

123 Route de St. Pée
64600 Anglet, France
3/11/85

Dear Datus,

I found your very kind letter with the details on how to find your stretch of Thompson Cr., on my return home 2 weeks ago. It was most thoughtful of you and I really appreciate your kindness. Even though I wasn't able to put your data to use, I had no great trouble finding your place: I spotted the construction from a distance and followed my nose.

Your friends had been there the day before but I saw no one the 2 days I visited the Creek. Certainly among the most difficult waters I've ever fished, with incredibly wary and selective fish. Although there were 2 distinct hatches, both large, I could only get them to look at one fly, the last one I had, a Devaux (French). (Sample enclosed - I'll send you some more). Unlike Dana's water or Armstrong Cr., when the fish were not feeding they were under cover and hence invigible.

I had a chance to examine the Jacobsen version of the Documento de Astorga - nicely done but doesn't add a thing to the Pariente version or to my translation, except that it cleared up the "blind chicken (fowl or bird)" mystery - "pita ciega" appears to have been local jargon for "nighthawk/nightjar/goatsucker", the name for which is "chotacabras" in present use. As for the "esmoridos" et al. the Spanish fly-fishing experts were as much at loss as I. "Longareta" refers to a breed of cock and by derivation, to its hackles.

The weather in Montana was, mildly put, spotty. One nice day on your water, the other spoiled by a fierce cold wind. Same on Dana's: the day before the record-breaking Oct. blizzard - Sunday Oct 8 - was fairly nice, although the wind came up strong from the N in the PM. The fish went mad and took anything. I counted about 25 caught and released and then ceased striking them: I must have had another 25 or so rises before the wind made it impossible to go on. Some very good fish too; several of 18" and up.

Would you like to be put up for membership in the Anglers' Club of NY? I'm sure Don Barrer would second

my nomination. It would mean appearing before the membership committee in NY, at the Club, that which can be arranged at your convenience. It's no big deal - just to make ~~y~~ sure you are a biped, binocular and do not use hand-grenades.

Thanks again for a great experience, and I hope to see you one day soon, either over here or in the US.

Yours sincerely,

George Beall
George Beall

PS: the fly attached worked when the
time BWO was hatching. I
saw no tricos - probably too
cold & windy for them.

Datus C. Proper
1914 N. Johnson St.
Arlington, VA 22207

Jan. 28, 1987

Mr. Paul Brown
17301 Keelson Lane, #49
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

Dear Paul,

Just received the rod and want to thank you for the great work. I'm glad I didn't do it myself -- too nice a blank. Must remember to send you a check with this.

I would have preferred a grip like the one you sketched, but you did as well as could be done with the existing cork and I'll try it for a while. Might ask you to do a different grip at some later time.

Also appreciate your later letter (which arrived here earlier) enclosing the deflection curve. I think it may highlight the difference between this blank and the one I tried last summer -- a slightly heavier tip on this one. The tip on the other blank was so thin that I worried about breakage, and Haneda may have had breakage problems.

However, the tip is still pretty light and the rod felt good to me in a little casting I did over the snow last night. I can't ever tell for sure till I go fishing but think I may be able to cast a #3 line -- not that it's right for the rod. I tend to underline and work too hard at my casting, like the Japanese you describe. Your description interested me: I wonder if this is why I get tennis elbow. One year I must learn how to cast.

During the last FFF Conclave I wiggled a bunch of rods and didn't see a light one I liked as well as Haneda's. If you know of an American maker who does this act well, please let me know. I do like the "parabolic" type action for light lines -- soft butt, stiff middle, light tip. I also appreciate the 4-piece feature, which is going to make my life a lot easier during foreign travels.

Thanks again. Let's get together in Montana, where I may be moving this summer. For your address book, my permanent address there will be 1085 Hamilton Road, Belgrade.

Yours,

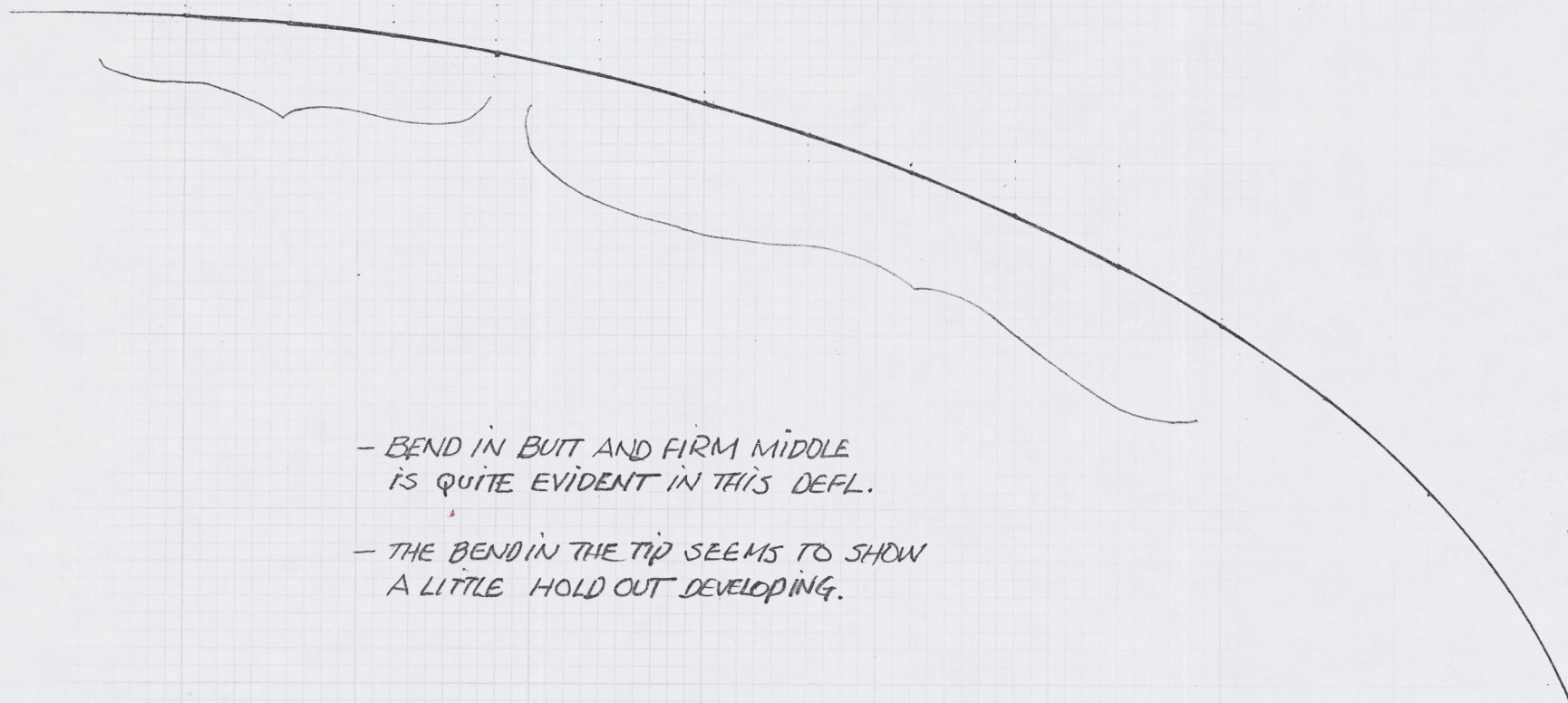
Datus

D. Proper

- DEFLECTION OF H. HANEDA ROD
BUILT FOR DATUS PROPER.
- 1/12/87 FOR BEND ONLY.

- FRONT REG AT FRONT OF GRID
- WEIGHT USED = 79.9 GR.

12 18 24 30 36 42 48 54 60 66 72 78 84 90



- BEND IN BUTT AND FIRM MIDDLE
IS QUITE EVIDENT IN THIS DEFL.
- THE BEND IN THE TIP SEEMS TO SHOW
A LITTLE HOLD OUT DEVELOPING.

1/12/87

Dear Datus,

I thought you might be interested in this deflection I ran on your rod.

As you can see from the deflection, there is considerable, (relatively), bend in the lower butt section, the middle third relatively firm, and another bend area at the $\frac{2}{3}$ point. Try viewing the the deflection from the butt end - it seems to be a bit clearer that way. Hold the butt end of the drawing up, close to eye level, and look along the "rod".

My original estimate/judgement of the rod seems to hold up - it casts extremely well, and it will handle a #4 line. I tried a #6 on it but it felt a bit "luggy" beyond 25 feet.

As you can see from the drawing, the transitions into and out of the bending areas are extremely well controlled and

this is noticed immediately when casting the rod. Again, Haneda has done an excellent job on this rod, but, as you suggest, he slipped a different blank in, or else his idea of how much power a #2 weight rod should have is quite different from mine. In general, the Japanese tend to be very "active" casters, putting a great deal of effort into their casting, and this may account for at least some of the excessive power or stiffness in the rod. They'd build any given rod on the stiff side so that the rod would receive a very powerful casting stroke - in this way they would feel they were "earning" whatever distance they could achieve with the rod. a kind of Asian, Protestant work ethic I guess.

Best,
Paul

1/19/87

Dear Datus,

I'm not really happy with the way the grip turned out. The constrictions of working around the Haneda grip shape made it difficult.

I've enclosed a drawing of a grip/seat I built last year. You can see that better control over the lines and proportions can be had when working from scratch with individual cork rings glued up. It's possible that you'll like the grip and seat the way they are - if so I guess there's no problem. If you don't like it, just send me the butt section and I'll re-do the whole grip and seat.

Here are a few questions you can answer if you'd like me to re-do it.

