country in late September. While I am certainly aware that that eventuality is possible in the mountain West, it has never happened before, at least not to me. Our last hike was 30 miles in and back, and didn't actually get much more than great exercise, since we got turned around at 7500'... and our destination was 8585'! And that, as they say, is that, in the wonderful world of mother nature!

As most should be aware, the Land Use Plan for newest wilderness in the US, here in Idaho, is now in the hands of the Land Use Planners. As they always seem to, it involved at least one closure to goats -- only goats. But in my response to it, which I did for both NAPgA and myself individually, I thoroughly rebutted any justification whatsoever for a goat-elimination-plan. We will have to see where they go with our comments, there is just NO legitimate justification for a closure to any animal, especially goats. I will publish much of my land use comments in this issue of the magazine.

Putting an animal down...

I had two animals that needed to cross the bridge this year, and after investigating having a vet do it, I elected to do it myself, due to the expense and my present financial situation. Never again! That was the most singularly brutal thing I have ever experienced and too much of a cruel final stroke for boys that have carried so much, for so far. Regardless of the expense, next time, it is gonna be the vet, and a much more peaceful departure from the land of the living. They just plain deserve better.

Well, the only direction to look at this point is forward, as we trudge unwillingly into another winter. Much was learned this year, as cougars introduced themselves into my consciousness in a very in-your-face manner, and I did find at least one place in Idaho that turned out to be just so-so as a hiking destination. But hope springs eternal, and I am currently trying to sort out where next year's adventure will be. Should there be a good weather-window in the spring, Hells Canyon is going to get another visit.

Land use plans continue to be a point of interest for goatpackers, as the Shoshone (WY) is still dragging their feet, and the much-delayed rewrite of the Blue Mountains (OR) has not as of yet presented itself. There are some signs that there has been some listening by Land Managers in that forest, and there is some hope that the outcome of that one may turn out to be somewhat better than it initially appeared.

Once again, KUDOS to **Maggie Highland**. Maggie injected herself into the land use equation in a major way with the initiation of her study of our goats, western US-wide, to see if we really have M-ovi as all the land managers suspected. **The result? We DON'T.** That study, and another recent study in Alaska, has really pulled the carpet out from under those that would relegate we and our goats to the wilderness ash heap.

**THANK YOU MAGGIE!!!!!!**

NAPgA's primary news item is the transfer of NAPgA's leadership baton from Charlie Jennings to Curtis King in Burbank, WA. Curtis has been a key figure in the bringing of reason into the Blue Mountains discussion, and was an excellent choice to pick up the NAPgA baton. Welcome aboard Curtis!



*Actually, FB Potpourri... but then nobody actually writes to GT, so what's an editor to do?*

**Taffy Mercer** shared Laz E Acre Farm's post to the group: North American Pack Goats Association/NAPgA. 1 hr · 🌐

Pac-Man was a very special goat. Nan & Phil Hassey raised him and Eldon Otta bought him from them a couple of years ago. We picked him up when we met up with them to hike the San Rafael Swell with Herb Flower (Charliehorse) and Larry Robinson. Pac-Man was a great ambassador for goatpacking at functions he attended and we all enjoyed hiking with him. He is really going to be missed.



**Karen Kopf** ▸ North American Pack Goats Association/NAPgA 7 hrs · 🌐

So...here is a controversial photo!  
 This is Wilbur, one of our boys who came to us from a ranch on the Washington Canadian border. The ranch owner was unsuccessful in his efforts to deter the Bighorns from his pasture. So how was it managed?  
 Fish and Game came out and tested the herd for M. ovi. The results were negative. Fish and Game thanked the rancher. The end.



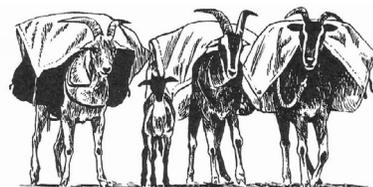
**Sandra Pratt Amos** 1 min · Pollock, ID

This old wether was our first goat and our first packgoat buddy. We made many happy memories with him. He was born April 10, 2002 and is still going strong at 15 1/2 years old.

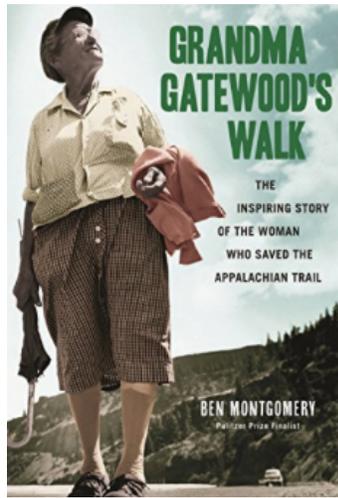


**Audrey Rietema Gomm** ▸ North American Pack Goats Association/NAPgA 7 hrs · 🌐

I am a docent at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park (Sutter's Mill) in Coloma, California. I bring my pack goats to the park to teach the visitors. During the California Gold Rush of 1849 people rushed to the gold field often strapping their supplies to the family dog. I ask, "If you had a 200+ pound goat would you not rather your goat carry your things?" I then have the opportunity to share about modern day pack goats. It's so fun to watch their faces. I LOVE my goats!



## Emma Gatewood, Not Your Grandma's Grandma



Emma Gatewood was the first woman to hike the entire Appalachian Trail alone, as well as the first person—man or woman—to walk it twice and three times and she did it all after the age of 65. This is the first and only biography of Grandma Gatewood, as the reporters called her, who became a hiking celebrity in the 1950s and '60s. She appeared on TV with Groucho Marx and Art Linkletter, and on the pages of Sports Illustrated.

The public attention she brought to the little-known footpath was unprecedented. Her vocal criticism of the lousy, difficult stretches led to bolstered maintenance, and very likely saved the trail from extinction. Author Ben Montgomery was given unprecedented access to Gatewood's own diaries, trail journals, and correspondence. He also unearthed historic newspaper and magazine articles and interviewed surviving family members and hikers Gatewood met along the trail. The inspiring story of Emma Gatewood illustrates the full power of human spirit and determination.

### Following Poem Written by Emma Gatewood

Emma Gatewood, better known as Grandma Gatewood, was an extreme hiker and ultra-light hiking pioneer who was the first woman to hike the 2,168-mile Appalachian Trail from Mount Oglethorpe in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. Solo, and in one season.

[[Book: Available on Amazon.com](#)]

### "The Rewards of Nature"

If you'll go with me to the mountains  
 And sleep on the leaf carpeted floors  
 And enjoy the bigness of nature  
 And the beauty of all out-of-doors,  
 You'll find your troubles all fading  
 And Feel the Creator was not man  
 That made lovely mountains and forests  
 Which only a Supreme Power can.  
 When we trust in the Power above  
 And with the realm of nature hold fast,  
 We will have a jewel of great price  
 To brighten our lives till the last.  
 For the love of nature is healing,  
 If we will only give it a try  
 And our reward will be forthcoming,  
 If we go deeper than what meets the eye.



packgoats.com ▶ Pack Goats  
 2 hrs · 🌐

👍 Like Page

So Merceless injured his back a few months ago (not packing) and I'm working with a animal chiropractor to try and see if we can get him back to 100%. I'll let you know how it goes. Really interesting process.



*Charlie Jennings goat Buford, at his best!*



A Christmas Goat!

# Paradise Ranch

## Pack Goats

### Research & Development

Paradise Ranch Packgoats delivered 32 “Specifically “ bred Packgoat kids to the 2017 Rendezvous in Colorado in June. We had about 100 kids on the ground this year and are presently accepting orders for the 2018 breeding season.

We have been breeding specifically bred Packgoats for over 20 years and offer 7 full blood breed, Alpines, Oberhasli, Saanen, Boer, Nubian, Toggenburg, LaMancha and a number of Hybrid lines like our 300 lb. Sabors.

We offer Saanens that will get near 300 lbs, 41”. Our ever-improving genetics is second to none. We breed for Packgoat conformation and temperament and the results speak for themselves. Have we hit the mark? Are our Packgoats any good? Don’t take our word for it, ask the ones who have purchased them, Larry Robinson, Charlie Jennings, Carolyn Eddy, Clay Zimmerman, Kent Daniels, Dave Suisse, Nancy & John Clough, Matt Lyons, Stephen Barnhill, Joe Delong, John Bamberg, Marc Warnke, Dean Kroon and many others.

Our specifically bred-to-be **Packgoat** kids sell at a \$50 discount to NAPgA members. They each come with all vaccinations, coccidia treatment, wormings and a life time of support. All kids are hand raised, individually, with many hours of hands on personal training by the time you receive them. A percentage of the proceeds from our sales will be donated to NAPgA’s legal fund.

The “Best is Yet to Come”! Phone: (620)767-7888 or eMail: [paradise27@tctelco.net](mailto:paradise27@tctelco.net).



Mudslide & Louis, Bridger-Teton NP, WY



You could be the proud owner of good-looking boys like these

These pictures are from this year’s crop of Dwite’s goats

# Don't Go Out Without a Way to Call for Help!

## Don't Go Out There Alone!

*Even if your only companion is a Rescue Device.*

Ever since I have been hiking, I have been fending off admonitions that, 'You must not go hiking alone!'

The primary reason I have been 'fending them off', is because, for reasons I don't intend to elaborate on here, I almost always have no other choice. It boils down to; either go alone? Or don't go at all.

Since not going at all is *NOT* an option, alone is a lonely number, but alone I go.

The one concession I did make years back, was to purchase a PLB when they first came available. The PLB is a satellite-based one-trick pony that simply calls for a rescue should you need one. These devices were initially pioneered/tested in Alaska, and began saving lives as soon as they were introduced. As a result of their obvious utility to the hiker and other outdoors folks, this rescue system was expanded to cover the entire US of A.

Since then, similar devices have sprung onto the market, that not only call for a rescue, but allow you to send other types of communications to folks at home, folks that care.

I am not going to attempt to cover the market here, as my main concern is that you have one. I carry a Satellite-based SPOT now, and it allows me to send simple 'I'm OK' messages, call for help, or call for a rescue. It not only gives a great deal of comfort should the unforeseen occur, but it allows you the flexibility to continually change your plans, without folks being unaware of where you are.

