

Fins, Feathers & Fur

VOLUME 6

APRIL 2011

The Other Day in the Woods...



**MICHIGAN
OUTDOOR PROPERTIES**

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You know I was beginning to think spring just wasn't going to make an appearance this year. It seemed that ole man winter just wasn't going to release his icy grip. This past week we finally got a good blast of warmer weather that has melted pretty much all the snow in my neck of the woods. The bare ground that is now showing is attracting the deer and turkeys out from their winter hideouts. Seems nearly every field that has some sort of green vegetation or left over grain from last fall's farming is being visited by hungry wildlife. You can almost see the smiles on the faces of the deer and turkey who've been eating sticks and twigs all winter.

Seeing all these turkeys has got the juices flowing about a favorite sport of mine, turkey hunting. I started out hunting turkeys in 1989 up near Houghton Lake, and it's become a passion ever since. I've been fortunate to have spent a lot of hours in many different places in pursuit of these big birds, and on occasion even harvested a few, though I must admit that the first bird holds a special place in my heart.

The first time I applied for a turkey hunting permit was 1989. A guy whom I was bowling with talked me into putting in for the permit and suggested we hunt near his cabin at Houghton

Lake. Following his invitation we both applied and were successful in the draw and received our permits in the mail. Now the interesting part begins, as neither of us had the faintest clue as to how to actually hunt a turkey.



Rick Patridge and his Dad Burt Patridge with our 1st turkey in 1989.

We both poured thru countless videos and read lots of magazine articles on how to hunt turkey. Course we needed some gear, so off to Jay's Sporting Goods in Clare we went. The ole plastic charge card got a work out there and we both came home with arm loads of calls, vests, shells etc. Anticipation was running high. The following weekend we decided to run up to Houghton Lake and drive around looking for some birds. We discovered a big problem in our plans, when we arrived the ground was still covered by 2 feet of snow. The

paths we hoped to drive down looking for turkey tracks were instead covered by snowmobile tracks. We had driven up in my friends Bronco and his nature was not to have a little snow foil our plans. So.....he locked in the hubs on the 4x4 and down the groomed snowmobile trails we went. No doubt the good Lord was watching over a couple dummies that day as somehow our little Bronco made it thru miles of snow covered trails without so much as spinning a tire in the deep snow. We did pass quite a few snowmobilers who at first we thought were waving at us in enjoyment. One particular group of guys were very energetic in their waving so we stopped to say Hi and see what all the waving was about. Heck we thought maybe they wanted us to share a cook out or something. Upon stopping and rolling down the window we found out their waving was being accompanied by shouting, and none was of a positive nature. Seems our little Bronco, while not spinning a tire, was still leaving some terrible deep ruts in the groomed snowmobile path and causing some rough riding for the snowmobilers. We didn't stick around for a lunch invitation.

A new wrinkle developed in our hunting plans just a couple weeks from opening day. My friends work schedule had changed and he wasn't going to be able to go hunting at all. Things looked rather bleak as now I was without

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Continued from Page 1

a place to stay or someone who had any knowledge of the area. In stepped my dad to save the day. He and I had hunted whitetails together for years and he had long been accustomed to following me on some deer adventures. I suspect feeling sorry for me was his motivation to help me out. He was retired and he and my mom spent countless hours riding the sand trails up near Houghton Lake. They made pages of notes of places where they had seen turkey or tracks. Heck by the time opening day rolled around I think dad was as excited as me. I had spent lots of time watching and reading about turkey hunting, had even got good enough on a box call to sound somewhat like a hen turkey, albeit a very loud hen turkey.

Opening morning dawned cold, still, and clear. Dad and I decided to try a spot where he and mom had been seeing some turkey crossing a trail intersection. We drove in long before daylight and had parked off on a side trail just a few yards from where we thought we'd start hunting. Dad and I were sipping coffee, in the dark cab of my truck, windows open, listening for gobbles. We sat there till dawn's first light started peeking over the horizon and I decided to get out and let loose with a series of squawks from my new box call. I cranked out a long series of yelps on my call and leaned back on the fender hoping to hear a response from a love sick gobbler. Instead I got the cold shoulder, not a peep. After

