

# National Outdoor Show



I attended the National Outdoor Show in Golden Hill, Dorchester County, Maryland on 22 and 23 February. It is held in the South Dorchester K-8 School building. They hold the National Muskrat Skinning Championship there. There are several other competitions including duck, goose and turkey calling; log sawing; pole skinning and venison cooking. There were also chainsaw carving demonstrations. One of the main attractions was the pageants for the kids.

One of the main reasons I was attending this event was to sell my new book about Walter Gibbs. A few days before, I had visited his still standing house which was near the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge after gaining permission from the landowner through Tom Bradshaw.

Before the event, Bruce Abbott had purchased the book from me and confirmed that he was the muskrat skinning champion in the junior class in 1963. I had mentioned him by name in the book. I met him while at the show. It was new to meet someone who I had mentioned in one of my books. Usually, they had long since passed.

I also met Greg Bennett. He is the grandson of Morgan Bennett Sr. Morgan had purchased the Gibbs' properties in both Maryland and North Carolina.

I was able to see some unique traps and muskrat harvesting items. I saw a nine-tine muskrat gig or spear. I also saw three unique hooked traps that looked like very large versions of the Tarantula traps. All three are basketball size or larger. The owner of these traps said they came out of Annapolis, but did not know anything beyond that. If anyone has any information about these traps, let me know and I will pass it on. The owner noted that he was not interested in selling them.

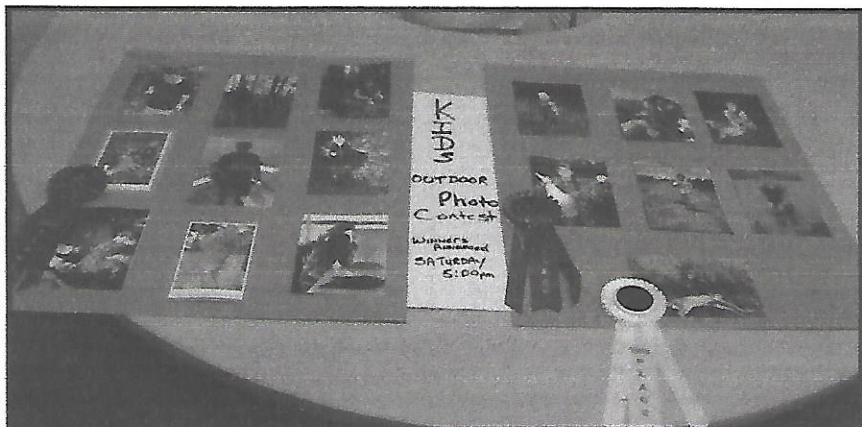
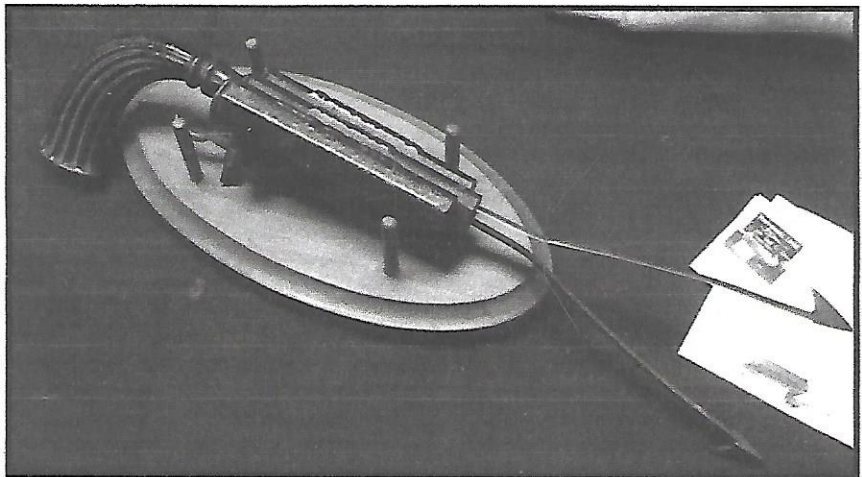
There was a trap for predatory birds mounted on a post. It had a holding pen below the trap to place live bait. There was also a F. Reuthe's Set Gun.