What it does do, is send a simple pre-programmed message, plus Google Earth coordinates of your exact location, so the folks receiving these messages can pinpoint you on G-Earth. The SPOT also has a 'Track' mode, that sends coordinates every 15 minutes or so, which has the effect of greatly narrowing the search area should you come up missing. If you send a SPOT message in the AM, and hike 10 miles before you send another, say in the evening, should you disappear, the search area is extremely large. If the last message was just 15 minutes ago, it becomes much more manageable.

One of the reasons that I have become much more intense about this, is that I have lately been reading books that recount the stories of folks that have disappeared in the wilderness -- and there are hundreds of them -- folks that go into the woods to enjoy the thrill

of the outdoors, and never walk back out again... and are never found. Jack Thomas here in Idaho walked into the Queens River area near Atlanta in June of 2016, and remains missing.

It CAN happen to you. The SPOT device is \$150, and the yearly subscription is \$150. Your life is worth that! Matt Lyon and my cougar

experience this summer is a clear demonstration of how quickly things can go to hell in a handbasket.

**SPOT:** <https://www.findmespot.com/en/>

**Amazon:** <https://www.amazon.com/SPOT-Satellite-GPS->



*the SPOT*

## Myrtle Beach woman comes home to find her goats on the roof

By Holly DeLoache, Digital Journalist, Saturday, November 4th 2017  
<http://www.wmbfnews.com/story/36764987/myrtle-beach-woman-comes-home-to-find-her-goats-on-the-roof>

MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) – A Myrtle Beach woman came home Wednesday to find her two goats, Nan Nan and Baby Brie, on the roof of her house.

"Ummm... this is what you come home to with free-range animals," Debbie Johnson shared.

Johnson lives in the Riverside neighborhood of Myrtle Beach. Her goats have been free-range since the 2015/2016 floods, but they always stay close to home.

Johnson says the baby goat started climbing up to the roof recently and now her mom is following her.

The mother/daughter duo has been using the back deck to get up and down.



# Land Use Issues

There can't be too many in our part of the world that are not aware that we have been struggling to retain our grip on the ability to access the wilderness with our goats. First we got shuttered out of the Shoshone NF (The Wind River Range), one of the most scenic areas in the western US. Then the Blue Mountains in Oregon began to posture in that direction, and now Idaho, in the newest wilderness in the US, has proposed closing a part of the White Cloud mountains, an incredibly scenic area in one of the most beautiful mountain ranges in Idaho. The reason is always the same, and that is that the sky is falling, and it is falling on the revered and worshipped Bighorn sheep (BHS) (in reality for the money that they return to the land managers coffers). What scares them witless, is the perceived threat of BHS contracting *Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae*, which is supposed to bring them down with pneumonia, and soon after that, death.

To be sure, BHS have experienced many die-offs in the past, reducing their numbers considerably. And it has seemingly always been pneumonia that was the culprit, although there are other pathogens out there that can fell a BHS. But none of the others is as common as pneumonia. So this is certainly an area of concern.

However, since BHS numbers in the US are around 60-70,000 animals, up from 6000 or so in the 1960's, what it is NOT, is a crisis.

So any precautionary actions that need to be taken, need to consider that: 1) This is not a crisis, and; 2) Zero risk is an unattainable goal.

With that in mind, I am going to publish most of my comments to Idaho's land use plan here, as they pretty much sum up why there is no justifiable reason for restricting goats out of the forest.

LR

## Idaho's Land Use Plan & EA Analysis

### *The response of the North American Packgoat Association*

All over the west, where Land Use Plans are being re-accomplished, or created, goats and goatpackers are being ushered out of the forest. Are there legitimate concerns? Or does this more realistically follow the logic of, "If you say it loud enough, and long enough most all will believe it."

The land managers stated reason for restricting goats from the wilderness where Bighorn sheep (BHS) are located, is the suggested 'risk' of 'disease transmission', specifically disease that is caused or triggered by *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*.

I will submit to you that this fear of 'disease transmission' by packgoats cannot be substantiated by any current scientific data. In point of fact, the most recent science says exactly the opposite. Furthermore, in the formulation of Land Use plans, NEPA requires that current science be followed, and decisions made, especially where it restricts or eliminates any user, must be based exclusively on what science is directly attributable to that particular user. I will submit that in regards to this potential closure, NEPA dictates have been resoundingly ignored.

### *First the peripheral issues:*

- 1) As already noted in the EA's for this plan, there is an extremely small amount of goatpacker traffic in these areas. I have visited the area of potential closure on two occasions, and I am only aware of one other packer that has visited this particular area.
- 2) In spite of the verbiage suggesting that BHS could possibly show up on the trail or in a goatpacker's camp, in well over 1000 miles of hiking in Idaho neither I, nor any other NAPgA goatpacker has ever encountered such a situation. Therefore I would suggest that that particular occurrence is more than highly unlikely. I would go further to suggest that a normal BHS would be more likely to 'distance themselves' from what, to them, is a foreign presence.
- 3) Packgoats, due to early imprinting and socialization, are extremely tightly bonded to their owner, such that they never will tolerate 'their' human to be out of their direct line of sight. They don't go 'wandering'. Whether in camp, or out on the trail, they follow religiously.
- 4) Additionally, a packgoat, also due to early imprinting/socialization, if lost or separated, goes looking, not for a herd to mingle with, but either his, or another, human. That is a matter of record.
- 5) A packgoat, if lost, will be the subject of an extensive effort to return it to its herd. Not only are packgoat owners painfully aware of the many issues surrounding a lost animal, but once again, from a purely practical standpoint, by the time one gets a packgoat to the point of service as a pack animal, the owner has a lot of money and time invested in the animal, and further, our animals are as much pets as packstock. We would consider the loss of one of our animals as a worst case scenario.
- 6) Finally, as two recent research projects have indicated, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* is at an exceedingly low prevalence in our packgoats. Additionally, with appropriate testing, we can prove that our packers are NOT carrying it. If we can substantiate that our goats are test-negative, then there is NO legitimate reason for keeping them out of the forest.

## **\*\* Areas of Concern in the Idaho Wilderness Plan \*\***

Page 17, Para 1; "Risk of Disease Transmission" This statement would imply that there is a considerable risk of disease transmission between packgoats and BHS. A packgoat owner is exceptionally concerned with the health of his goats, and would never take a sick animal into the woods. From a purely practical standpoint, a sick animal would be likely to leave the packer hanging by refusing to carry his equipment back out of the woods. In other words, our packgoats are not "diseased" and the grand majority of our healthy packgoats and domestic goats housed on the same premises as packgoats do NOT even carry *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*.

But in regards to the primary pathogen of concern, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, as will be discussed in greater detail in the EA comments, there is very little chance of a packgoat carrying that into the woods as, the majority of our goats don't carry it, and further, can be tested to verify that.

Page 30, Para 2; Objective 2152, ["Minimizing contact with BHS"] What contact? There has never been any documented instance of a packgoat getting away and mingling with a BHS herd. The one instance that invariably comes up at this point, is the so-called feral Hells Canyon goat (**NOT a packgoat**) that mingled with a BHS herd that subsequently had a pneumonia die-off. The research that followed this incident, when carried to its conclusion, indicated that the feral animal was not carrying the same pathogen(s) that triggered this unfortunate event. Nor is or was there any evidence to support that this goat was a lost or abandoned packgoat).

Page 30, Para 4; Standard 2154, ["Packgoats will be prohibited in the East For Herd Home Range"] [As described on Page 32, Figure 4] This potential closure is, once again, due to the risk of potential 'disease transmission'. What disease transmission? If you can be tested for the current pathogen of interest that MAY cause disease in bighorn sheep, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, and your boys don't have it, YOU CAN'T GIVE IT!! This one must be addressed as it prohibits us from the entirety of the Big Boulder drainage, a total of at least 12 quality lakes & fishing. I have done this area before, as it is one of my favorite areas of Idaho. To lose access to it would be a sadness indeed, and especially because the stated reasons for closing this portion of the forest do not have any validity whatsoever.

Page 30, Para 5; Standard 2155, This is a listing of some of the standards adopted from my submission to them of our 'Best Management Practices'. Their inclusion of these indicates to me that there is at least a limited willingness to consider alternatives.

Page 30, Para 5; Standard 2155, Item 4; ["A limitation of 3 packgoats per person"]. This is impractical and unduly restrictive. See the response below to the EA, Page 11, 2.5.1.

Page 30, Para 5; Standard 2155, Item 5; While these sort of scenarios sound great on paper, in many cases they are wildly

impractical in practice due to the limitations of terrain, etc. In many miles of hiking (for this writer personally, well over 1000, possibly closer to 2000), I have never met or seen any BHS on, or close to the trail, let alone in a campspot. My three visuals of BHS have all been in the high environs they prefer, and not near any 'traffic' areas.

## **\*\* Areas of Concern in the Idaho Land Use Plan Environmental Assessment \*\***

**Page 11, 2.5.1;** The number of allowable packgoats is unnecessarily restrictive, especially when compared with the allowed numbers of other stock. Packgoats can vary widely in size, with some being able to carry no more than 20lbs. Also, they are usable for no more than 6-9 years, and so there are always young ones, 'coming up', and must be taken along for the training experience. If these numbers were set low due to concern about 'control' of one's animals, for reasons stated above, there is far less to be concerned about regarding goats than other packstock. Unlike horses or llamas, packgoats do not have to be restrained, as they are unduly concerned about:

- 1) remaining together; and ultimately,
- 2) remaining with their handler.

### **Potential Addition to Pack Goat Guidelines:**

Although not in the current guidelines, NAPgA believes that the following should be added: "No packgoats under 1 year old be taken into the wilderness." The reason for this suggestion, is that in the research project conducted by Margaret Highland, 90% of the *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* 'positives' that were found occurred in goats under 1 year.

**Page 48, Wildlife Resources:** *Sadly this is the same old, same old. These old standby justifications have been bandied around for a very long time as the purported authority to keep goats out of the woods. For these we will have to examine them one sentence at a time:*

### **Wildlife Resources (My comments are in Red)**

*The actual paragraph in question, followed by my dissection of it.*

#### **Wildlife Resources**

Contact between pack goats and bighorn sheep can result in disease transmission. *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, which is commonly carried by domestic goats, can be transmitted to bighorn sheep when the species interact. This pathogen can trigger pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep, leading to high mortality in the bighorn sheep populations (Besser et al. 2017), affecting the natural quality of the wilderness.