1. Is the present diameter about right, or too small or too large?

2. How about the length (total length)?
ok, too short, too long.

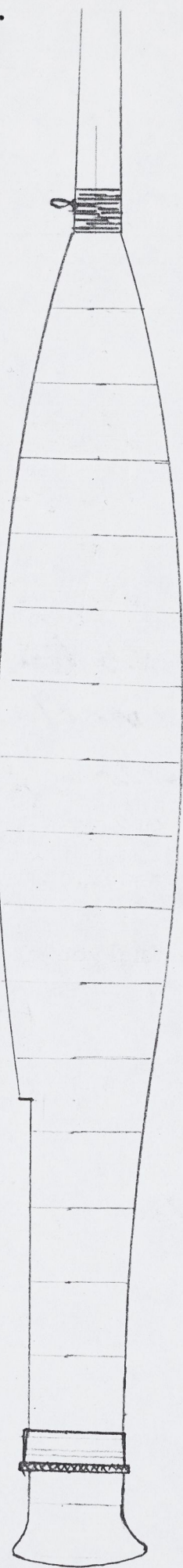
I left the bottom of the hidden hood showing because I tapered the edge of it backward to avoid a hard glue line. In your letter you asked that the hood be completely hidden. This might be a major concern as far as doing the grip over again. Starting from scratch I can easily hide it all.

It will not be that difficult to do the grip again, so, if the drawing I enclosed has a bit more appeal for you, don't hesitate to say so and I'll re-do it.

The cork I have won't be quite as good as Xaneda's, but with some effort at selection my cork will be almost as good.

Best,

Paul



answered 7/15/91

July 2, 1991

LOUIS BIGNAMI
1914 CONESTOGA ST.
MOSCOW, ID 83843

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, Montana 59714

Dear Datus:

Thank you very much for the fine book. I've some ideas for review placements. I'll send tear sheets if they work out.

Here's JUST PHEASANTS, put together in a rush over one weekend. However, I'll stand by the recipes. If it stays hot, I recommend the Endive salad. My own cold weather favorites are the Pasties and enchiladas. However, off our conversation, you might try the Basque pheasant, We particularly like it with odd pieces. The sausage recipe seems rather special too. We thaw pheasants, bone and whip this up all summer. It's nice with potato pancakes for breakfast too. So you can see why I'm fat!

I got a couple of worthwhile reports on the new pheasant hatch this year. I suspect a lot of late birds and extra good hunting towards the end of the season. Let me check the dates. I recall some ballet either here in town or in Spokane that might interest your wife. Mine likes ballet -- noted that the Boise group is a bit "clumpy" -- and we're theater buffs too. Annette also shoots from time to time. Incidentally, we're looking to seeing PHANTOM again in Vancouver -- it plays until October 26th. We saw it in London the week before the cast moved to the Big Apple, and loved it.

I'm curious about the dog history you cited. It makes very good sense to me -- given the English fondness for Port -- that the pointing pups in question came from around Oporto. Is that the proper spot for upland birds.

I also appreciated your comments about bird shooting. I've always felt that if birds on the land belonged to everyone, nobody would take care of them. Start a lease program, as is the case in California, and all sorts of habitat improvements obtain. Of course, this obviates the equalitarian U.S. approach to hunting "free for everyone." I'm not sure about that. I'd like to see marksmanship and other strict requirements for hunting licenses.

Yours,


Louis Bignami

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF JOURNALISTS AND AUTHORS, SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, OUTDOOR WRITERS OF AMERICA, NOWA (IDAHO DIRECTOR)

PHONES: BUSINESS/FAX: 208-883-3498 HOME: 208-883-0802 E-MAIL 71270,1407

Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-3345

April 25, 1991

Mr. John Baden, Chairman
FREE
2500 25th St. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105

Dear John:

The writers' colloquium was a breath of fresh air. Thought I was too busy to spend three days in Seattle without writing something. Turns out that I needed to talk to somebody besides my computer, and the group you assembled certainly got me going. Especially profited from Garrett Hardin, Michael Rothschild, and Randy O'Toole. Environmentalists need more of these folks -- in large doses.

Every page of Rothschild's Bionomics has a couple of things that the rest of us should have thought of, but didn't. Guess that's a fair definition of brilliance. It's about time that the market discovered Darwin.

I'm going to be writing on Rock Creek: the lumbering proposal vs. other values. Would not have known enough to try this before the conference.

For your May colloquium, I recommend Keith McCafferty. (1115 S. Grand Ave., Bozeman. 406-587-8380.) Writes for Field & Stream, among others. Thoughtful guy. Probably too busy, of course.

Thanks,



December 6, 1990

Mr. Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton, Road
Belgrade, Montana, 59714

Foundation for
Research on
Economics and the
Environment

John A. Baden
Chairman

Washington Office:
4900 25th N.E.
Suite 201
Seattle, WA 98105
206 548 1776

Montana Office:
502 S. 19th, #1
Bozeman, MT 59715
406 585 1776

Dear Datus,

Each year I select a gift book for our trustees, contributors, and friends. In years when I produce a book, the choice is easy but the judge not impartial. This year I must choose from many excellent candidates, a gift for FREE's friends, a discriminating lot.

I have happily chosen *Pheasants of the Mind*. I find your book to be a delightful mixture of lifetime experiences and a philosophy about man and nature accessible to those who appreciate the outdoors. Combined, these features make a work whose value will outlast the holiday season. I would appreciate your signing them: "With best wishes from a fellow friend of FREE".

Best wishes for the holiday season. Ramona and I look forward to seeing you in a few weeks.

John A. Baden, Ph.D.
Chairman

James R. Babb

Editor, *Gray's Sporting Journal*
PO Box 29, Searsport, ME 04974
phone/fax (207) 548-6043

March 10, 1997

Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Datus,

Thanks for yours February 1. I remember Chuck Johnson showing me your fine foreword to Ortega y Gasset—it's an intimidating thought, introducing the unintroducible. Fortunately, I'm insufficiently luminous to get many of those offers, except a couple years ago for a foreword to John Culler's reissue of Francis Francis's *Book of Angling*. That was far less daunting.

I hope you will re-up for *Gray's*—and maybe even write something for us sometime. The over-the-transom submissions tend toward the unendingly dreary and wealthy, a whole lot of one-last-hunt-before-the-Labrador-dies, and me-and-Ted-Turner-drink-single-malt-Scotch-then-post-a-stream pieces. I've stopped buying those and am looking for stuff from people who spend their time fishing and hunting and enjoying hell out of it instead of remembering when they used to fish and hunt and boring hell out of those of us who still do. I mean, the average *Gray's* subscriber age is only 51.2 years old—the same age as Mick Jagger and Rod Stewart. That's hardly the age when humor dies, and Charley Waterman and I can't always be the only ones amusing ourselves at others' expense.

Your book on nature management sounds neat (who did you sign with? When's it due out?), and a perfect opportunity for someone who likes to wander around the homeplace absorbing the interlocking minutiae of life. I write about things to learn about them, and there's nothing I'd rather learn about than that. You'll do a wonderful job, because you're still amazed and tickled by what you see.

Sometimes I wonder if I'd ever leave my backyard if I didn't need a broader perspective and wider experiences for my angling column. I've given up expecting people to believe that, especially when I end up traveling to places like Labrador, Ungava, Great Bear Lake, Cabo San Lucas, and Midway Island—all in the name of bidness. The one trip this year I'm genuinely looking forward to is spending a week with my brother high in the Cherokee National Forest of East Tennessee, fishing the streams I grew up on for tiny Appalachian-strain brook trout newly revived by nostalgic fisheries biologists who don't quite believe the hillfolk, who'd rather eat a carp than a rainbow, will clean them all out with Clorox as soon as they hit fryer size.

Local brookies I ration: No more than five fish per brook/stream/pond per year. In addition to my backyard two-miler, there's a dozen or so locally that I have mostly to myself, after the early spring flush of Zebco-toting poachers subsides. Real Fly Fishermen these days prefer name-brand rivers and wouldn't be caught dead crawling on hands and knees in a 20-foot-wide brook for a chance at a nine-inch trout. I just traded some back-of-the-closet sweepings that weren't being fished to Bob Gorman at Green River for a little 7-foot 3-piece 4-weight he's making me—a Leonard-like impregnated-cane fairy wand, but with enough inner steel to snap a Humpy up a 20-foot roll cast. Can't wait for the season to begin.

Now, however, the dread month of Farch drags on, and I feed the woodstove and piddle around on snowshoes.

I'll come see you some later summer, although this one coming looks pretty clotted with prearranged bidness trips. If you ever get the urge to come East, let me know. I've got a camper set up down on the pond. And there's that little network of local brook-trout streams. Nick Karas has a brook-trout book coming from Nick Lyons sometime this spring. It's a little dry in places (I edited it, but editors should be invisible), but the only thing I've seen in many years strictly devoted to my favorite fish. I caught some 6½ pound brookies in Labrador and Ungava, and in my opinion they could beat the crap out of brown twice their size. And I still get just as much pleasure from a nine-incher in the backyard. ³₁

Best

Jim



Gray's Sporting Journal

January 16, 1997

Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Datus:

I was just gonna let my *Field & Stream* subscription lapse when I got the February issue containing your three fine pieces. If you'll be doing more of the same, I guess I'll dig down for fifteen tax-deductible dollars and re-up.

The Meeting Place was the most endearing piece of writing, but I derived the most value from A Place of Our Own, which mirrors what I'm hoping to do here. Two years ago we excavated an old dump and spring seep behind the house and built a small pond (A Pond of One's Own, October 1996 *Gray's*), quite possibly the best \$4000 investment we've ever made. Trout overwinter there now (we keep the ice clear of snow to provide enough light for the wild celery to produce oxygen), and nine wood ducks grew to maturity there last summer. This fall I'm hoping to see natural reproduction in the gravel spawning bed I built over the inlet spring. I spend blissful hours just sitting near the pond in an Adirondack chair, watching its ecosystem evolve.

