January 30, 2006

To current and future bowyers,

For years I have thought about switching from a recurve to a long bow and for years I have also thought about building my own bow. Well, last year during the final week of September I was practicing with my 20-year-old Bighorn recurve bow. I came to full draw and there was an explosion and limb string and arrow were flying every which way but loose. I was broken hearted. I had to switch to my old Bingham recurve and then think about getting a new bow. The next day I was looking through the Three Rivers Web site and I decided to look at the book section dealing with bow construction. I had been there before but now I notice a book that I had not seen before, TRADITIONAL BOWYER, MORE UNNECESSARY FUN by Jack B. Harrison. WOW, $89.95 and 699 pages; money and time, two things that are always in short supply. The description was a pretty picture for an aspiring bowyer and something just made me do it. I said to myself, "Your 61 and you better get going or you're going to leave it a wish."

The book came and I was impressed with the quality: great hard cover, glossy paper and print that I could read without my reading glasses. I made a commitment to read at least one hour a night. In the first chapter Jack set the hook and he didn't quite reeling until I finished. This book is GREAT! The majority of it is based on scientific studies done by Jack through a research grant from the Alaska Science and Technology Foundation and work supported by the local university. The bow data in the book is fact, not opinion. The work was done and the data was reported. This isn't an "in my opinion…" or an "I think…" book. It's a "this is a fact" book. It goes through limb design, best wood laminations, where and when to use carbon and fiber glass, riser design and strength, tillering (what to do and what not to do), why not to use a Flemish string, spraying, building the form and the oven, etc, etc, etc. These aren't instructions from Tinker Toy. Jack covers it. If you want to learn, if you want to build a good bow, if you want to avoid mistakes, or if you just want a good read, then you must buy and read this book. Even if you don't intend to build a bow and just want to be able to ask intelligent questions about your next purchase, this is the book for you. It's the bible of laminated bows and Jack Harrison has written the epistles.

An amen to Jack. Praise the Lord and glue those lams.

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