- 1) Contact between pack goats and bighorn sheep can result in disease transmission [Possibly, but this is unproven and speculative. No record of that has ever occurred except in controlled research situations; situations that are wildly unlikely to occur in a natural habitat, where these animals are much more likely to want to remain separated. NEPA requires that

real science and real instances of stated contacts be cited as a justification for the limitations placed on a wilderness user].

2) *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, which is commonly carried by domestic goats [This sadly, is a patent falsehood as it is not 'commonly' carried at all. In fact, two recent research reports indicate that there is very little occurrence of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* in the goat community as a whole. Additionally, the recent Besser, et. al, research project quoted below, indicates that even goats purposely infected with *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, still didn't cause lethal pneumonia in the captive research bighorn sheep],

3) ...can be transmitted to bighorn sheep when the species interact [Once again, unproven and speculative. When has an interaction like this ever occurred in the real world (ie. outside of a research setting)? Meaning when has a packgoat left his/her handler and gone looking for BHS. Quite simply, it hasn't. Once again, NEPA requires that justifications for limitations placed on a wilderness user must be based on documented science and events. Not on suppositions that it 'probably has happened' or 'could happen'.].

4) This pathogen can trigger pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep, leading to high mortality in the bighorn sheep populations (Besser et al. 2017) [This is the most egregious statement of all. Quite simply, **That was NOT the conclusion of Besser's research, and indeed is patently false**].

**His actual conclusion as stated in his research:** '*M. ovipneumoniae* strains carried by domestic goats were transmitted to comingled bighorn sheep, triggering development of pneumonia. However, the severity of the disease was markedly milder than that seen in similar experiments with domestic sheep strains of the bacterium'. [Emphasis Mine]

Furthermore, although there was reported evidence of respiratory illness while the bighorn sheep were alive, Besser never confirmed that the animals had pneumonia, not even after he had killed them in order to look at their lungs to verify pneumonia actually had occurred. The end result was that they didn't actually have pneumonia. (note: the researcher killed the bighorn sheep, not disease from comingling with domestic goats).

It is also very relevant that Besser's study goats in one of the 2 described studies were ONLY infected with *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* because he purposely gave it to them. They were unquestionably not infected until his intervention. The BHS reaction, according to Dr. Besser, was markedly milder AND

there was no proof that the bighorn sheep even had pneumonia. The eventual result of the histopathology performed after they were put down did NOT indicate or describe the presence of pneumonia.

**Now, finally, in addition to the fact that there is no concrete indication that would indicate the need to restrict goats from wilderness areas inhabited by BHS, Dr. Besser also stated in his article to the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation:** "If the low prevalence of 'the carriage of *M. ovipneumoniae* by packgoats is confirmed by testing" (and it has been)... "I believe that *M. ovipneumoniae* test-negative packgoats represent a negligible risk for triggering pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep and that it would be reasonable to take this into account when setting public lands policies." [Emphasis Mine]

The final analysis is that the Forest Service, F&G & other land managers cannot possibly justify restricting goatpackers out of the forest. The many reasons stated above indicate that there is no reasonable suspicion that goats can, or will, cause a disease event in BHS, now or in the foreseeable future.

Many goatpackers are using goats due to age (for this writer personally, age 77), or disabilities that mitigate against the carrying of a full pack. It would be sad indeed to restrict those folks out of the wilderness when they are enjoying the last few years of their ability to use the forest.

What NAPgA wants the Land Use Plan to do for All users, especially goat users...

NAPgA suggested the limitations and standards and therefore completely supports the Standards in 2155 of the Land Use plan. NAPgA also supports the use of permitting in order to insure that all goatpackers follow the guidelines and testing indicated in this analysis. This cannot place an undue burden on land use agencies due to the paucity of individuals actually taking goats into the wilderness.

What NAPgA does NOT support is the closure of the forest to goats on the basis of false and speculative standards that cannot stand the scrutiny of scientific examination.

Larry Robinson  
Land Use Manager, NAPgA

PO Box 170166  
Boise, ID 83717-0166  
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*Here is one that I think is particularly relevant, and repeats something that I have postulated for some time. And that is, that taking only the biggest animals, and the best genes out of a population, reduces the chance that these animals will ever establish a natural immunity to pneumonia.*

*Also: note that in the highlighted paragraph, even the Brits have zeroed in on the real bottom line with BHS... dollars!*

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## **Trophy hunting removes 'good genes' and raises extinction risk**

29 November 2017, By Helen Briggs, BBC News  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42152393>

***Hunting animals that stand out from the crowd because of their impressive horns or lustrous manes could lead to extinction, according to a study.***

Research predicts that removing even 5% of high-quality males risks wiping out the entire population, for species under stress in a changing world.

Animals prized by trophy hunters for their horns, antlers or tusks usually have the best genes, say UK scientists.

Removing these could push a species over the edge, they warn.

There is intense global debate over trophy hunting. Some argue that it should be banned or restricted, while others say it can provide valuable revenue for conservation.

Dr Rob Knell of Queen Mary, University of London, who led the research, said the assumption that so-called selective harvesting is not especially threatening to a population of animals does not take into account recent work.

"Because these high-quality males with large secondary sexual traits tend to father a high proportion of the offspring, their 'good genes' can spread rapidly, so populations of strongly sexually selected animals can adapt quickly to new environments," he said.

"Removing these males reverses this effect and could have serious and unintended consequences."

Human hunting is different from natural predation in that big-game trophy hunters target large animals, usually males.

They may be awarded prizes for killing animals with exceptionally large antlers, horns or manes.

And illegal poaching of animals such as elephants for the ivory trade also targets animals with the biggest tusks.

Using a computer simulation model, the scientists were able to predict the impact of selectively targeting males on the basis of their secondary sexual traits.

"If the population is having to adapt to a new environment and you remove even a small proportion of these high quality males, you could drive it to extinction," said Dr Knell.

"You're removing the genes from the population that would otherwise allow the population to adapt."

In the past, human hunting has led to the extinction of many animals, from the zebra-like Quagga, which was once common in Southern Africa, to the Tasmanian tiger of mainland Australia and Tasmania.

Hunting is still legal in many countries; trophy hunting takes place over a larger area in Sub-Saharan Africa than is conserved in national parks.

**In the US and Canada, there is also a lucrative trophy hunting industry, for the likes of deer and big-horn sheep.**

Some argue that revenue from trophy hunting can support conservation efforts and local livelihoods.

The scientists said age restrictions that allow males to breed before being removed could reduce the impact of trophy hunting.

This is already recommended with some species, such as lions.

"When properly regulated trophy hunting can be a powerful force for conservation which is why we're suggesting a different management approach as opposed to calling for a ban," said Dr Knell.

*The study is published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences.*

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*Article below is adapted from a larger article that is available via the enclosed link...*

## **Heartbreaking Ways Animals Have Adapted to Protect Themselves Against People**

Jess Bollut, Dec 4, 2017

<https://www.cheatsheet.com/culture/ways-animals-have-adapted-to-protect-against-people.html/?a=viewall>

### **Bighorn sheep have developed smaller horns**

Similarly, bighorn sheep have evolved smaller horns in response to intense trophy hunting by humans. Phys.org reports that human selection leads to what scientists call [artificial evolution](#). Hunting sheep specifically because they have big horns selects against that trait, since the animals who have that trait don't live to reproduce as long as other animals in the population. So the animals' horn size has declined over time.

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### **The Sierra Bighorn Sheep**

In the late 1990s, about 100 Sierra bighorn were left on the planet, according to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. In the latest counts, roughly 600.

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/outdoors/article/Lion-in-San-Francisco-a-testament-to-big-spike-in-12351753.php>

*Which is why they are the only Bighorn that is listed as 'endangered'.*



## Court blocks sheep grazing in eastern Idaho to protect bighorn sheep

by Rich Landers, NOV. 21, 2017

<http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/outdoors/2017/nov/21/court-blocks-sheep-grazing-eastern-idaho-protect-bighorn-sheep/>

**WILDLIFE** -- A federal court has blocked thousands of domestic sheep from being released to graze in eastern Idaho where environmental groups say they jeopardize a small herd of bighorn sheep with deadly viruses, the Associated Press reports.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Candy Dale on Monday granted the temporary restraining order sought by Western Watersheds Project and WildEarth Guardians in a lawsuit filed last month against the U.S. Forest Service.

The groups contend the grazing of sheep owned by the University of Idaho via permits issued to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sheep Experiment Station risks transmitting diseases to bighorn sheep.

Dale in the 31-page ruling says the environmental groups established the likelihood of irreparable harm to the bighorns.

The U.S. Forest Service didn't return a call from The Associated Press on Tuesday.

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### Big Horn Sheep Makes Multiple Appearances At Office

By [Karen Morfitt](#), November 9, 2017

<http://denver.cbslocal.com/2017/11/09/big-horn-sheep-loveland/>

LOVELAND, Colo. (CBS4) – A business in Loveland is dealing with an unlikely visitor.

A big horn sheep has been hanging around the Group Publishing building on the west end of town.

Stephanie Hillberry spotted him outside her window on Wednesday and immediately grabbed her camera and started taking pictures.

"I probably took a half a dozen," Hillberry said.

It wasn't long before the entire office had turned their attention from work to the wild animal outside.

"I saw some chaos going on and I looked out and he was kind of cruising around he actually came up to the door right here," said Tiffany Rogers.

She says he stared at himself in the window for a few minutes giving the public plenty of opportunities to snap a few close ups.

Then Rogers said he was off to the next office.

"The person I was meeting with said 'Look!' and I thought what in the world would he be looking at, and I turned around and the big horn sheep was looking at us," one employee said.

Jennifer Churchill, spokeswoman for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, says seeing the sheep in that area makes sense.

The office building is in West Loveland. The sheep likely came down from the Big Thompson Canyon.

"It is a young male so this animal is probably out looking for a female or mate," Churchill said.

Thursday, the sheep was back and CBS4 was there to catch him on camera.

Churchill says if he continues to hang around, they may have to guide him away from the public.