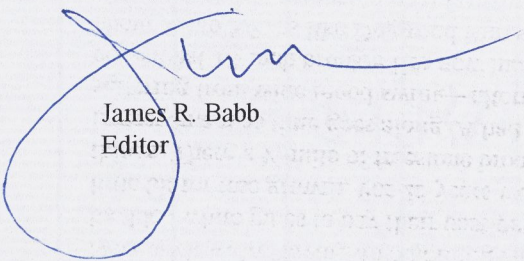
Next week we're buying an adjoining 34-acre piece to keep its cash-poor real-estate-agent owners from stripping its thick white pines to pay their past-due quarterly taxes, and we're hoping to manage it mostly for wildlife and a little bit for tree growth. For 25 years we've thought of it as our own land anyway; now we're just formalizing things. There's 3/4-mile of freestone brook-trout stream running through it, and I'm hoping to do a bit of habitat improvement as time goes along. A bad clear-cut on the upper end of the land about 15 years ago left the stream suffering from wide mood swing—alternately flooding and running nearly dry—and where I once took an occasional 18-inch brookie I'm now lucky to find 10 inchers. Over the same 25 years the pH has dropped from about 5.9 to 5.2, as like Dogwood Run we're downwind from heartland America's industrial flatulence, but I suspect a liming campaign on a fast-running freestone stream is a waste of time and money.

At any rate, the grown-up clear-cut now produces bumper crops of snowshoe hares, there seem to be many more partridge around than before, and I saw three whitetails this morning scratching through the snow for the birdsfoot trefoil that carpets the dam. I just need to find a balance in tinkering with the inner workings of this giant backyard playground that benefits the widest variety of species, or at least those species my narrow sportsman's view has taught me to value.

I left Ragged Mountain Press (where I asked you to write a foreword for Luce's *Fishing and Thinking*) three years ago, spent two years with Lyons & Burford, and ended up replacing John Barsness as editor of *Gray's*. John, alas, didn't read enough Dilbert cartoons to build the necessary mithradatic tolerance for corporate idiocy.

Thanks for the pieces in *Field & Stream*. Maybe sometime you'll write something for us.

Best,



James R. Babb
Editor

James R. Babb, Editor

PO Box 29, Searsport, ME 04974

April 16, 1993

ROBERT H. BATES
153 HIGH STREET
EXETER, N. H. 03833

Dear Datus,

I liked your book very much, both as a travel book + a hunting book, but especially as a Datus book.

Some people who expect travel books to deal with buildings + museums may not have liked the hunting sections but I thought them great, + especially enjoyed your imaginative use of separating the chapters.

Why not do a book on dogs, working dogs? Sled dogs love to work, + they whine + whine if they are left beyond for any reason while other dogs work as usual.

There are all kind of working dogs. Our cairn terrier was bought as a working dog, for instance, and his 4 basic jobs were to keep skunks, woodchucks, rabbits and other animal

intend us out of our garden. He also had to entertain small kids who came, and take us for a walk every day, alerting us to snakes, other dogs and ^{small} hiding animals on the way. Finally, he was a watchdog, & could also tell us when a thunderstorm was coming.

Some dogs carry dog packs, others pull carts, and all hunters find them useful. Sheep dogs are marvelous & I suppose cattle dogs can be just as good. Look into doing it. Such a book could be fun, especially with a friend doing illustrations.

I recently came across the inclosures. You may get a chuckle from them.

Hope to send you another book in the fall.

All best,

Bob

Gail joins in sending best wishes to you
+ Anna.

(Gunnerman Press)

P.O. Box 214292
Auburn Hills, MI 48321

June 10, 1992

Mr. Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd.
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Mr. Proper:

I just finished a letter to some dolt who wrote a piece in RGS Magazine on how to demolish British game guns, then SHOOTING SPORTSMAN showed up. I noticed your article and started to grind my teeth. Happily all that jaw tension was wasted. What a splendid article.

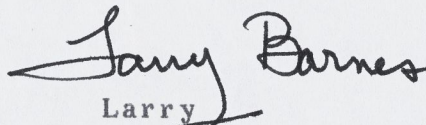
I faced the same problems that you tangled with and using exactly identical methodology, arrived at the same conclusions. Quite a few kegs of 7625 have gone thru my old MEC and all my guns are in fine shape.

A little less obvious powder is Greendot which at 19 grs. in a Premier hull handles both 1 and 1-1/8 oz. loads at very reasonable pressures.

For a factory load the Winchester Superlite 1-1/8 oz. runs a shade over 7000 LUP. The 1 oz. standard target load of the same brand hits 9000 LUP. The danger in these loads is that they are loaded to a velocity and with the next batch of powder, the pressure could be up 2000 LUP.

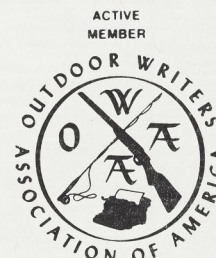
Again yours is the first lucid article on 2-1/2" shotguns I have read on this side of the big pond. Well done.

Best,


Larry



Freelance Writer
Specializing in Midwest Outdoors



Larry Brown
P.O. Box 227
Randall, IA 50231
Tel: 515-893-2213

Iowa Editor,
Outdoor Life Magazine
Book Author

October 16, 1993

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd.
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Datus:

I read your piece on outdoor ethics in *Outdoors Unlimited*, especially the part on British chambers, with great interest. I also read your original article in *Shooting Sportsman*.

I'm enclosing my own thoughts on the subject as they appear in the current issue of the Ruffed Grouse Society magazine. I spoke with half a dozen gunsmiths who specialize in old doubles, including Kirk Merrington (an RGS copy editor managed to drop an "r" from his name) who trained in England. None recommended against lengthening chambers, assuming a gun in otherwise solid condition with sufficient barrel wall thickness. However, they all stressed the importance of altering the forcing cones at the same time.

Although I am prepared to accept the opinion of the experts with whom I spoke, I too would like to see the results of some proof tests run on doubles with lengthened chambers. For example, just how great a reduction in pressure results from altered forcing cones? (Obviously, this would depend on both the original and altered design of the cone.) But unfortunately, given the American attitude toward proofing guns, we aren't likely to see any tests like the famous one in which a Winchester Model 21 was subjected to thousands of "blue pill" loads.

One thing I didn't mention was all the old .410's with lengthened chambers. My father's legacy to me was an ancient Eastern Arms break-open .410 single with a chamber that had been punched out from 2 1/2" to 3". With .410's generating higher pressures than other gauges, I would think such alterations would have to be among the most suspect. But the problem of all the originally short-chambered "American classics", many of which also had relatively thin barrel walls, must dwarf that of the English game

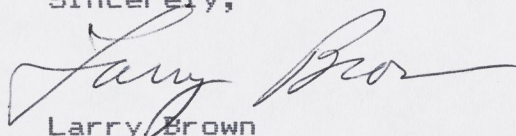
p. 2

guns in this country. As I said in my article, I'm sure that many of those old Parkers, Smiths, Ithacas and Foxes have been fed a steady diet of 2 3/4" loads for years, with owners bragging about what hard shooters they are. I wonder whether any have actually blown up. With all the old makers out of business, I expect we'd have to rely on anecdotal reports from gunsmiths rather than product liability suits. Have you heard of any such incidents?

Although I do not advocate heavy loads for run-of-the-mill pheasant shooting, I can't bring myself to agree with those who say that an ounce of shot is always sufficient for ringnecks. My usual right barrel load in my Alex Martin 16, a 6 lb. gun choked about cylinder and modified, is an ounce of hard 7's handloaded in a 2 1/2" case by a friend of mine who is a real 16-bore tinkerer. But I'll follow this with a factory 2 3/4 dram, 1 1/8 ounce load of 6's in the left barrel. I've used Winchester XX 2 3/4" Mags with that same formula in 20 gauges--but not ones with altered chambers! In all my tests, I've found that load to produce higher pattern percentages than anything else I've tried. I've even experimented with its 16 gauge equivalent (1 1/4 ounces of copper-plated, buffered 6's) in some of my guns, to include the Sauer, lengthened chambers and all. The recoil is unpleasant enough in that slightly heavier gun to remove any tendencies I might have to try it in my Martin.

Here's to continued safe shooting with those fine old doubles. Let's hope we aren't forced to go to steel for upland game--that would certainly put us out of business.

Sincerely,



Larry Brown

P.S.: I've been meaning to get your book, Pheasants of the Mind. Would you be interested in swapping a copy for one of the few remaining hardcover copies of my own From a Pheasant Hunter's Notebook?

Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-3345

October 18, 1991

Mr. Bill Buckley
Box 149
Maine & King Streets
Oldwick, NJ 08858

Dear Bill:

Thanks for your letter on cooking stuff. I'd have replied earlier if my computer had been working.

I doubt that I know enough to turn out frequent articles on game-bird-cookery. Wish I could recommend someone who did, but no one else in print seems to know much more. My wife and I have at least learned to spot the useless recipes. That eliminates most.

The state of the art in America is shameful. Most hunters skin, wash, and freeze their birds right away. Or they turn the job over to guides and lodges, who have even less time to do the thing right. Cooking articles have therefore been of three kinds, all based on mistreated raw material.

-- Recipe articles. Pinch of this and that.

-- Treatment of birds like leftovers. Stews, barbecues, pies, tricky sauces. Pheasant breasts simmered in mushroom soup.

-- The prestige gimmick. Old Bordeaux, candles, amusing history, famous lodges, and Eisenhower's quail hash.

What hunters need is solid information on method: aging, plucking, cooking. But it may not be what hunters want.

When we talked in Bozeman, you said that you would like a little story along with the cooking stuff. Must be a good idea -- Field & Stream has it too. I've sold them one story and am working on two more, which will exhaust my stock of people who have both stories worth telling and some knowledge of game cookery.

I note that F & S has given up the Sylvia Bashline column. She handled all outdoor-related cooking (big game, small game, and fish as well as birds), and she still ran out of material.

Maybe the answer is to get individual stories by writers who are good in different areas. If there are enough writers in your stable who can prepare just one dish well, the series would be a hundred percent better than anything else out there.