One big part of the event was a muskrat feed. I had never eaten muskrat before, so gave it a try. I was not disappointed. Local trappers said muskrat carcasses or "meats", as they called them, were selling for \$3 each. That was more than I got for my muskrat furs on the carcass this year.

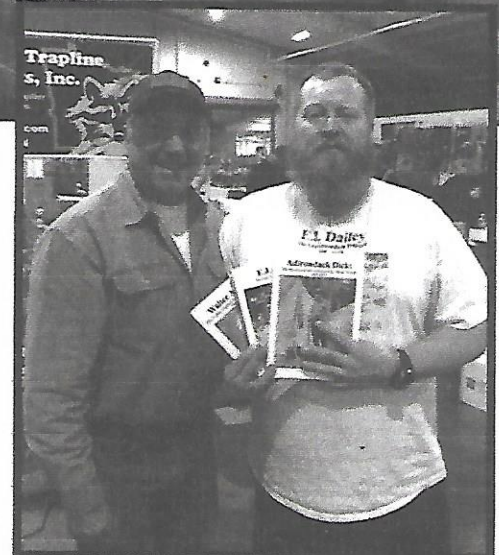
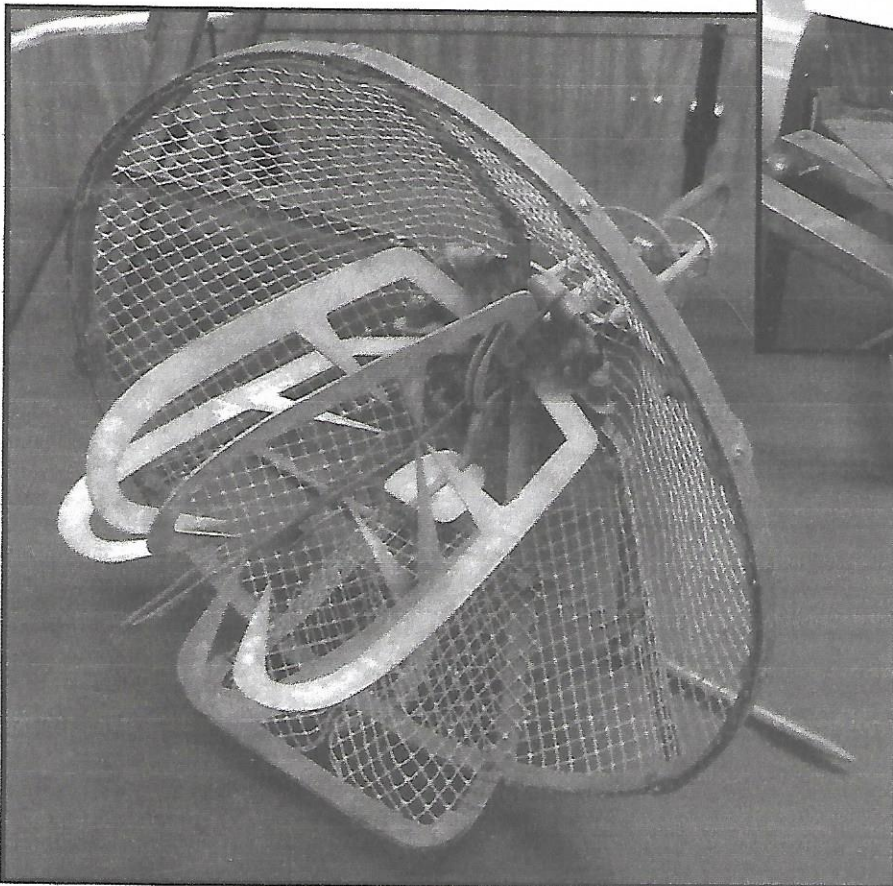
I bought a DVD about the event called "Muskrat Lovely." It is an interesting overview of the event. It focuses on the intriguing opposite ends of the spectrum of getting prepared for and competing in a beauty pageant to crown Ms. Outdoors versus a muskrat skinning championship. It is an hour long and only cost \$5 at the show.

Since I was not from the area and had no local bias, I was asked to be a judge for the Kids Outdoor Photograph Contest with two others. I was able to sign up a new member for the association and handed out a few membership applications as well.

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