For Hillberry said jokingly her biggest concern is productivity levels would drop if he returns for a third day.

Churchill says if you do spot the sheep in the area to give it some space.

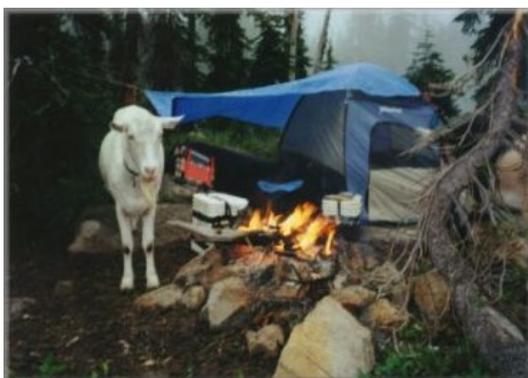
She recommends heading to the [Big horn Sheep festival in Georgetown](#) on Saturday to view the animals in their natural habitat.

*Karen Morfitt joined the CBS4 team as a reporter in 2013. She covers a variety of stories in and around the Denver metro area. Connect with her on [Facebook](#), follow her on [Twitter @karenmorfitt](#) or email her [tips](#).*




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**I am always looking for folks to describe their goat-travels here in Goat Tracks. I have a lot of my stories on backlog, but you are going to get real tired of just reading about me! Please consider sending me a narrative of your adventures. I can edit like mad, but can't describe your travels!**



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## Preparing goats and sheep for winter weather

Posted on November 15, 2017 by [Mike Metzger](#), Extension Educator  
[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/preparing\\_goats\\_and\\_sheep\\_for\\_winter\\_weather](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/preparing_goats_and_sheep_for_winter_weather)

*Most goats and sheep spend most of their time outside, but livestock that live outside may need special care when the winter weather sets in.*

All animals need some kind of shelter even if it is only a windbreak. They need a place where they can get out of the wind. Shelter can include a building, a three-sided shed or even just a tree line. Ideally, goats and sheep should have access to some type of free choice shelter with a roof so they can get in out of the rain and snow. Michigan State University Extension reminds owners not to completely enclose an animal shelter. Proper ventilation is vital to avoid a buildup of ammonia from urine which can cause respiratory problems in goats and sheep. Sheep tend to handle cold weather and the elements much better than goats, but the exceptions to this are hair sheep or wool sheep that have been sheared late in the year.

Animals utilize more calories to maintain body temperature in cold weather to stay warm. Be sure that they have plenty of hay to eat, as the digestion of this hay in the rumen will help them create heat and stay warm. In very cold weather, you may need to supplement your animals' diets with some kind of concentrate – cracked corn, oats, sweet feed or a complete pelleted feed to add calories to their diet for the overall health of the animal, especially if they are pregnant. Goats and sheep that are giving birth in the cold weather require even more care. Animals should be checked at regular intervals. Newborns need to be dried quickly after birth in sub-freezing weather to prevent frostbite, especially to the ears. It is also important to get colostrum into these newborns as quickly as possible so that they have the calories they need to create body heat and survive. Extra bedding may also help during the cold months to keep young kids and lambs warm. Heat lamps should be used very carefully and sparingly and not within reach of any animals.

Access to fresh water is essential. As temperatures begin to drop, water troughs and buckets can freeze. Be sure to check all your animals' water at least twice a day as the temperature drops below freezing. Any time there is a layer of ice on top of the water trough, it needs to be broken so the animals can get to the fresh water. You may want to consider a submersible water heater to keep the water from freezing.

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu/newsletters>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

## Small Packages

Lauren Hall Ruddell

It's a sheepdog, no it's a wookie, no wait... it's actually an Old Irish Goat!

The Old Irish Goat is Ireland's indigenous, landrace breed of goat shaped by the Irish climate since its arrival in the Neolithic Age. Highly adapted to very adverse weather conditions, this small, stocky goat possesses a very deep body to accommodate large quantities of nutritionally poor forage and a long, course, and thick outer coat that acts as a natural thatch. A dense under-wool of cashmere pushes the hair outwards in winter, creating an effective body core protection in even the worst of weather. Like all goats, they will seek shelter from a frigid blast or a drenching downpour, but such shelter is often no more than a rock outcropping.

Although small and inelegant in body shape, these goats have remarkably refined and attractive heads. Between the horns is a small to luxurious pouf of hair called a 'coif'. They tend toward a very calm, even laconic, personality. When kept in domestication, the does can give up to 200 gallons of milk annually.



*Norma, a very ttypy Old Irish doe  
Photo by L. Hall Ruddell, 2017*

The Irish are not generally known for their goat keeping. Sheep spring to mind first, then maybe cattle (but generally sheep, sheep, and more sheep). Yet without the goat many more

deaths would have occurred during the potato famine in western Ireland. Already a land with impoverished soil and controlled by a foreign, and not tremendously sympathetic, government, the western peoples survived on seaweed gathered in tremendous quantities on the shoreline and hauled miles inland by donkey, and also goat milk. Cattle at that time were the providence of the rich. The goat was referred to as 'the poor man's cow.' It was goat milk that provided the protein needed for nursing women, and for laboring men plowing the fields or cutting turves (peat). One County Mayo resident can recall a family story in which all of the small islands in Clew Bay were covered with bodies. The burial crews from the outer islands would no longer go ashore on such places and illegally dumped the body of a young woman on the beach of Mulranny. A strong young man, from a family who owned goats, found the body and discovered the girl was not dead. They were able to nurse her back

to health and she became a great, great, grandmother to the Mayo man. It's no coincidence that this man is the president of the Old Irish Goat Society.

In 2015 and again in 2017, I was fortunate enough to spend time with fellow goat fanciers in Mulranny, County Mayo, where the Old Irish Goat Society and new Environmental Center are housed. On the hillsides of The Nephin Beg, I could see the bachelor herds with their magnificent horns lounging on sunny ledges (whenever they could find one!)



*Connemara Girl  
by Augustus Burke*



*Mature Old Irish bucks  
Photo by L. Hall Ruddell 2017*

It was not hard to understand the dedication of a small, but growing, core of folks who do not wish to see this part of Irish history disappear for lack of understanding and protection for this breed.

I was able to work with 2 does in 2015. My interaction with one was planned. She was to be trained as a pack goat and her accomplishments used to inspire the locals to one day undertake a touristic enterprise for the region by offering pack goat guided tours up into the mountains to see the wild goats. My interactions with the second doe were more spontaneous.

The unplanned interaction was with a very diminutive little girl we came to call Runtess. She had a darling little baby girl, but she was only just entering adulthood herself. The magnesium rich soils of the bogs that comprise a goodly portion of the lower mountains tend to bind a number of minerals in such a way that they are not available for metabolic use by mammals. A great mom, and a heavy milker, her still developing body had paid a high price for a diet depend on bog vegetation. Her front legs resembled her back legs. Before we began therapy on her, the backs of her knees nearly touched the ground.

Slated for euthanasia, her keepers were waiting for the baby to be weaned. Being the bold and obnoxious American that I am, I took charge of her recovery. She was a truly wild goat. Gentle, but terrified of people, it is a

testament to the resilience and general good nature of the Old Irish Goat that she eventually tolerated being handled and having her legs wrapped every 3 days. The front right leg eventually straightened, but the left merely improved to a certain point, then seemed determined to remain crooked. She got around quite nicely, however, and eventually was adopted out to a lady who had been wanting a goat for some time and didn't mind one with a physical challenge.



*The author and Runtess  
Photo by G. Jagmin, 2015*

Little A Hocht, my demo goat, was as sweet as a peach from the get go. Named by a young OIG intern at her birth for the white mark on her side that resembled the number eight (a hocht in Irish), she too was nursing. Nevertheless, she took to being a pack goat like she had been at it her whole life. She seemed to enjoy outings and did not object to being separated from her youngin (maybe she needed a break, just like all moms do sometimes). Within a week she had logged a couple of miles of mountain territory and even more on the seaside. She was my little trooper for teaching the locals how to saddle, unsaddle, load, and lead a pack goat. She never became frustrated, impatient,



*The author and A Hocht off to the beach for a morning stroll. Photo by G. Jagmin, 2015*

or nervous. Just give her a 'biscuit' (cookie) and she was ready for anything. She too was eventually adopted out. After the DNA studies on

the Old Irish Goats in captivity and in isolated feral herds were completed, the herd book was started and A Hocht was determined not to present the most pure genes. If I could have put her in my suitcase and brought her back with me, I would have. Sometimes good things come in small packages.

I am hoping to return in 2019 to present a full blown seminar on the touristic potential of using wethers from the breeding program as pack goats. We have every reason to believe it will be met with enthusiasm.

*Cont. Pg14, Col 1*

Mulranny is an award winning town that has hosted many conferences on environmental building, conservation of heritage breeds and conservation of biological diversity. I would be hard-pressed to think of any community I have ever been a part of that is so dynamic, energetic, and forward thinking. This community is now attracting artists, nature writers, sculptors, and photographers who are using the Old Irish Goat in and out of its natural setting to inspire their work. It has been my great privilege to be a small part of that.



The next generation! Photo by L. Hall Ruddell, 2017

### Pretzel-Coated Fried Goat Cheese

Crush 2 cups mini pretzels in a food processor (or in a sealed plastic zip-top bag by pounding with a rolling pin), and pour into a bowl.

In a shallow bowl, whisk 2 large eggs with 2 Tbsp water. Place 1/2 cup flour in a third bowl.

Slice (4-oz) goat cheese logs into quarters. Dip each round into flour, shaking off excess. Then dip into egg, drop into pretzel crumbs and turn to coat thoroughly.

In a medium skillet, heat 1/2-inch olive oil over medium heat. Gently lay 4 of the goat cheese rounds in skillet and fry about 45 seconds. Turn with a slotted spatula and fry the other side until golden and crisp, 30 to 45 seconds.

Remove to a paper-towel lined plate to drain. Repeat steps with remaining 4 rounds.

Serve with marinara sauce for dipping and a sprinkling of chopped parsley.

Serves 4

Per serving: 528 cal, 33g fat, 738mg cho/, 20g prot, 37g carbs, 7g sugar, 7g fiber, 527mg sodium

TIP If the goat cheese logs aren't slicing neatly, place in the freezer for 20 minutes to firm up.