I could do an occasional piece. Would like to stress respect for the game: If you shoot it, treat it right. The mythic angle seems important. The game consents to feed me and then, if I handle it with respect, to return and feed me again in another season. It's been going on for forty thousand years.

Maybe you didn't want all these bright ideas. More specifically, you might have a look at the last chapter of my pheasant book. Doesn't work as an article, but it's the angle that seems good to me. Modesty aside, there's been nothing else like it in America. I could write an article along the same lines.

Yours,



RAGGED MOUNTAIN PRESS

Books that
take you off
the beaten
path.

April 30, 1993

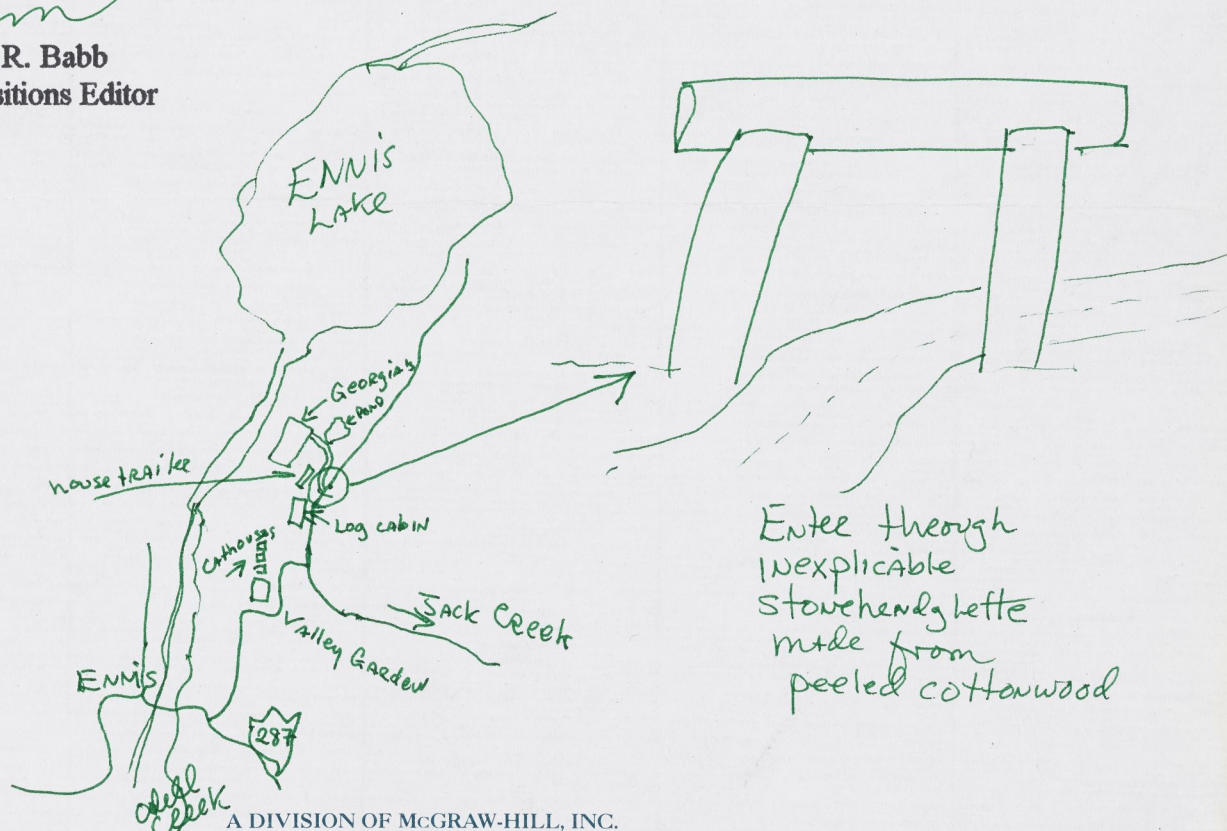
Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, Montana 59714

Dear Datus:

Thanks again for the foreword to Luce's *Fishing and Thinking*. It's just the ticket. I put a Rush on the check request, but it'll still take four to six weeks to wend its way through the corporate labyrinth. I'd suggest you take a portion of it along to Ennis this summer, first giving Georgia Miller, of Willowood Ranch, a call (406-682-4752). This is the place I told you about that makes the Continental Divide taste like Burger King (↔wild exaggeration, but you must expect that of East Tennesseans). Al McClane used to stay there (it's a B&B) and praised Georgia's cooking to the heavens--a pretty good recommendation. Georgia serves no more than a dozen people a night and, best of all, you get to sit in the kitchen and watch her cook. At last count, dinner for one is \$35, all inclusive. Bring an appetite--and cash; she doesn't take credit cards. Bring a fly rod, too; a fairly inaccessible part of The Channels forms her backyard.

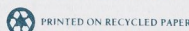
All the best.


James R. Babb
Acquisitions Editor



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February 15, 1988

Mr. John Bailey
Dan Bailey's Fly Shop
209 W. Park St.
Livingston, MT 59047

Dear John,

We've moved to Belgrade, or rather to the banks of Thompson's spring creek. Anna is liking it as much as I do, thank goodness. Nice place to live. We'd like to get you out here if you're ever in the neighborhood.

Meanwhile, I'm sending you an enclosure on which I'd appreciate your comments. And I especially need photocopies of the fly pages in your 1959 catalog?

Tom Pero has asked me to do a story on trends in flies 1959-1989. The idea is to run this in Trout as part of an issue on TU's thirtieth anniversary. The subject sounds like a good one to me: I was tying flies in the 1950's and have seen changes worth noting.

I'll be sending this kind of request to a few other firms, too -- very few, because I can't think of many who were important in 1959 and still are.

Thanks.

Yours,

Enclosed: questionnaire

BECK MINNEAPOLIS

December 27, 1996

Mr. Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd
Belgrade, MT 59714-8307

Dear Datus:

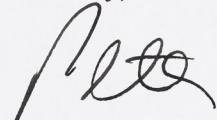
Your **Pheasants of the Mind** was a small present to myself this fall. I savored it. Thank you for writing a fine book.

I also have had the pleasure of many days afield with an Original Veronese Fowling Dog; Duke passed on just as my children arrived. I agree with you about pointers...they can spoil a nimrod.

A few years ago, my brother-in-law bought a ranch near Livingston. My family and I head West each summer and Thanksgiving. I'm just beginning to taste Montana's riches. Ben Williams has been kind enough to take me along with his Britannies. We got snowed-out this Thanksgiving, but last Thanksgiving Day was one I'll never forget: no snow, little wind, a huge private ranch, coveys of Huns, a sharptail or two, five wonderful dogs, and Ben leading the way. If I've ever had a better Thanksgiving, I don't recall it.

I hope your fall has been equally memorable. I'm tossing in some samples of what I do. I'd enjoy meeting you someday.

Sincerely,



Peter Beck
encl.: bio, sp's, bc

called 1/11/97

Said we might be able to
go hunting, if prairie birds are
good, + that he would use duck blind
for photos or do pheasant shots.

The Southwest Natural History Association

P.O. Box 35141 • Phoenix, Arizona 85069

David E. Brown
573-50-6150
3118 W. McLellan Blvd.
Phoenix, Arizona 85017-1138
(602) 973-0591



October 13, 1993

Datus Proper
Contributing Editor
FIELD & STREAM
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Datus:

I finally managed to snag a copy of Field and Stream and I of course read your article on Mearns Quail immediately. As expected, I found it to be well written, factual, and highly informative.

What I like about your writing is that you convey a dignity to the bird you write about whether it be Mearns quail or pheasants. You have the ability to write an enjoyable piece about an animal without resorting to the jocular descriptions so often found in sporting magazines. Congratulations.

Given our concern for the bird, I thought you might be interested in the enclosed letter by a Tucson hunter expressing his opinions of Mearns quail hunt regulations. One of these days, when I feel like making myself unpopular, I will have to write an article on the follies of guided hunts and late bird seasons from a biologist's perspective.

Keep up the good work.

Cheers,

*Thanks again for the
good hunt last year!*



L.L.Bean^{INC}

FREEPORT, MAINE 04033

Outdoor Sporting Specialties

TEL. (207) 865-4761
CUST. SERV. 1-800-341-4341



December 10, 1992

Mr. Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Mr. Proper:

Thank you for your recent order which is currently being processed.

I would like to take this opportunity to outline the policies and procedures for the discounts we offer to Outdoor Writers.

These are as follows:

- You are eligible for a 20% discount off regular full-price items, with some product exceptions.
- You may purchase merchandise through the Retail Store, "800" number or mail order.
- You must be a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America or the NewEngland Outdoor Writers Association.
- You may not purchase gift certificates at a discount.
- The only appropriate use of the L. L. Bean courtesy discount is merchandise purchased for your personal use only.

I am enclosing the discount exception list.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please feel free to give me a call.
I can be reached at 1-800-832-1889.

Sincerely,

Hanna Horigan
Corporate Sales Representative

**L. L. BEAN, INC.
DISCOUNT PROGRAM**

**MERCHANDISE EXCEPTIONS LISTING
(for **groups normally approved 20% discount)**

NO DISCOUNT ALLOWED:

- Sale, Sample, Specialty Items
(sale items receive 20% off retail OR sale price, whichever price is lower)
- Repairs, Rebuilds
- Kodak Film
- Sony Handy Cam Video Recorder w/Sport Pac
- Gift Certificates (includes State of Maine agencies)

10% DISCOUNT ALLOWED:

- Bows and Arrows
(Note: all other archery items qualify for standard 20% discount)
- Downriggers
- Firearms
- Coleman Products
- Science Diet Canine Maintenance (Dog Food)
- Lowrance Products (Depth Finder Equipment)
- Cameras
- Candy
- Food
- Jiffy Products (includes Jiffy ice augers)
- Bicycles --- (NOTE: All L. L. Bean-branded bikes receive standard 20% discount AND all large pieces of fitness equipment, including exercise bikes, qualify for the standard 20% discount)
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- Cork Decoys
- Ammunition
- Wood Stoves
- Tents
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- Ski Sets (pre-assembled and "make your own") and Components
- Binoculars
- Tripods
- Rifle Scopes
- Wilderness Camper

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L. L. Bean reserves the right to expand or condense this list.

