

Another Turkey Tale  
April 2003

It's April in the North Country. April means one thing in the up here-Thanksgiving. We up northerners don't celebrate Thanksgiving in November as do the fudge suckers and most of the rest of the nation. November is deer hunting month and no self respecting man from northern Michigan would think of giving up a day in the woods during deer month. No, April is turkey hunting month, so naturally that is the month we celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is April 30, barring a leap year, then of course it is April 31.

This year was no different than other years. Babe and I were sitting on the deck enjoying the crisp spring air and the woods were alive with turkey gobbles. You would naturally assume then that the woods were full of turkeys. You could assume that but you would be wrong. The woods were actually full of turkey hunters; our front yard was full of turkeys. The turkey hunters in the woods were trying every trick in their turkey calling book to call the turkeys from our front yard into the woods. Of course the turkeys were having none of that. They were content in our front yard and that's where they were staying.

Seeing that our turkeys were safe, Babe and I drove over to big Jake's to see how he was doing. Big Jake of course already had his big gobbler, but his daughter Sweet Amy and her fourth of fifth husband Spike had not gotten theirs yet. So Babe and I drove out to the woods and came upon Sweet Amy in her blind. We knew we had found her, despite a remarkable camouflage outfit, when we heard a shout, "Turn off that engine, McSpade, or I'll blast some leaks in your radiator." We entered the blind and sat with Amy.

"I'm after Moby Turkey", said Amy. "He's been seen in the area and old Moby is mine."

Now I must digress a bit here. Most of you are thinking that "Moby Turkey" is referring to Melville's great white whale "Moby Dick". You could certainly think that, but again you would be wrong. "Moby Turkey" is indeed a huge, smart turkey, but he is not named after the Melville character. Nobody up here has heard of Herman Melville, wouldn't care who he was if they had heard of him, and have never heard of a great white whale named Moby Dick or any other whale for that matter. In fact, if you tell anyone in Northern Michigan that there is a body of water larger than Lake Superior or there is an animal bigger than our legendary "Tirty Point Buck" you will be met with laughter and probably rude gestures. Anyway, Moby Turkey is named after Moby Farnsworth, who first spotted this huge turkey several years ago. After being spotted and verified by several others, this huge turkey was then referred to as "Moby's Big Turkey" and as time went by, it was just shortened to Moby Turkey. Over the years, this huge bird has managed to elude all the hunters in the area. He just will not succumb to their calls.

Now back to our story. Sweet Amy is the best turkey caller in the north country. If anyone can call in Moby Turkey it is Sweet Amy. After awhile as Amy called, there was movement coming from the woods across the small field where we sat. Amy called, the bushes parted. Could this be the moment. Amy raised her shotgun as she gobbled and clucked. Out into the open burst---Spike her husband. "Spike, what in the great north are you doing?", Amy asked, none too politely I might add.

"Well, I heard this turkey calling and I thought it might be Moby Turkey, so I followed the calls to here, hoping to bag the big guy," said Spike.

Now folks, I am not a hunter, but even I know you call and wait for the turkeys to come to you. You do not chase the turkeys.

Evidently Spike didn't learn his lesson well enough from last turkey season.

"You twit," shouted Amy. "Babe, will you take Spike home before he gets hurt out here. I almost shot my own husband. Course, that wouldn't be the first time for that either", she added laughingly. And while you are at it Babe, you might explain to him again how that Spenard Divorce works."

After that little adventure, we settled in and Amy resumed her mesmerizing calls. Soon the bushes parted again. To my astonishment, out came the largest turkey I have ever seen. The bird was huge; how could it ever get off the ground and fly. As I soon found out, it couldn't. The old bird stepped into the field heading straight for Amy's blind; straight for her calling. I was dumbfounded. Forward he came. Suddenly the woods erupted in gunfire. If you remember the closing scene in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, then you have a pretty good idea of what happened when Moby entered the field. That poor bird didn't have a chance. But somehow he kept moving forward towards Sweet Amy and her seductive calling. More gunfire. Amy raised her shotgun and fired. The bird kept coming. Dust and leaves were kicking up all around the bird from the gunfire, but he kept coming. Amy fired again and the bird still kept coming towards Amy's clucking and gobbling. Suddenly, a few yards away from our blind, the big bird dropped. As suddenly as the firing started, it stopped. Out of the woods erupted an army of camouflaged hunters. In unison they all shouted, "I bagged Moby Turkey!"

Amy stood up "Nope, I gott'im. Anyone gonna argue?"

"Nope, I'm pretty sure I missed", said one hunter sheepishly. "Me too," said another. Still another said, "I'm sure you gott'im Amy. I think I shot low."

"Sounds about right," replied Amy, with her sweet disarming smile.

So folks Sweet Amy finely bagged her turkey. April 30 will be a happy Thanksgiving at Sweet Amy's house. And things should be good at the old 210 tavern this year.

Now as a postlude, I would just like to make an observation about the whole scenario I just described. With all the gunfire, I never once saw old Moby Turkey flinch as if he were hit. I never saw any blood where he fell; nor, after Sweet Amy picked him up. Now I'm not saying that Sweet Amy didn't get the bird, because there was some mighty fine turkey meat at her Thanksgiving dinner. And I'm not saying Old Moby died of a heart attack or anything like that. I would never think anything like that, and you shouldn't either if you know what is good for you. Perhaps I just did not look closely enough to see the evidence or perhaps, Old Moby Turkey knew his time had come and he just surrendered to the inevitable outcome of Sweet Amy's call. After all, many a man has succumbed to her call; should we expect any less from a turkey?

Till next month

Wade