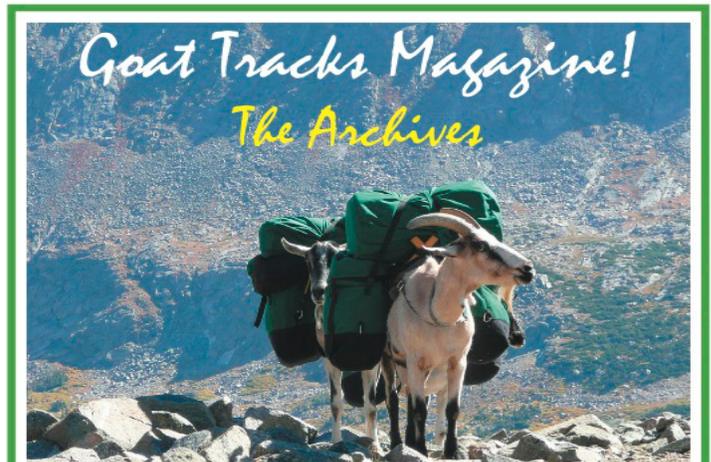


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In my frequent forays into the files that make up the GT Archives, I have come to the conclusion that the only reason that everyone doesn't have a copy of this information is that they just don't realize how completely entertaining lots of this stuff is. There have been some great writers for GT over the years!

FRANK & ERNEST

By Bob Thaves





**Karen Bean** at her primary avocation/livelihood, beekeeping. Besides writing great stories for this magazine, Karen takes care of a potful of bees, in addition to getting her products ready to sell, in addition to traveling over 100 miles to Ballard (Seattle) Washington in order to occupy her booth there.

Karen is soldiering on, having had a couple of years of unadulterated, gut-wrenching trials. She lost her life partner to Lou Gehrig's disease, struggled through last winter's extremely heavy snow which had her prisoner for a time, had to deal with the loss of some of her hives to vandals, and now is struggling through the recovery process resulting from hip surgery. Karen is a gutsy and hard working lady, a fun conversationalist, and a great writer. Enjoy her latest as well as a treatise on recovery from a major operation.

**Karen:** <http://www.pacificnorthwesthoney.com>

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## Post Hip Replacement Hiking

### *With Goats, Of Course*

When the surgeon said "total hip replacement", I saw all my future days in the backcountry disappear. I like to go out for days at a time, usually with a pack on my back, even when the pack goats are along.

I have two adult pack goats: Tiberius who is 5 years old and Remington who turned 3 this year. Remington had never carried a pack before. Tiberius (aka Tibo) is a pro whose travels include having done the High Pasayten here in Washington.

The team also includes a one-year-old "future pack goat", Balder, and a 3-year-old "well, that breeding didn't work out" pet cashmere. His parents were big, The Professor, however, is the smallest Cashmere I've ever owned.

My pack goats were always intended to help carry my usual load, plus books, my sketchpad and pencils.

Post hip replacement, everything but the essentials got tossed aside, including my pack. I'm happy to say Tibo and Remington rose to the occasion.

### Walking 101

Before we could begin to hit the trail after surgery, I had to "learn" to walk again. As all hip replacement patients do, I started out in a walker. It was an interesting conundrum.

My world is one of dirt roads. Walkers do not roll well on dirt. After a few futile attempts to push it along, I took to carrying the walker. It would hover just above the dirt and descend when I needed it. Sometimes that need was simple stabilization; often it was protection from the goats.

Of course I took the goats and dogs with me. To go for a walk without them would be unthinkable, to them and to me. We all know goats like to nudge and run. When they would come near me, I would plant the walker on the ground and just hold on. A friend watched this maneuver one time and said, "It's not a walker, it's shark cage."



By week three I moved onto two walking sticks. It was a vast improvement. But the danger of being nudged by a well-meaning goat still existed. When a goat approached too near, I would plant one stick on the ground and gently swing the other back and forth. The boys soon learned that walking too near me could mean a thunk with a stick.

Slowly I progressed from quarter mile walks to 3-mile walks with the goats and dogs. I am lucky that I can walk straight off my property and in a forest. None of my hikes required me to load the goats into my truck.

### The First Excursion.

Loading goats came at week nine. I had walked and done my exercises. Remington and I both needed a "test". Remington had never carried a pack on our previous mountain walks, and I had to test drive the new hip. I live in the northern Cascades just south of the Canadian border. Coniferous forests and alpine meadows with amazing



*Going towards High Pass*

views are a short drive up the Mount Baker Highway.

For our first post-hip foray into the mountains, I chose an area above

Gold Run Pass.

Walks around here tend to be steep. The route to Gold Run Pass rises about 1,700 feet in just over 2.5 miles (one way). It starts on an open slope of shrubs and wildflowers. The trail rises into a forest of hemlocks and cedars, before opening up into a more open area and starting a very strenuous climb to the pass.

The secret to Gold Run is that there is a very old, unmarked, trail that leads south, and higher from the pass. If you

don't know it's there, it is very hard to find. That's where we were heading. Lower Gold Run is popular with hikers heading for Yellow Aster Butte, but this



*Rim at High Pass*

little known stretch sees few people. I have never run into anyone there. The views are lovely: Tomyhoi Lake stretches to the north, Mt. Baker rises in the south, to the east, High and Low Pass and their lower basin can be seen.

We did well. Remington endured his pack. My hip did not hurt at all. The odd thing for me was walking with only a camera slung around my shoulder.

**The Season Continued...**

The goats and I went on local day hikes and overnight



*Tibo - Mt. Baker in Distance*

trips nearly every week, until October. It starts to rain here in October. Our adventures took us to areas of peaceful

beauty. We ambled along a narrow ridge and as we contemplated the peaks of the northern Cascades from High Pass. We watched the setting sun turn Mount Baker crimson from our tent on Skyline Divide. Took a group snooze in the meadow just below Church Mountain. It was lovely and I was incredibly pleased that, thanks to my surgeon and physical therapist, I was once again walking the wilderness.

**Of Healing and Health**

I was determined, committed and lucky to have a wonderful medical team. Everyone heals at different rates, but a few tips might help anyone who is heading for hip replacement surgery.

Pre-Surgery: Go in healthy. It hurts to walk before surgery (or why would one do the surgery?), but I did everything I could to keep walking and swimming to stay in shape. The goats helped. They needed to be walked, even if that walk included me limping along with a sturdy walking stick.

**Post surgery:**

Do the exercises. Yes, they are incredibly boring, but worth every tedious minute.

Walk as much as you can, being very careful the entire time.

Let people know when and where you are walking, even if it is "to the end of the drive and back." Set a time to call these people, so they know you have returned safely. This has always applied to wilderness travel, but post surgery this also applies to "down to the barn" or "the end of the drive."

Think of it as an enforced vacation. The days of walking in the peaceful woods surrounded by my goats and dogs



*Balder Looks East On Gold Run Pass*

were actually quite lovely, and materially enhanced the post surgery recuperation.



**Cheviot Hills Goats**

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2017/nov/10/the-week-in-wildlife-in-pictures>

Feral goats graze on the Pennine Way in the Cheviot Hills on the Anglo-Scottish border. The herd clusters in the region are believed to be the purest descendants from the neolithic era which came to Britain from the Middle East.

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## HEY, Larry! How's Your Summer Going?

### *The Sequel*

And on we go with the disasters, or at the very least, the unmitigated slogs. Sooo, let's continue digging into 2017's hiking.

**Warrior & Lodgepole Lakes!** <http://www.boiselarry.com/recents/2017/warriorlakes/warriorlakes.html>

So after Goat Track's Fall issue folly, I got busy with my research, and came up with the two mentioned above that I had never seen before, and which had been barely missed by 2016's Pioneer Fire.

**Yeah!** I want to go hiking again, and these guys are close to home. Sufficient at this point to say that my research was clearly insufficient, in that I only gave minimal attention to the amount of altitude that I would have to transverse to access these two. Naturally, at some point, that became a much more important aspect than just 'I wanna get there'.

But never mind that, since they are close to home, I arrive at the TH, bright eye-ed and bushy tailed, as they say, and here we go. It was a clue that from the very beginning, that we were climbing... and climbing... and, well, ummm, climbing. Later on, things varied a bit, but suffice to say, climbing was definitely the order of the day.



At some point, after lots of climbing, there was a very deep drainage that needed to be crossed. But, hey! There's a bridge! But hey! The bridge is

broken in the middle and steep on the ends to the point that even the goats, sticky feet or not, might not make it across this clearly worn-out conveyance.

OK, so we've gotten across the drainage, barely, now on we go... *UP*. Because this trail knows nothing else! At some point, we come across this wonderful, what-appears-as-the-top area that we should have camped at and called it a day. But, Oh, No! Not this boy. I kept telling my feet that it is time to pack-it-in, but they didn't listen! No matter how much I said to them, 'stop', somehow they just kept plugging ahead. I just gotta get new feet!

After a what-seemed-like long steep 'up-climb', we had a bit of lateral crossing of a cliff face, and at the top of that, what do you suppose. Another completely burned area, and resultant erosion, which made trail-finding impossible (Of course: Duh! Because after the erosion, there was NO trail!).

At the top of the erosion area, the trail re-appeared, and at the top of that, a road

... **WHAT?**

Yes, we had arrived at a 4WD trail/road that led to the Swanholm Peak Lookout.

At that point, it was completely unclear where the he—the trail went from there, so I made the only intelligent decision I could make at that point, and that was? BAG IT!

I hiked on up to the lookout (slowly), melted the still-present snowbanks for water, and called it a day.

It was notable that it was only in my post-hike examinations that I became aware that this hike involved a 3500' climb, or in

other words, 3500' of climbing to just get to the lookout. There was even more after that!

It was fun to be able to look out over the entire area, including Graham Airstrip, which I had flown into a number of occasions while I still had wings, as well as to be able to view the world from a catbird seat.

I slept on the ledges of this lookout, which is a "Top of the World" experience as Karen Carpenter noted, and had a good sleep, considering.