Updated 12/10/92



L.L.Bean^{INC}

FREEPORT, MAINE 04033

Outdoor Sporting Specialties

1-800-832-1889

(In Maine: 1-800-341-4341 Ext. 4545)

FAX: 207-797-6585



August 10, 1995

Datus C Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd
Belgrade MT 59714-8307

Dear Mr. Proper:

Thank you for your recent order. As a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America or the New England Outdoor Writers Association, you qualify for a 20% discount off L.L. Bean products.

I would like to take this opportunity to review the discount policy with you.

The policy states:

- Members of the Outdoor Writers Association of America or the New England Outdoor Writers Association qualify for a 20% discount. Membership in one of these groups is required in order to be eligible for the discount.
- The discount will be applied toward regular, full-priced items, with some exceptions (please see enclosed list of exceptions). Gift certificates may not be discounted.
- Discounts will be applied toward merchandise purchased for your personal use only. It does not apply to giftgiving or family use nor does it apply to merchandise sent to an address other than your own.
- You may purchase merchandise through the Retail Store, by phone or by mail. Please state that you are an active member of either the OWAA or the NEOWA at time of purchase. Accepted

forms of payment are cash, check, money order, or your personal credit card.

- Current shipping charge applicable.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please feel free to call the Corporate Sales Department at 1-800-832-1889.

Sincerely,

Loretta Greene
DC

Loretta Greene
Corporate Sales

John D. Smith

American Embassy
Apartado 2103
1103 Lisbon Codex
Portugal

January 16, 1982

Dear Bob,

I enjoyed your letter and thought you would like to know that all of the three fish you mention were, I think, acquaintances of mine.

The first, in lower 5 Hatches, broke me on September 9. He took a sherry spinner on a #14 partridge hook~~xx~~, dived right into a weed bed, and instantly broke a .006" leader (heavier than the one you landed him with). I knew this was a heavy trout. He didn't show much after that, in the couple of days I had left.

The second fish is more questionable but could be the one below the hay-cart bridge. I rose that fellow three or four times and each time thought I had him solidly, but the hook always came away.

The third fish, which you identify as a "free-rising untouchable" on the upper Barton, sounds a great deal like a trout that I caught and released twice. He was somewhere in the vicinity of 1 3/4 pounds and in very pretty condition. ~~On~~ The second time I had him was the time I removed your little nymph from his flank. Showed you the fly on the evening we dined at your house.

YOur little nymph sounds like just the right medicine for these fellows, at least in daylight hours. Actually, the approach is very American, but we don't have many weedy streams. The little hooks and fine leaders work fine in open water. IN the Itchen, as you note, it's a gamble. I lost so many fish on .005" tippets that I decided to fish a little heavier and try to fool them some other way. With heavier leaders and larger flies, however, my only real successes this past September were in the evenings. I see nothing wrong with gambling on the fine tackle in daytime: as you and I can both confirm, the trout certainly don't lose any weight because of a little hook left in them. Aside from becoming wary, they seem little bothered.

Do give some thought to stopping off in Portugal on your way to or from Dubai. The weather here is easier than what you're having. I don't know how long we'll be here, but it should be at least through spring.

Th~~ank~~aks for your tale of the Itchen. Brought back good memories,

Yours,

John

6, Cavendish Grove,
Abbotts Barton,
Winchester.

18th. December, 1981.

Dear

Datus,

I hope that you and Anna have a very happy Xmas and that in the new year you will get the sort of posting that you would have wished for.

I am feeling very guilty because when I received your card I suddenly realised that I had not answered your letter. Please forgive me and put it down to old age and an inherent hatred of writing letterd. My wife used to say that we had been married for more years than I had written private letters since she had known me!

The last one or two weeks of the season at Abbotts Barton became very interesting. There were always fish to be found feeding on the surface but catching them became very very difficult. There were many fish that continued to rise throughout the day ^{ignoring} both dry fly or light nymph.

On the Monday of the last week, I was walking up to the Hay-Cart bridge with the idea of going on to the Main when Chris Hall, who was fishing about thirty yard down ^{5 HATCHES} the Lower Barton, beckoned to me to join him. I went round and then crawled up behind him and ~~then~~ watched him cast to a fish which was busily surface feeding by a tussock on the left bank. He appeared to be covering the fish very adequately and his fly would sit up nicely but the fish totally ignored him. He said that he had been trying for an hour with no signs of a "take" and had decided to give up. He suggested that I try my luck. I watched the fish for a few minutes. It was taking any dun that came within a foot and a half radius from it's lie and between times obviously taking ^{emerging} ~~coloured~~ nymphs. I decided to put on a little Tupps nymph which I had tied on one of the V. Marinaro/Capt. Hamilton midge hooks made by Partridge and size 24. I also had to change my point to 1lb. 9oz. nylon. Meanwhile John Jinifer had crept up behind us to, as he said, watch the fun. My first cast was a bit short but I thought I had seen a slight movement in the water. My second cast put the nymph about one foot above where I thought the fish was but about 18 inches to the left which was the direction in which it seemed to prefer to travel. There was a lovely boil in the water, I tightened very cautiously and then to my horror realised I was in to a big fish! It ran upstream to a ~~big~~ ^{large} patch of weed - the amount of pressure which I dared to put on was not enough to turn him - and he was down amongst the ranunculus. I yelled out in anger "thats the end of that, I've got on a 24 hook and 1.1B 9oz. point so there's nothing I can do." Nevertheless I first tried giving slack but with no effect. I could still feel the line twitching so I said "here goes" and began to put on gradually increasing sideways strain. You can imagine my joy when the fish came out of the weed. After a few minutes with my heart leaping about inside my mouth the fish seemed played out and I drew him

poss. fly
mine

towards the bank, at the same time endeavouring to unclip my net. The clip got jammed so I asked John to land it for me as I was rather scared of jerking the line while I fought the net. John landed the fish, gave it the last rites, and then said "who are you kidding about midge hooks. You've got at least a large 14 on". Sure enough, there was a rather nicely tied Sherry Spinner in the side of the jaw attached to about 3 feet of nylon. On the other side of the mouth, however, there was my nymph embedded right up to the eye of the hook! It later weighed in at 3ls. 3oz. so the Gods really looked down kindly on me that day. A piece of luck I thought that will not be repeated.

Chris was fishing again on the Tuesday. In the afternoon I again walked up to the "hay-cart", Chris was again fishing the Lower 5 Hatches beat, and, yes, you've guessed it, and called out to me "there's another fish playing silly buggers for you to have a go at!" Chris told me that Peter Smeaton had been trying for this fish, a persistent riser, for most of the morning. Peter had given up and told Chris that if he wanted to waste his time and get utterly frustrated, he should have a try. Chris also told me that the fish would rise continuously for about twenty minutes then go down. He had fished for it various times without success and then gone away to give it a rest and then come back to find it feeding again. It appeared to have stopped feeding for the time being and in any case he had to hurry home. The light was staring to fail and after a few minutes I saw one or two small olives coming down. Sure enough, when they reached the area which Chris had pointed out to me, each one was greedily taken. This fish was only taking duns so I put on first a ginger quill size 16 - no luck - and then the same fly but on a No. 18. It was one of those days when for once I was casting well. My fly would land just where and how I wanted it to do, but although that trout took every one of the duns which came down it refused to be taken in by me. By now it had got too dark to fish so I went home a much saddened man.

goo! idea

The next day, the last of the season, I went down to the river again arriving just after lunch. There was someone on Lower 5-Hatches so it was about three o'clock before I was able to go and see if my friend was still there feeding. The fish had not been caught and was still feeding. As I had plenty of time, I decided first to try a couple of small dun imitations and then, (if these were refused, to put on my midge-hook nymph. I thought it would be interesting to see whether the success the day before was pure luck or whether the tiny nymph did have some special virtue. The trout was again taking each of the small duns which came down but again refused to be tempted. First cast with nymph. The fish came across at least two feet to take it and was firmly on! It was a very lively fish and as I had had to put on a fine point again, I was sure that I was going to lose it each time it jumped. Lucky again and a nice two and three quarter pounder.

mine and his

Back to the fishing hut and as bucked as hell and was told that there was another free-rising untouchable on the Upper baron. There was still time to have a look. Believe or not, the fish was rising and this one also came to the little midge hook nymph! I was not to land it, alas, when it

Eight
tippet
also
important

saw the net it start skittering over the surface on its tail with the inevitable result. That was the least of it. The important thing was that though several very good fishermen just coul'nt raise it, the little nymph was once again a winner.

I know how easy it is in these circumstances to come to hasty and facile conclusions which later are not confirmed by further ~~experience~~ experience; nevertheless, I know that next season, when overflogged fish start playing their games again, I will be getting out my Marinaro/Hamilton hooks ~~again~~ and my spool of ultra-fine nylon tying thread.

It was very kind of you, Datus, to invite me over to Portugal. Unfortunately though, I am not quite sure at this time whether I can fit it in. I'm off to Dubai again later next month and will probably stay for about five weeks. It will be a blessing to get away from the arctic weather which we are experiencing. My son's in-laws, very nice couple, live just outside Lisbon and I would also like to see them. I'll certainly do my best to make it but am not too hopeful at the moment.

Until the ice and snow set in (-12°C in Winchester and -25 in Shropshire) we had a lot of rain. This has done our water a tremendous lot of good and is helping to clear the silt. The waters are really looking good and we have been literally amazed by the number of trout redds which have been cut. A surprisingly large number of trout around including many big 'uns. You just must come over before you leave for parts unknown. You will of course stay with me and give ~~me~~ the pleasure of picking your fishing brains during the evenings.