**A Sidebar:** What I have noted in my miles of hiking, is that the entire infrastructure is clearly in decay. Signage is collapsing, trails are poorly marked, or not at all, and trail maintenance is decaying to the point that many trails are being left to return to the wild. Knapp Lakes in Idaho is one example. Without the trail in this drainage you are, quite simply, toast. Reasons are: (and as Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride* said, "Let me explain... no, too much. Let me sum up!") quite simply, with much of Idaho already burned, and resultant dead trees falling across the trails, plus the growth of the understory grasses and flowers, a trail can disappear in a few years. I hiked the Knapp Lakes trail in 2011. A clear, obvious trail, all the way to Knapp and Horseshoe Lakes. Now? No trail, and an unmitigated slog. 6 years. It doesn't take very long with the above issues, coupled with the fact that trails have to be cleared by hand (What BS!!!), means that only the trails that are hiked by the thundering hordes will be accessible. Make sure you know how to use your GPS, 'cause when you venture off-trail... you gonna need it!!



*Looking out from the Lookout  
Warrior Lakes are more or less in the center of  
this picture, and behind the ridge*

Morning I made the decision to go back down. During the descent back to the trail, I noted where the trail continued, which I had missed the night before, but at this point, I was constrained by time, and had to continue back to the TH, where I arrived early afternoon. In spite of the fact that I failed to reach my destination, it was a wonderful hike, revealing to me things I would never had seen otherwise.

### **Knapp/Langer Lakes:**

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/knapplanglerlakes/knapplanglerlakes.html>

Well, ol' Knapp Lakes. I saw it/them briefly in 2011 when we hiked past them to Horseshoe Lake, stopping by Knapp Lakes on the way out. I thought it pretty then, and thought that it would be a good place to return to, which I did in 2016. However in 2016, I had no raingear, nor any raingear for the goats, and since it was a really long hike out, the threatening weather caused me to make the decision to bail! It was late in the year, this time.

So, here we go again in 2017! It is noteworthy that the trailhead, so-called, is a long ways off ID21 that goes to Stanley, and a bumpy dirt road is the conveyance. Further, this TH is a 4WD TH, and for the first 4 miles, you are hiking what in my mind is a ROAD! *I don't like road hiking!*

Interestingly, last year when I hiked this, it may have been a road, but it was a reasonably easy hike, with no obstructions. This time, at milepost 2.2, this 'trail' went to he— in a handbasket. This area is, once again, as it most of the rest of SW Idaho, in a burn area. And over the winter, an awful lot of the still-standing stubs had made the decision to lie down, which made this 4WD track nearly impassable even to walkers!

Eventually after a potful of detouring on this road/trail, we made it to its intersection with the Winnemucca Creek 4WD trail, and since that had been cleared, it was an easy 3 miles or so to the actual TH (Said tongue in cheek as this is just one more trail that has been 'let go', and has about 95% returned to nature).



*Knapp Lake-the Main One*

When we got to the TH there was a 4-wheeler parked there and chained to the tree. At that point I was clueless, but it should have served as an OMEN!

However, since we were somewhat fatigued, and the 4-wheeler had real 'seats!', at the time it seemed like a real blessing. Had we only known...

Eventually, after the rest break, on we went. The old trail, comes and goes for a time, but eventually just goes. So, other than a burn area, with a lot of the 'burn' on the ground, how can it get any worse?

Well, it does. This drainage, unlike any other I have ever seen, is weeping water out of every nook and cranny in the drainage. Presumably the original trail skirted most of it, but without the trail, you are treated to one swamp after another, ad naseum. If it were only a little wet, it wouldn't be a problem, but you never knew whether the next step would be 'a little wet', or if you would sink in it up to your knees. Suffice to say it is a wildly frustrating place to try and hike.

Finally, out of the frustration mentioned above, I crossed the creek. At least on the south side of the creek, the swamps were much less in number.

On the south side the climbing began in earnest, and continued to about the lake level, where we came out on the south side of the lake, and had to make our way around to the west side of the lake where exists the one camping area on this lake.

One of the positives regarding this lake, is that, maybe possibly due to the difficulties in getting into it already described, you are pretty much guaranteed to be alone in the world. Arriving on the northwest corner of the lake, the area of the camping, we were to discover that, at least this time, we definitely were *NOT* alone in the world. In fact it was more like a convention. We were faced with people, horses, kids, tents, tarps & NOISE!

As a result, we were forced to reconnoiter back around the lake, and shove ourselves into a small cubbyhole camping area back to the south.

What resulted, was that there was pretty much constant noise/commotion from our unwanted companions, and after another day of it (during which we day-hiked away for a little respite) I made the executive decision to BAIL.

We decided to RON in the Stanley Basin, and in the morning, motor over to the Langer Lakes TH, where we hiked into and overnighted at Ruffneck Lake. At least there it more resembled wilderness, i.e., it was quiet!

### **Crimson Lake:**

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/crimsonlk/crimsonlk.html>

Here is one, interestingly right on the opposite side of the very tall ridge that is to the south of Knapp Lakes, that gets a very high rating from Ralph Maughan in his Idaho guide book, and one I have wanted to see for some time.

So, this is the time. And since the TH is a long ways from home, and even a bit of a drive from Stanley on the road

that goes out to Challis, ID, I figured that I would visit another one I have not ever seen in this area as well, Mystery Lake.

So, off we go. I purposely placed myself in the area of Bonanza, ID the night before, so I could RON and be ready to hit the trail the next day. (With a name like 'Bonanza, ID', it sounds like there might be a town there. NOT. The only thing there are memories of gold rushes and a town that once was)

As I remember, we (the goats and I) were on the trail by 9am, rip roaring and ready to go. That 'rip-roaring' thing will abate considerably later this afternoon.

In any case, initially the trail goes delightfully down towards the river... down is good. Very soon however, it begins to climb, and goes up a very long ways, enters the burn area, and then goes right back down to river level. At some point between the return to the river and Lightning Creek, I ran into a trail crew that had been creating the conditions I had been seeing, which was that I did not have to negotiate any downed timber, as it had all been cut out of the way. Interestingly, they claimed to have been working for Parks & Rec... in the NF. Haven't figured that one out.

Motoring on, after crossing over the Lightning Creek bridge, a convenience that Ralph Maughan claimed to have been washed out in 2000 or so, and that had now been rebuilt to the extent that it could withstand a nuclear blast, I passed another trail crew. This one was a NF crew, and as is normal, they were carrying hand tools... 9 miles of trail in 7 days, or so they claimed. Having to use hand tools to clear the trails, simply means that a lot of trails, such as the Knapp Lakes trail, will return to nature, so the enviro-freaks can be very happy that we are not intruding on nature with our motors. I'm not sure that 'nature' gives a da--, but the enviros are seemingly in control.

Somewhere around noon, or so, I encountered the Cabin Creek intersection, turned right on the Cabin Creek trail, and continued on. This section of trail passes through more burn area, quickly crosses the creek, continues for quite a ways through a meadow of sorts (recently burned as well), then re-crosses the creek to the east side.

After the creek crossing, begins the 'up'. Only moderate for quite a distance, then the intersection for Crimson Lake. That is when the 'up' gets down to business. Remembering here, that we are somewhere near the end of our energy resources, having already done in the neighborhood of 7+ miles.

In addition to the 'up', this trail hasn't given up its propensity for 'yo-yo'. Up and then back down; up, and then back down. I am left to wonder just what the altitude gain *really* was. It certainly was more than the advertised 1830'.

Late in the afternoon, a Cabin Creek tributary is crossed, and the last steep climb to the lake begins... and it is indeed steep. And at this point, my speed is down to about 2 miles a day!

And, we are basically in the 'mindless' mode. We are still moving, but the brain has shut down, and we have slowed down to a crawl. Eventually, and I DO mean eventually, we get a glimpse of the lake through the trees, and the brain erupts in an internal rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus. *Really!*

I unloaded the goats, then got out the camp chair and sat down... then veg'd for about the next 30-40 minutes, wondering who's going to set up the tent. I am bloody well too tired to do it...

Eventually, I got out one of my easier dinners, a MRE entrée, set up the tent, highlined the goats, then went to dreamland.



*Crimson Lake*

This was an easy step, as my energy meter had long ago fallen to zero.

Eventually morning dawned, as it always seems to, and I was forced to arise and begin moving again. Today's assignment was to explore the lakes around this particular basin. Finished breakfast, got the 'lunch goat' ready with his panniers, and embarked around Crimson Lake to the south end, headed for the drainage for the lake above, that we will have to follow for Lake 8565.

This was a beautiful green drainage, the drainage itself something akin to the Grand Canyon, and a vertical rise of a little over 200'. Turned out to be a gem in and of itself, and we spent 30-40 minutes there taking pictures.

The next phase of my plan was to transit the cirque up high, all the way around to the southwest lake I wanted to explore.



*Goats are noting, HEY! We just did this yesterday!*

Went OK for a while, but then I ran into a granite wall that I lacked sufficient panache to attempt, so Plan B was formed. Go back to camp,



Lake 8565

have lunch, then climb up to SW lake after that.

After lunch, energized plan B, which was a bit more of a grunt than Lake 8565, in that this

involved a 500+' climb. Arriving there, it became obvious that it was definitely worth the effort. This lake had a deep turquoise color, and appeared to be 'multi-deep', although it was hard to tell for sure, as it was somewhat more turbid than the others in this basin.

Climbing back down the drainage was much the same as the drainage for Lake 8565, in that it was carved out very deep, and kept me busy taking pictures, as well as finding the way back to camp.



Lake 8873

Next morning, plan was to hike back out, find the TH to Mystery Lake and hike into there the next day. That particular plan was abruptly terminated when it became clear that smoke (from the 2017 fires. Idaho is always burning in August... well almost always) was moving into the mountains in a major way, and since my main reason for going anywhere is to take pictures, it was obvious that there was no point in going further, at least this year.



One of few Green spots on the hike out

The hike out was a real grunt. It was hot, you were in the sun nearly 100% of the time, and by the time I reached the magic carpet, the GPS was indicating 12 miles. Enough for one day, and since the feet hurt in a major way, probably enough hiking for now, anyway (2018's gotta bring new hiking boots to my house. *Maybe santa...*).

Pretty much finished

out 2017's hiking with a week in the Eagle Cap Wilderness accompanied by Curtis King, and 3 days in the Sleeping Deer area with Matt Lyon. The Eagle Cap is astounding as always, and Sleeping Deer was nothing to write home about, with the exception of one Cougar that wanted to get up close and personal with the goats. Wrote about that encounter in the Fall issue. At the time that was excitement central.



Glacier Lake, Eagle Cap Behind



Lake 8568 the most attractive of the Cache Creek Lakes, 2/3 of which has already returned to a meadow-Sleeping Deer, ID

Last hike was up the middle fork of the Boise River from Atlanta, ID, up to 7500', stopped by snow, RON'ed, and returned home. Pretty much clear that if there was 3-4" of snow at 7500', it wasn't going

to get much better, and the prospect of hours of wet feet on the way to our destination at 8585', caused us to come down on the side of reason, and that was 'outta here!' (This last hike in the Sawtooths, will be elaborated upon in the upcoming Spring 2018 issue.)

**Eagle Cap Picture Link:**

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/eaglecap/eaglecaporegon.html>

**Sleeping Deer Picture Link:**

<http://www.boiselarry.com/recent/2017/sleepingdeer/>



Coffee Bean, Front; Mocha Behind



[Cargo panniers]

# Butt-Head Pack Goat Products

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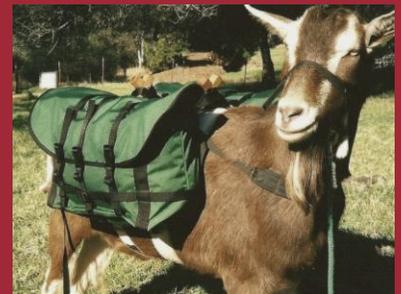
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A little bit dated at this point, as the comment period is long over, but I liked a lot of things that Victoria said in this her contribution to sanity in the Shoshone.

### **Victoria Jordan, Joys of Hiking with Children & Jan Huffaker**

My best friend and college roommate, Jan Huffaker, was an avid outdoorswoman. She had a degree in Animal Science from Colorado State University, and when the doctors told her that even with knee replacement surgery, she could no longer carry a backpack, she was devastated. She was never a quitter, though, and discovered packgoats.

Because she lived alone on a small farm, it was a logical step for her to raise goats, make goat-



Victoria Jordan, & Children

milk soap, and teach the kids how to carry her pack. Thus, a lifelong passion was born. She and I would venture into the wilderness together, along with my husband. When our first son was born, I was delighted that her herd had grown enough to carry all of the baby gear, plus mine, because I was now burdened with a child on my back. By the time our second son came along, my firstborn could ride on the pack saddle, and we could still take our summer trips into the National Forests. My boys grew up packing with goats. We could stay out for 10 days, and truly experience and explore the National Forests the way Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir had done. This would have been impossible with Jan's bad knees, my husband often unable to accompany us due to work schedules, and 2 small children who couldn't carry much. Teddy and John never had those issues, so they never discovered packgoats!

Jan's animal husbandry knowledge came in handy. She monitored the health of the goat herd, coordinated with other goat packers across the US and Canada to hold workshops and "rendezvous," and helped create the



North American Packgoat Association, NAPgA. My boys became teenagers, able to carry their own gear, then Jan developed cancer and died. Her goats were sold, and were no longer available to us, but they had launched our family into the outdoors, and helped us create forever memories and a love for our National Forests that

will not waver. Now, my boys are in their early 20's, and are taking their friends backpacking and exploring the wilderness, sharing their passion and teaching others to appreciate our wild areas. Without the goats helping us all those years ago, this may not have happened. Those goats created lifetime advocates for our National Forests.



I am moving into the age of retirement. I look forward to continued backpacking adventures with my children and potential grandchildren. Now, it is my knees that suffer, and I know I won't be able to carry a heavy pack much longer. I am looking forward to the day in my retirement that I can be the one to own a small herd of packgoats, and have them carry the next generation into the wilderness. I want to be able to continue sharing our National Forests with my children and grandchildren until I die. With goats along, I know this would be possible. Without goats, my backpacking days are done.

Packgoats are pets. They are not treated like livestock. They are raised to imprint on people, and follow us around more closely than a dog would. They are vaccinated, treated for diseases, and fawned over. In light of these



reasons, packgoats should be considered in a different category than "livestock" when creating regulations for our public lands. Your Forest is about to set a precedent for all other National Forests that have habitat for bighorn sheep and mountain goats. If you close your Forest to packgoats, you will be shutting a door

on my future, and potentially the future of many in the generations to come.

As Henry David Thoreau contemplated, "In wildness is the preservation of the world," and ***to deny even one person access to an extended National Forest experience for no good reason is to deny their soul a chance to come home.*** Please allow packgoats continued access to our National Forest lands. It will allow many humans continued access as well.

Victoria Jordan, [vjordan678@gmail.com](mailto:vjordan678@gmail.com)

## Nan Hassey... Cartgoating, Kinda :-)

### Goat-O-Rama Charioteers Revive International Goat Days Tradition

The Goat-O-Rama charioteers cut a dash at the 28th annual International Goat Days Festival in Millington, TN this fall, reviving a tradition that had fallen by the wayside.

It all started in 1990 when a man named Babe Howard invited

some Irish relatives to his home in Millington. Inspired by the Puck Fair in Killorglin, Ireland, Babe started his own goat-oriented celebration, which he dubbed the International Goat Days Festival. For many years, a goat chariot race was the centerpiece of the International Goat Days Festival. At the peak of its popularity, the chariot race had multiple heats, and competitors traveled from as far as Mexico.

The IGDF continued to flourish after Babe Howard died, but chariot racing petered out and was eventually discontinued



due to a lack of competitors. This year Phil and Nan Hassey of Goat-O-Rama traveled from Colorado with their goats Finn and Sputnik to revive the race. A road behind the horse

arena became a racetrack. To further liven the event, the two competitors dressed as Norse god Thor and Roman goddess Juno, both of whom traditionally drove goat-drawn chariots. Finn and Sputnik flew side by side down the track to the cheers of the crowd and when they crossed the finish line Sputnik won the trophy by a neck.

The race can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/235762866>

After the race, Phil and Nan converted their chariots into sit-down carts and offered goat cart rides to the kids as a fundraiser for NAPgA. Those hard-working goats raised \$350 in two hours!

Aside from chariot racing and goat cart rides, the IGDF includes a "World's Greatest Goat Parade," a BBQ cook-off, tractor pulls, goat show, goat costume contest, and bounce castles for the kids. There's lots to see and do, and the organizers would love to see the chariot race revived with more participants.



## Famous Army goat Lance Corporal Shenkin III dies suddenly aged 7

<http://metro.co.uk/2017/09/27/famous-army-goat-lance-corporal-shenkin-iii-dies-suddenly-aged-7-6961253/>



A famous Army goat who was a guest at rugby matches and met the Prince of Wales, has died aged seven. Lance Corporal Shenkin III, a Kashmiri

from the Royal Herd at the Great Orme in Llandudno, was the Regimental Mascot of 3rd Battalion The Royal Welch.

He died yesterday, and a Ministry of Defence spokeswoman told Metro.co.uk that he 'died of illness'. A letter has been sent to the Queen officially informing her of Shenkin's death and asking permission for the regiment to select a new goat. Goats from the Great Orme herd have been presented to the regiment for more than 170 years.

Queen Victoria presented the Royal Welch Fusiliers with its first official royal goat in 1844. Shenkin III was selected for duty following the death of his predecessor, also called Shenkin, in 2009, who died aged 12.

Goat Major Sergeant Mark Jackson has been at Shenkin's side for the past five years.

They have led officers and soldiers in freedom parades and the national rugby team on to the field at the Principality Stadium.

Shenkin will have a headstone commissioned outside Regimental Headquarters in Maindy Barracks, where flags have been at half-mast in tribute.

Sergeant Jackson said: 'He was a legend. He wasn't just a Regimental goat, but part of my family as well. He loved a crowd and was a total poser.'

Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Crewe-Read, the commanding officer of the battalion, said: 'Shenkin was the figurehead for the battalion and would lead us wherever we went.'



## **With autumn comes the seasonal doctoring of the goats, or as my children refer to it, "Dad's little rodeo"**

by Richard Kaylena Frates

I usually come home from a hard day of landscaping and look out in the goat pen and see someone hobbling around on wooden shoes and realize that they're not wearing shoes at all!

"Guess it's high time I trimmed their hooves," I mutter. "Time to de-worm them, too."

Dusty and Ghost sidled up looking for a handout, and to rehash old times. I shot a good spot of paste into Ghost's mouth when he opened it to say hello. He started coughing. Before Dusty could back away, I grabbed him and dosed him too. He sneezed and his eyes went crazy! Their feet were worn down from miles of trekking on rocky trails and needed only minor trimming.

I grabbed brown-headed Hannah and pried her lips apart. I inserted the syringe and depressed it. At that precise moment, she exhaled with a mighty WHOOSH, and blew the de-wormer all over my face. My mouth was open and everything! Instantly, I knew why the goats gagged and made funny faces when they tasted the medicine. It was horribly bitter! I gagged and spit! My eyes began to water! I tried to wipe the stuff off my face but it only got in my eyes and-they-did-sting! I had to sit down and close my eyes until the pain subsided. The boys were howling with laughter!

"Now Dad won't have any worms!" Qaden yelled.

Xerin took off, "to go get the others!" I reacquainted Hannah with the medicine and clapped my hand around her mouth before dosing her again. Then I grabbed her legs and tipped her onto her side so I could trim her hooves. These older goats would not stand to have their hooves trimmed, so I resorted to borrowing a few moves from my son's wrestling matches to bring them down.

I had trimmed the herd down to two goats. I had my choice of a hornless, but obese doe, and the well-armed billy. I was considering my options when I heard a familiar voice.

"Helluva way to spend yer time! Thought ya learned not to work so hard!"

"Hello, Fitch. How are you today?"

"Helluva lot better'n you are!" Fitch guffawed.

Xerin showed up with more of his siblings. Zandria, Dale and Dennis lined up along the fence to see the action.

"Hey, Fitch!" Ten-year old Xerin greeted, "Gimme five bucks and I'll let you come up in front!"

Fitch waved his walking stick at Xerin. "I'll give ya five of somethin, but I it won't be dollar bi-ills!"