Excuse me typing this letter and in such a messy way, but my fingers tend to sieze up when I'm using a pen. This is the result of an old wound which damaged by right ulna nerve. It doesn'T trouble me in any other way and I suppose its the continuous movement when writing that causes the trouble.

We lost six members at the end of the season. One died, Peter Palmer, two have been given free private fishing and the other three, who come from a long distance away find that the present cost of petrol makes it too expensive. *Have recruited 5 good new ones though, already.*

Sorry to have burdened you with such a long fishing tale, but I thought you would be interested by the saga of the midge hook.

All my best wishes to you and Anna and hope to see you soon.

Bob
—

a will and by Sunday evening the major crisis was over.

It all taught us a good lesson, however, and during the last weedcut Roy started on the Upper Barton two days before the official period. It was very lucky that he did. The water is still very low but although masses of cut weed came down again, it did get free passage down the Barton.

Despite the low and very clear water, fishing has been very good lately. Being at the tail end of the season there are a lot of fish about which have been severely pricked, or even worse, probably more than once. They are extremely cautious and whatever skills one possesses are fully employed. Each fish landed is a source of great satisfaction. Fly has been very sparse but has continued to hatch spasmodically during the day. Few duns in the evenings but quite good falls of spinner. The fish in the evenings are concentrating entirely on spinner and completely ignore anything else, including the sedges which are so often thrown at them. The other night I found two rising fish, one on the Middle Main and one on Park Stream which I just could not get to take my fly. On my way back to the hut and when crossing the Junction Stream bridge, I saw a cloud of spinner and noticed some exceptionally bright red coloured sherries. The next morning I tied a sherry spinner with a glaring orange pink body and gave it a try in the evening. I first went to the main where I found the same fish rising but did not at first tie on my gaudy object. When after a short period of non-success I did tie it on, I immediately got a rise and caught the fish. Back I went to Park Stream where my old friend was again feeding. Same story. I then made my way up to Five Hatches where I found another member experiencing similar difficulties with a continuously rising fish. He asked me for my advice so I promptly offered him my bright abortion. Two casts later he had caught the fish. Probably no more than coincidence but interesting all the same.

Same
experience
of
etc

Another interesting thing is that on account of the very low and clear water, the fish are consistently chasing the fly down stream while making up their minds whether to take. They also often come to it eventually, open their mouths and then merely nudge the fly away. When fishing directly upstream this has given rise to quite a few eyeball-to-eyeball confrontations - with disastrous results. A point worth considering when reviewing tactics.

As you will have seen, the last few months have been full of incident but that of course, is no excuse for having failed to write to you for so long a time. Please forgive me.

Datus, it was truly a very great pleasure to have you at home. I am looking forward to next visit - why should Washington be a bar? And please remember that "la casa es suya".

Best wishes to you and all.

Bob.

Excuse the many corrections. When I get into full flow my fingers tend to run away with me and poke in double consonants where not needed while ignoring double consonants when they are needed!

Winnhester, 19/8/82

Dear

Many, many thanks for your book. I haven't written before because I wanted to read it once and then once again, ruminating over every page.

Your book is excellent. Your command of good english makes for very easy reading and above all it fulfills the purpose of all good books in that it stimulates thought. I have been thinking of the right words with which to congratulate you and have decided that I cannot do better than to heartily endorse Vincent Marinaro's foreword - in all but one respect. Vincent concludes by saying "How I would have cherished a book like this in my own formative years". I ~~dis~~sagree. By "formative years" I presume that V. Marinaro means when he was a beginner because although I have not met him, I know from his books that he is too good a fisherman and observer of trout behaviour not to agree that a trout fisherman's formative years should commence on the day when he started to fish and end not just when physical ~~dis~~sability prevents him fishing but when his mind has become too senile to make valid observations. No, your book is not for the beginner. I believe it is a book for the fisherman who is already succesful in the catching of trout, who gives much thought as to why he caught that particular fish, why he failed to catch that difficult one and who welcomes the opportunity to evaluate his conclusions against those of a very experienced and thinking fisherman.

To me, the outstanding part of your book is the chapter on hooks. What you have to say is both original and comprehensive and I am sure that your comments will be quoted by many writers in the future. The least satisfying section, at least for me, is that on fly behaviour. This is quite understandable, of course, because you are writing chiefly for the american market, whereas my fishing is concentrated on the British southern chalk streams where the "mayflies" in their three stages, apart from the sedge and the black gnat, are the insects of primary importance.

I notice that in common with other writers the sketch illustrating the trout's angle of vision shows the angler's head as being the pint highest above the water. You do mention the "waving rod" but I feel that this should have greater emphasis. Last week I was standing on the bank of Five Hatches when I saw a movement of the water about twelve yards upstream which I was sure had been caused by a fish. I concentrated on the spot and was rewarded by seeing a very gentle rise. At that moment one of our new members - a complete beginner and not a very promising one - came up behind me and asked if he could watch. The fish rose twice again in rapid succession: I asked my companion to "freeze" then knelt down to commence fishing. Happily, I caught the fish and when the last rites had been performed the beginner said: "why did you kneel down? The fish obviously hadn't seen you when you were standing up". I had to explain that the moment I started casting my effective height would be increased by at least six feet. Admittedly the rod is less conspicuous ~~in~~, when still, than the fisherman's body, but isn't this advantage nullified (new word) by the movement of the rod when casting commences?.

Send "note
on names"

A point of interest regarding your book is that you adhere to the belief that the female sherry spinner flies with its setae curled round the egg-sac and that you apparently give no credence to the findings of Harding, and later confirmed by David Jacques, that the sherry spinner only curls its tails round the sac in order to press it against the venter, where by virtue of its glutinous nature the ball becomes firmly affixed to the underside of the body. This having been done, the spinner then completes its flight with the setae extended in the usual way. John Goddard refers to this in his "Trout Fly Recognition" and illustrates it by a photo showing a sherry spinner with the egg-sac attached and the setae fully extended.

Your book has certainly given me much food for thought and many very pleasurable evenings reading. Despite being a pigheaded conservative who fishes with split-winged flies, I shall spend many winter hours endeavouring to master the intricacies of tying your Perfect Dun which I will certainly give a good try-out next season.

There is a hoodoo on the Kennet for me. It all started on that nightmare of a day which I spent with you on the Denham water. Just before you arrived I must have displaced one of the scraps of cartilage in my spine which in normal people feature as cushions between the vertebrae. My back was giving me hell throughout your stay and things came to a head that day at Denham. Just after we had gone our separate ways my back commenced to scream at me; I just could not kneel down to cast with any hope of getting up again and going through the motions of fishing, for that is all I did, was perigutary. I just prayed for the day to end and when we eventually returned to the car it was with one big sigh of relief. I didn't say anything to you because why spoil the day for both of us?

A few days after you left, Jack Heddon rang me on a Friday evening kindly inviting me for a day on the Benham water the following Friday. He told me there were still a good number of mayfly hatching and quite heavy falls of spent gnat in the evenings. The following Monday I started to get that nasty sensation at the back of my nose that usually presages a heavy cold in the head. No sign of the cold the next day but I was definitely off colour. On the Wednesday I fished the Lower Test with Richard Partridge. I felt rather rotten throughout the day and was troubled by frequent discharges of thoroughly nasty muck from my nose. I rested up all Thursday but had a very troubled night. I eventually fell asleep around dawn and by the time I woke up, feeling rather ill and with a raging sore throat, it was too late to ring Jack and cancel the fishing. By the time I set out for Newbury I had lost my voice completely. We met at the Halfway House, I managed to whisper to Jack about my loss of voice and we went down to fish. Quite a successful morning, I caught two fish, but the pain in my throat was getting worse and by the time we went to the pub for lunch, I was only able to manage a sip or two from a pint of beer. Not like me. In the afternoon we split up and I was feeling so rotten that I just found a shady spot and sat the afternoon out. We had agreed to meet at 6pm. and when we did so I was forced to tell Jack that I just had to pack up and go home. A nightmare of a drive home. I felt very confused at the roundabouts but eventually got back home never having exceeded 30mph. On arrival I just tore off my clothes, got into bed and took my temperature. It was 103 + . During a rather delirious night I developed a continuous cough

✓ but had no real trouble in breathing. In the morning I managed to get up and dressed and my neighbour's wife drove me to the local clinic. My doctor confirmed that I had a rather nasty combination of sinusitis, laryngitis and pharyngitis all caused by a particular ^{vicious} ~~nasty~~ bug which was sweeping across the country. Whilst pumping me full of antibiotics the quack told me that I had been lucky in that although I had got sinusitis, which was unusual with this bug, I had missed the chest infection which was currently the worst symptom and which had indeed been fatal in the case of some elderly sufferers.

I was off river-bank duty for about ten days but as I had been talking about going to Wales with Angelo Bacchini for a few days, it was taken for granted that that explained my absence. When I returned to the fishery Iris Whitfield gave me absolute hell. She said she took it as a direct insult that I hadn't got in touch with her as I should damn well have known that either she or her daughter-in-law would have come round daily to care for me. I know that she was being very genuine. Good of the old girl. All of this has had one very touching result. A short while ago a friend of mine came over from Argentina and I missed three days fishing. On the third day I was bombarded by phone calls and in the evening a delegation of fishermen came round to see if I was alright. Very, very nice of them.

During the weed-cutting before last we experienced what will long be remembered as the "weed crisis". Due to the continuous hot weather, the low water and very poor flow, the masses of cut weed coming down from above literally blocked our carriers. Roy was away on convalescent leave, Geof Lee, one of the working rods was unavailable and Stewart Newell was the only strong young man able to help. He struggled manfully to both cut and keep the water clear but could only devote an hour or so in the evenings. On the Friday of the last weekend of the weed cutting, I went down to the fishery in the morning, was appalled by the amount of "hung-up" weed I cut see everywhere and on going up to Pudding Farm ~~and~~ was then completely shattered by the sight which confronted me. From the footbridge at P. Farm down to about fifty yards below the Highland Burn sluice the water was completely blocked by cut weed apart from a little channel about one foot wide against the left hand bank. There was not just one layer of cut weed. Under the trees going up to P. Farm the water pressure that had built up was forcing one layer of weed on top of another. I was scared that the Pudding Farm sluice was going to collapse at any moment (the Barton of course would just have disappeared, the water flowing into the already bog-like field on the left bank of P. Farm) and went post haste back to the fishing hut where I donned chest waders and siezed a weed-grab. I knew that I was being foolish and taking on more than I should, but it was a crisis and something had to be done. I got into the water and struggled to clear a channel for the weed to pass down. Later on Jim Gilman arrived, was met by Iris W. who told him that I was doing my best to kill myself and he promptly also got a grab and came to join me. He was wearing thigh wades and standing in water up to his middle. We eventually cleared a channel about six feet wide and called it a day. I went home feeling very tired and expected to wake up entirely crippled. No such thing. I got up the next morning without a trace of stiffness or back ache and went back to Pudding Farm. By lunch time I had been able to clear that stretch from bank to bank and had begun to work my way downstream. Jim had left a note in the fishing hut asking all members who might turn up to give a hand. They all, including Jim again, worked with

Book Sent

33 COURT STREET
EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03833

Jan. 23

Dear Datus,

Thank you for your handsome Christmas card. We didn't send any this year. You may or may not have heard that we lost our son in August. He fought a long, courageous struggle with a congenital heart problem. He died in Mass. General Hospital August 22nd. He was 37 years old. We simply weren't up to sending any cards this year although we enjoyed yours and were glad to know that you had such good shooting this year. To answer your question, no, I haven't received a copy of your book, but I'd very much like to. When I find out the title and publisher's name, I'll

see that the "Exonians in Print"
column mentions it in the next
issue of the Bulletin!

Betty found an old black and
white snapshot I took of Mike
Crosbie holding a trout rod, standing
on Court St. with brother Bob. I put
it in an overloaded drawer of my
desk for safety, and now, darn it,
I can't put my hand on it. Very
frustrating. When it does turn up,
I'll send it along to you.

Betty and I went out to Denver
to spend Thanksgiving with daugh-
ter Edie and family and spend
Christmas with daughter Betsy and
family in Philadelphia. Our two-year-
old granddaughter is a pretty fair
ice skater and skier!

Betty joins me in sending
our best wishes.

Sincerely,
Bill

*Associated
Physicians, LLP*

4410 Regent Street
Madison, WI 53705

(608) 233-9746

INTERNAL MEDICINE

JOHN J. BRANDABUR, M.D.
ROBERT O. BURNS, M.D.
THOMAS J. ANSFIELD, M.D.
THOMAS S. HYZER, M.D.
JOHN E. EWALT, M.D.
ROBERT W. OLSON, M.D.
JULIA S. WALDEN, M.D.

CARDIOLOGY

THOMAS J. ANSFIELD, M.D.
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DERMATOLOGY

WILLIAM C. MILLER, M.D.
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KYRA L. GERAGHTY, M.D.
MARY SUE LANDRY, M.D.

PEDIATRICS

SUSAN R. NONDAHL, M.D.
ELMA O. SIA, M.D.
WENDY LIN, M.D.
MARGARET C. WILCOTS, M.D.

12 MAY 98

Anna,

Blessings from an unknown admirer. Since from his writings it is obvious you are the well-spring there, I am writing you about the M.S. he sent me.

I have read it all through once and will do a second read this weekend when I relax in Tallahassee. I have never done this before and I must say I could never be a writer and expose myself this way to editing ^{of} something I created. Hard enough to abide "turn your head and cough" all day.

Taking on the "why I hunt" crowd is well done. ~~and~~ Dealing with Californication requires a sterner, bolder approach. I read February twice. As Gertrude S. said "there is no there, there".

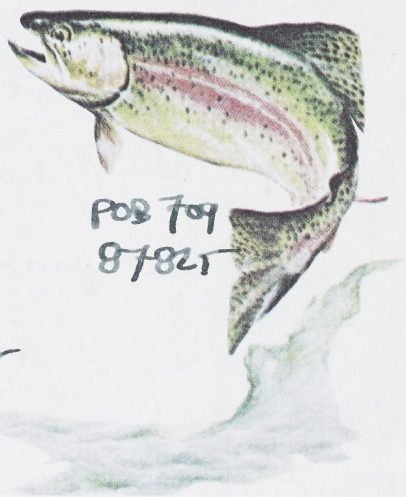
I think the general format is
fine, script is at times brilliant,
but needs fire. He needs to get
mad at the lady with all the
feral cats, the guy who "cleans up"
his landscape and lays down the
astroturf to keep his ATV out of the
mud.

Can't you do something to piss
him off?

With apologies for the rude!
out of admiration

Jack Mandel

DP
1085 Hamilton Rd
Belgrade MT 59714



15 Mar

Dear Datus:

many thanks for the remarks on

P. I wouldn't mind (except for the solemnity of publishers) putting "About the only one in recent years my wife & I both liked" on the dust jacket!

Please read Looking for Portugal ASAP. I'm really looking forward to it, and will give it a serious critical read.

Did you see the review of yours + Steve G's books in S.S.? They managed to do their usual required typo--

"Proper required" rather than
"acquired"; but other than that,
I'm pleased with it. As I'd better be,
since they don't want book reviews
any more. Oh well - back to
writing books.

— Steve

Datus P.

Steve Bodio
POB 709
Magdalena
NM 87005

8 Jan

Dear Datus : thanks for picture of unnecked roadrunner on white dust... what's fresh snow?

Actually I might have mentioned that we had a week of very sub-zero here following the last snowstorm. This was followed by a few wet mist + sleet days, ^(almost Pacific Northwest) that were followed in turn by two in the sunny sixties. Now we're frozen solid again. The sunny southwest...

I am serious about reading your Portugal book - wouldn't ask if I didn't want to read it (I know less about Portugal than, probably, any non-Scandinavian country in Europe; hope that won't hurt.) I do know Betsy was fascinated by it. But, as we all "think" we're immortal - "think" not exactly the right word - when we're happy, we never got round to talking much about it, never mind visiting. (We were broke) I do remember such daydreams as her saying "when

were rich we'll buy a ranch here and a windmill on the coast of Portugal.. "

I prefer discursive (digressive?) writing when you, ^(the writer, me, whatever) can keep it wandering on back to the main track eventually*. This is especially true of "travel" writing (more "s" - I hate genre labels.) Think of Bruce Chatwin, or Robert Byron's Oxiana.

Anyway, I want to see it!

Total change of subject - re-reading favorite portions of phrasants for another review, decided to weigh the bands of my 20-box Darné. They are 28 inches long and weigh 2 lbs, 5 1/2 oz. That's long & light...

I think I'm gonna get that AYA.

* I am anti-minimalist with a vengeance

MOX 5001,

S

PPS - I forgot.
Gary Luke is buying my newest non-fiction (MOX of it soon) for \$\$\$
!!!!

Bodio
Box 709
Mogadero
NM 87825

19 Oct

Darus:

I enclose for your amusement a photo of
The Bird who Got Away (or actually was
Given Away.. because of noise) atop the Blue Pig.
Notice that although the country is drier (slightly),
than Montana it is not desert*. Those mountains in
the background are covered with ponderosa and Douglas
Fir, and are three feet deep in snow in the
winter. I believe we may have our first dusting
of snow tomorrow...

Have you been in touch with Grooms? I liked his
book even better 2nd reading - and he likes yours, a lot.

I include for your sorer amusement this clip from
comoscur. I think it's supposed to be snide.

Did you by any chance see the October Smithsonian?

Querencia out in 3 weeks - they say.

And Ed Gay is actually putting out the anthology I did
2 years ago, for Christmas. You'll like it, I think. How can

* Yeah, I know, ~~and~~ no trout. I know, dammit.

anybody have 3 books out at once and be absolutely, almost literally, penniless? Just lucky, I guess. Maybe the new agent will help. She'd better, or I'm gonna die.

Still interested in seeing the Portuguese ms. And I want to buy an autographed copy of Pheasant at your earliest convenience.

Stay in touch - good hunting - Steve PS

PS I'd sort of like the photo book because I have only three, and I miss her -- insatiably, considering I couldn't work with her in earshot.

S

Replyed
2/16/90

POB 709
Magdalena NM 87805

6 Feb 90

Dear Datus --

many thanks for the thoughtful shotgun piece --

I can't think of a single thing we disagree on, and I've learned a few things from you.

(Re the Ruger O+U -- the longer I shoot English or English-type guns, the less patience I have with anything else other than the one repeater I like: the M12.)

I wish I had, or ever could afford, a best sidelock.

I do have three nice shotguns, though, one of which I've owned for a very long time, one for a while, one rather new to me.

The old-mmer ^(for me) is a Darné 20-gauge, 27", barrels, ^(and 0.6 m. metric length) 5 lbs 10 oz, two triggers of course. It has a straight-hand stock, a plain black action, and I've shot it as well as I shoot anything, for years, from the east coast to here.

The second is an Ingram boxlock out of Glasgow ca. 1895.. a remarkable, I think first-quality ^{*}boxlock -- Holland-type scroll, easy-opener, fences with a heavy trefoil design, game-type rib, lovely wood (14 3/4 pull). ^{straight-hand, of course.} It still has

(*) my gunsmith, who works on best-quality guns, says it's the nicest b.l. "inside" he's ever seen.

its case colors and is as tight as the day it was made.

Its barrels are Damascus, 30", and weigh 3 lbs, 1 and a half oz. (the gun weighs about 6 lbs 13 oz.) Briley has measured the barrels (chambers are $2\frac{3}{4}$) and certified it safe for ^{modern} loads under $1\frac{1}{8}$. More on my plans for it in a moment.