Xerin moved out of Fitch's range and Fitch took over his place at the fence.

"How do I catch a wild goat?" I asked Fitch.

"Ah like to rope 'em, but seein' as yer no good with a lasso, yull hafta sneak up on it. Hide behind that fat one and move it

along with ya."

"I'd ask you to demonstrate your technique, but I don't have a goat big enough for you to hide behind!"

Fitch waved his stick at me.

I used "Fat Annie", as we call Annabelle, as a moving shield to sneak up in a crouch on "Fat Millie". I then reached out and grabbed her collar. She was not pleased, and she rumbled off with me grasping her collar. I slipped down and seized her legs. She dropped her immensity on top of me. I was pinned!

"Looks like the goat got you!" Fitch mocked. "Don't let her get yer shears!"

I couldn't get up because she was on my legs, but I didn't want to let her go so I could get my legs free! Maintaining my grip on her collar, I wriggled my legs out little by little and rolled onto the wheezing goat. I was now able to release her collar and examine her feet. One front hoof was the worst I had ever seen.

It was going to take a while to fix these feet.

"What do ya charge for that foot-spa thingy?" Fitch hollered.

"You mean a pedicure?"

"Yeah, that sounds about right."

"I only do goats, Fitch. Nobody has ever tried to hire me."

Fitch rubbed his chin in thought while I wrestled to reshape the cracked hoof. I shifted my weight and Millie heaved herself up, carrying me with her. I wrestled her back down but she rolled over on top of me and struggled back to her feet. I was looking at her belly. Then, out of gratitude for having treated her so roughly, she stepped squarely on my groin and stepped over me with her nose in the air!

I writhed in pain while while Fitch cackled, "She showed ya who's boss right thar!"

I struggled to my feet. I was mad now! I charged forward and jumped on Millie's back. She brought her head up and met mine with a solid smack! My world went dark.

I awoke to see a pair of enormous goat lips hovering over my face. I put a hand out to fend off the puckering offenders and rubbed the lump on my forehead. My skin was wet, but not with blood! The children and kids were gathered around, happy to see me awake.

Fitch called out from his place behind the fence, "Ah told ya he wasn't dead! Gettin' mouth to mouth from his pack goat really brought him back to life!"

I started spitting and wiping my face with my sleeve. Dusty looked at me as if to say, "You're welcome!"

"That was the best idea you could come up with to bring me back to consciousness?"

Fitch answered, "Well. It warn't the best ideer but we couldn't git him to pee on demand-and the water was so far away!"

I looked over at the water trough a mere ten yards away.

"But it was the funniest!" Fitch burst out laughing. It was some time before I was able to finish with Fat Millie.

"Do that one, Daddy!" Benjamin said, pointing to the big, black-headed Billy that the boys had somehow managed to get chained to a nearby trellis.

About then, Kitty showed up. She extended a fine-toothed saw suitable for cutting almost anything. "You should take better care of your tools. I looked everywhere for this."

"How are you, Fitch?" she asked stiffly. She didn't care much for useless old men, and Fitch was more useless than most.

Fitch squinted at the saw. "That's no saw! This here's a sa-aw!" From a capacious pocket on his hip he pulled out a folding saw with teeth like a bear.

"It's a sharp'n!" Fitch said, pushing it in my direction. I held it tentatively.

"I don't think this will work for trimming goats hooves. What do you even use this for?"

Fitch guffawed, "Why, Ah cut ever'thing wit it. Ahce, wood, plas-teek. Once Ah even had to cut a tough old steak wit it cuz Ah couldn't find ma knife! Shore 'twil cut some puny hooves!"

"OK. I'll give it a go." I said.

Kitty excused herself by saying, "I see you men have it under control so I am going in for some water and fresh air."

Fitch missed her subtlety. When we were alone he said, "She shore is a winna! Looks like she cooks good too!"

I patted my flabby stomach, "Yeah. She takes good care of me."

"We-ll, let's get on with it then. Ah'll sit on 'im, and you kin run the saw!"

I unwound the chain from the trellis pole and used my best take-down move to bring the Billy down on his side.

Fitch was an ample man -- not huge, but not a guy you would want to see on Santa's knee either. Billy let out an audible whoosh as Fitch settled down on the goats ribs. I figured I had better hurry if I wanted a live Billy for my does.

I gripped the nearest hoof, checked the angle, and proceeded to try to cut the hoof, but the large teeth wouldn't start a groove. Billy was getting more nervous every second and I was afraid that Fitch would start in on another one of his stories and kill off my goat before he was through. In the end though, it was Fitch who lost patience.

"Gimme that saw! Ah 'll show you how it's done!"

Putting a foot on the Billy's head, Fitch stretched out across the goat's body and grabbed a hind leg. Billy began to struggle to get free so Fitch put his other leg across the Billy's front legs. Using both hands he began working at a furious pace. Sweat beaded up on his face. When the saw slipped, Fitch taugth the goat and I new words. Finally he got the saw started!

Billy moved as if his hooves were being scraped across a blackboard! With every stroke, Billy and Fitch changed positions. Finally both hind legs were cut! I saw blood. Was it Fitch's or Billy's?

Fitch reached around for a front leg and shifted one of his legs to the goat's back end. His moves would impress most yoga

instructors! Somehow the chain got involved in the yoga and about then I perceived that things were coming to a head.

Fitch shifted enough for Billy to get some air and, all in one motion, the goat inhaled and then stood up, shrugging Fitch off his side.

Both stood on all fours, panting from heat and exertion. The smell was terrible! Fitch was trying to get the chain off of himself when Billy decided that he was finished with this activity. I watched dumbfounded as Billy took off running towards an open gate.

Fitch hollered, "Hey! Lemme get out of this chain first!" He moved more quickly than I thought a man his age and size could. He shook off the last length of chain, puffed out his chest, and said, "Ta-da-aagh!" He suddenly leapt off with a jerk! One of the last links in the chain had caught on a button of Fitch's overalls and the two were off! Although Fitch was heavy, Billy had plenty of new-found traction in his feet, and more than enough momentum to get Fitch moving. Fitch supplied Billy with motivation by the way he kept waving his saw around, yelling out curse words!

I had never seen him run that fast before! They ran down the drive and turned up the road and ran past the telephone-repairman. He was so startled that he slid off the pole! The two passed Fitch's house and disappeared over a rise in the road, bellowing all the way!

The repairman limped over to where I was standing. He was shaking his head and picking slivers out of his hands. He looked at me and said, "Earlier, I asked that old guy what he was doing. He said he was just going out for some exercise. Man, that is a real iron-man using a goat to pace himself!"

Kitty came out with two glasses of ice water.

"What happened to Fitch?"

I replied, "He decided to take a walk."

"With the goat?"

"Yup."

"Dinner's almost ready. Don't you think you better go find them?"

"Probably."

The water was a pleasant addition to my walk. I saw the repairman back to his truck and continued on down the road.

Billy met me on his return to the house. He was dragging something at the end of his chain. It was too small to be Fitch and very dirty and stinky and blue -- it was Fitch's overalls!

I left the overalls on the rocking chair on Fitch's porch. The lights were on but he didn't answer the door.

"Hope he's taking a shower!" I thought.

The next day, my neighbor Mrs. Snelling mentioned that she had seen Fitch walking up the road by himself. "That pervert wasn't wearin' his overalls!"

"Oh?" I asked. "What was he wearin'?"

"I don't know," she replied. "But they sure were brown!"

## Submissions to Goat Tracks

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## Black Billy

by Jean Pufahl Vincent, Friday, September 8, 2017

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I promised my long-suffering husband there would be no more baby goats.

That was after six sets of twins were born on the coldest two days in January.

I should know, by now, not to make promises over which I do not have complete control.



It's not that I'm sure there will be more baby goats, it's just that I'm not certain there won't be. That's all due to what happened one day last month when I looked out the back door, expecting to see all 13 goats happily eating weeds, brush and other things nobody else wants to eat. Instead, I saw the entire herd stampeding from the east pasture to the west pasture, necks stretched out and tails upright, hooves beating the ground as they sped through the barn lot.

I didn't even have time to yell for the long-suffering husband before the panicked critters thundered past again — this time from west to east. That's when I saw the reason for the commotion. In hot pursuit of the herd was one of the most handsome billy goats I've ever seen. Black and shiny, clad in a red collar, he sped past.

The memory of the promise I'd made — "no more baby goats" — popped to the front of my brain. I yelled for help, and my poor spouse came upstairs with the "what now?" look on his face.

We went outside, concerned we would never be able to catch our visitor, but as it turned out it was easy. Black Billy was dragging a 25-foot cable with two carabiners attached. One latch was open. We grabbed the cable and took the billy into the yard, where we tied him up to a tree with hay and a bucket of water.

He proved to be very friendly and gave us no trouble. His cable firmly wrapped around a tree and fastened, he calmly ate his hay and drank his water, bleating now and then to the 13 others who were lined up in the barn lot, watching through the fence.

It took all afternoon to find out where Billy had come from — all the neighbors were alerted, and we finally found one who knew where the billy belonged. Contact information was acquired, and when his owners (if one really ever owns a goat, actually I think it's the other way 'round) got home from work, Black Billy was walked back up the road to home.

We learned his name is really Black Knight and he's called Knight for short.

One would hope that was the end of the story, but the goats at our house were intrigued by the possibility of a new neighbor.

*And that's another story.*



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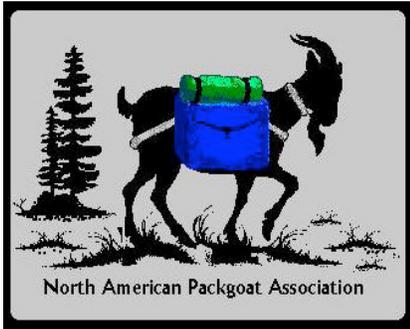
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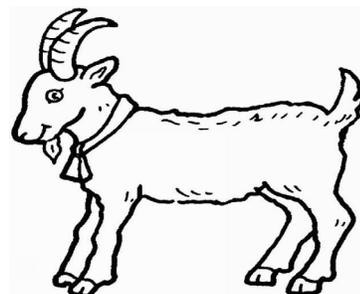
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And he's a sweet-talking devil, he is!