The third is a relic of my coastal youth -- I can't be without a ten! It's a Beretta B.410 10-gauge magnum ca. ^{late} 1960s, a surprisingly graceful ten with (I will only tolerate them in a wildbowl gun) chrome-lined bores. It has two triggers, ~~horr~~ ^{will probably cut both eventually!} hinged -- a b.t., but a slim one, a p.g., but a shallow one. I have refinished the stock to dull, and added a Pechmayr O.E. pad.

I sold all ^{my shotguns - far too many..} but the Darné and the Ingram when my partner Betsy died a few years back. The Beretta was to replace two older tens... I only paid \$400 for it, in a local gunshop. It handles steel.

This is almost too much gun talk at once for me -- I dread being a gun bore! But I can't resist a little more on the Ingram. I want to either sleeve it or have a new pair of barrels built (first infinitely more affordable); despite its being 'safe' with light loads I'd feel better with steel barrels, and I'd also like to cut it back slightly, to 27 or 28 inches. And have some choke in the left barrel (it's cylinder + blunderbuss right now.) And maybe lose 1 or 2 oz.

Do you know current prices on sleeving etc.? Anyone you

particularly recommended? Finally I'd like a little more
 cast in ~~the~~ the stock -- I have a broad face. Know
 anybody vaguely near me who does stock measurement
 or has a try gun? (Houston is not near me -- I'd rather
 drive 500 miles on the plains than 50 in E. Texas.)

All in time.

Hope to get up within the next few months. Russell
 Chatham, in Livingston^(Clark City Press), is publishing my memoir Querencia,
 I hope this summer -- gives me some excuse to go,
 to get away. Also: my ^(irrelevant) little pigeon book, Alott, will
 be published by Nick Lyons in May.. Smithsonian is doing
 an excerpt. Unfortunately they are both paid A... need
new work!

Stay tuned....

Steve B.

1085 Hamilton Rd.
Delgrade MT 59714

Bodie
Box 709
Magdalena
NM 87821

Dear Patrus:

sorry for the late reply. My life has been even more than usually in chaos for the last few months (friends might doubt that but it's true..) Every dumb financial decision I've made in the 3 years since Betsy's death -- and nondecision, and impulse buy, and procrastination, and.... -- anyway, I am straightening out my stuff with everything from the IRS to credit cards, and it's been tough. (One trouble is the drying up of various markets, but mostly it's still mine -- the fault, I think.

What this leads up to is that I had to give the Ingram up to settle an old debt. So I am once again without an English gun, nor any reasonable prospect of having one. Damn, sometimes I wish I hadn't learned so much about guns so I could be content with, I dunno, a Remington 870...

Down to one shotgun, my straight-stocked 27-inch barreled Dime 20 ga. Which is the one I shoot best anyway...

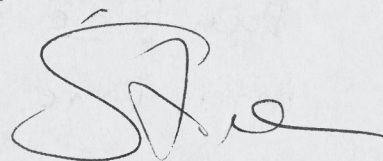
BUT. I wouldn't have written just to piss + moan.

This is a very strange time in my life. Turned 40 March 4 with less money + more debts than I have ever had. And yet: I have two books coming out, Alert at NLB + excerpted in Smithsonian (pigeons) and Querencia at Livingston's own Clark City (get a catalog for an idea - though the cover, a Chatham original, isn't done justice in B+W.) That one may make me money...

Also - am well into a novel. Sent the first 60 pages or ms. to Robert Jones, who says it's the best thing I've ever done. Got an agent. Have another assignment from Smithsonian, on the Bosque del Apache wildlife refuge. Talked to Outside on the phone about 3 articles - they wrote asking me for stuff. Finally, a senior editor at ~~Knopf~~ Knopf whom I corresponded with just wrote saying essentially "we must plan a book."

So I sure can't be depressed all the time.

best



I'm
pedantic
about
such]

PP
1085 Hamilton Rd
Belgrade MT 59714

P.S. I found some
means yards
from my house.

Box 709
Magdalena
07825

7 June

Dear Datus:

not a chance I'll be up this summer
barring unexpected windfalls, but I'm
still hoping for fall. Gave up a shot
at a pay-as-you-go 94-peeprine
hybrid, which I want more than anything
but possibly an English gun, because I
didn't want more debts. Not only am I
flat broke, but the IRS is on my ass.
Not quite as dismal as it sounds -- what
with two books coming out and a novel
chugging along, I'm optimistic.

Weirdo readers are the only kind to have.
They'll find you. (Not as sinister as that
sounds.) I'd be fascinated to read a book
on Portugal by you -- one of the things
I loved about your long (never published?)
Irish piece was that it reeked (in a good
sense) of the country. If you do only outdoor

writing you - or at least I - tend to stagnate.
Neither of the books I have coming out are
really outdoor books, although Querencia
(rather incidentally, it that's the word)
is ^a full of history.

(Have I even told you about the books? - I don't
keep copies of my letters. Aloft, which is on
pigeons, is out about now. You actually might
like it. Querencia - you can get a catalog
from Clark City in Livingston - will be out in
the fall, and I'm sure you'd like it. It's an odd
sort of memoir, which owes much to such things
as Jour on Africa, Cross Creek, maybe Hard Scrabble.

I've already collected blurbs from Tony Hillerman,
Rick Bass, and Anne Prodx - have hopes of
McGuane. I'm bragging...)

Did you see the horrible piece on Montana in the
Gannet newspapers Sunday supplement recently? Montana
as home of the stars, the next Aspen. I'll send it
if you want. God! I think I'll stick with my
dusty querencia, or move to Wyoming or Northern
Nevada...

WESTLEY RICHARDS DROPLOCK AS A BACKUP?

I may shoot you with my Darnie!

What is the last word in yr. letter: "I know this is in
~~the~~ " ?

best always,
Steve

Datus
1085 Hamilton
Belgrade 59714

Wrote to Knox
+ sent a book to I Love
10/20/90

Bodie
POB 709
Magdalena
NM 87825

15 Sept

Hi Datus --

I owe you two letters at this point --
been running around trying to get various
things done and letting my correspondence
leg...

Tell
Knox
In the interim, I have (I think) acquired
an agent: Flip (Phillippa) Brophy of
Sterling Lord. She had to go to Albuquerque,
where we met, and she's got me excited.
One thing she did was negotiate an enormous
advance for Verlyn Klinkenberg, at Knopf... so
I have high hopes...

Right now my first priority is my novel.
Then I'll think about spinning ^(books) stuff again. This
fall, though, is novel and bird-hunting. Have
already missed my first doves. A friend in
town, who has just acquired a new Hatfield
20-bore, was heard to say as the third
dove he shot at sailed away unscathed, "I

Portugal again. When Betsy was alive she used to say we should acquire a windmill on the coast of Portugal. Though I suspect her prices on such were 20 years out of date...

killed that one dead and it's so dumb it doesn't know it..."

Much thanks for the word with Knox, by the way. I was cashing my net wide, because I knew I needed an agent. *

Portugal. I'm a very big fan of both good travel writing in general and of all your writing in particular. I always thought that trout piece you did years back (ever get it published?) worked as well as a portrait of Ireland as it did as a fishing story. I'd love to see any and or all of the Portugal thing as soon as you're ready.

When will you have Pheasants in hb.? I already reviewed it (rave) for Grays, but I'd love to get a copy & have you sign it...

Enough! I have twenty duller letters to answer. More soon ————— Steve

* Flip handles magazine stuff too, which should help me.

1085 Hamilton Rd.
Belgrade MT 59174

Answered 8/20/90

Box 709
Magdalena
87825

14 August

Hi Datus -

Thanks for the letter. Re quitting smoking -
I probably am. Quit 100% for 8 years, without
effort - but those were good & relatively easy
times. After Betsy's death (blackly ironically, from
lung cancer) I started again. Humans don't
always make sense...

I'm supposed to be in Albuquerque picking
up a new falcon but the shipment was
delayed. With luck and a few dollars you
may finally see me harassing your mallards.
She's more hawk than I have any
business owning without unlimited time +
money, an enormous Gyr-peregrine hybrid,
but she's been virtually forced on me. ~~Sort of~~
Sort of like somebody making you take a
Porsche or a Lamborghini or some-damn-thing.

New guns - I don't want a "new gun" per se.
What I want is one gun of slightly larger

gauge - a 16 or 12 -- and something
esthetically "perfect", i.e. a (probably)
English or (sometimes almost as fine)
equivalent in Belgian or Spanish or French or
(maybe) Italian gun. I've educated myself
in guns far beyond my means.

And I don't want to
replace the Darnes -
I want two
guns.

Got another copy of Pheasants, from
Prentice Hall. What's this about a sporting-
literary series? Could there be anything there
for me? Who would I talk to?

Agents. I think I need one. I'm the
only person I know with five books behind
me, all from commercial publishers (well all but
Ed Gau's, and he's bringing it out for real this
Fall) whose total advances don't make a year's
good salary. What are your thoughts?

*See A
draft*
I WANT TO SEE THE PORTUGAL BOOK,
|| in any form. "Travel" writing, which encompasses many
things, is one of the grounds of my life. I have so far
not traveled widely -- my fault. Betsy did -- she always
said, not entirely un-seriously, that we should move to a
windmill on the coast (?) of Portugal if we ever left
Magdalena.

more soon - best -
Steve

17 Feb

Hi Datus -

I keep putting off writing because I keep hoping I'll have NEWS .. especially of the novel. But so far, nada. A couple of NY editors have praised the writing and plotting, then said (as Dave Barry says "I am not making this up") : "The characters don't reveal their feelings to another enough. They should talk more about their emotions."

(Hall are ranchers.)

or: "You don't come down hard enough on the ranchers or environmentalists side."

(I thought that was the damn point...)

Ah well. We just keep on sending it out.

I'll be up 2 March to April whatever. Let's get together, eat, etc. (Fish?)

How was Tucson and environs? Sorry you didn't stay to eat & fly hawks.

Oh and - how much is still outstanding on Libby's gm. just in case I suddenly sell something and can pay it off in one big jump? (Otherwise I'll just keep it trickling in...

best, Steve B