trying the same pattern for 20 minutes I gave up and got back in the truck to warm up. About 20 minutes after my first attempt, and getting near full daylight, I jumped out and tried calling again, somewhat less enthused this time. As soon as I stopped my yelps it seemed the woods were full of turkey, as toms were gobbling from at least 8 different locations!! It was pretty much Keystone Cops for a few minutes as we wrestled with clothes, calls, shells, and my gun trying to get geared up and headed out before the rapidly closing gobblers made it to our location. Dad and I ran about 50 yards down the trail from the truck and quickly sat down. I was up against a big oak and dad decided to sit on top of a stump. I settled in and let loose with another series of yelps. Literally seconds after I stopped the woods again was full of gobbles and they were close, it seemed the ground was actually shaking from the gobbles. I quickly dropped the call and got my shotgun up on my knees, stock tucked against my cheek. All I was moving after that were my eyes. I felt like the toms had to be close enough to hear my wildly beating heart. A quick glance around and I could not see any of the turkeys, even though I knew they were very, very close. I looked toward dad and could see he was ever so slowly sliding down the side of the stump, trying to get on the ground, and looking directly in front of me.



Staring thru the trees I finally saw the bird. He was less than 20 yards away and slowly walking toward me, head craned

high no doubt looking for the loud hen caller. Funny when you're in a situation like this how the world slows down, your vision almost seems tunnel like. As if there's nothing else in the world but you and the target. At about 10 yards the turkey stopped, of course right behind a young pine sapling, giving me no shot. I had the safety off and the shotgun pointing directly at the bird, waiting for an opening. After what seemed like hours, which in reality was really a couple seconds, the tom poked his head around the side of the tree and seeing my chance I touched off the ole 12 gauge. The load of number 4 shot did its job and the big gobbler was flopping around on the ground. I jumped up, ran over and grabbed the bird and turned to face my dad. He was running toward me with a HUGE smile on his face. Handshakes, and hugs were in order as we celebrated our success. The bird was nice, 24 lbs, with an 8 3/4" beard, and felt heavy as we walked back to the truck. Been quite a few birds put in the freezer since that day, but the first is always the best and sharing it with my dad was priceless.

Leftover Spring Turkey Permits

The Department of Natural Resources reminds hunters that leftover spring turkey licenses go on sale to unsuccessful license applicants on Tuesday, March 8. Licenses may be purchased by any hunter beginning March 15, including those who did not participate in the application process. Hunters may look up their drawing results and view leftover license quantities at www.michigan.gov/hunt/drawings.

"There are numerous licenses available for many areas of the state," said Al Stewart, the DNRE's Upland Game Bird Specialist. "There are more than 52,000 remaining licenses available, which allows hunters to pursue turkeys on private land in southern Michigan from April 18 - May 1, the first two weeks of the season. Or, hunters may purchase a license for Hunt 234 to hunt turkeys statewide from May 2 - 31, except for public lands in Unit ZZ." The Hunt 234 license may be purchased until May 1.

There are over 74,000 total leftover licenses available for limited-quota hunts. Hunters may purchase only one license for the spring turkey season. Licenses can be purchased online at www.mdnr-elicense.com or are available for purchase at state retail license agents.

In 2010, Michigan hunters harvested about 37,000 turkeys, making Michigan one of the top 10 turkey hunting states in the country.

Upcoming Events Around the State

4/2	Growing up Wild	White Lake
4/3	Motorcycle Swap Meet	Birch Run
4/3	Signs of Spring Walk	Milford
4/3	Gizmo Guys	East Lansing
4/7	Fun on the Farm - Tractors	Milford
4/7	Great Lakes Loons Opening Day	Midland
4/8	Detroit Tigers Opening Day	Detroit
4/8 - 4/10	Home & Garden Show	Novi
4/9	Dog Show	Birch Run
4/9	Fur Trade Day	Monroe
4/9	GPS Scavenger Hunt	White Lake
4/9	Orienteering	White Lake
4/15 - 4/16	Earth Fair	Goodells
4/16	Reptile & Exotic Animal Show	Kalamazoo
4/16	Flea & Farmers Market	Kalamazoo
4/23 - 4/24	Old Tyme Plow Days	Scotts
4/27 - 5/1	National Trout Festival	Kalkaska
4/29 - 5/1	Walleye Festival	Freeland
4/29 - 5/1	Maple Syrup Festival	Shepherd
4/29 - 5/1	Maple Syrup Festival	Vermontville
4/30	Earth and Sky Day	Grand Rapids
4/30	Celebrate Earth Day	Saginaw
4/30	Spring Fling	Dexter
4/30	Science Saturday	Portage
5/1 - 5/7	Blossom Time Festival	Benton Harbor
5/6 - 5/8	Mushroom Festival	Mesick
5/6 - 5/8	Green Street Fair	Plymouth
5/6	Dixie Motor Speedway Opens	Birch Run

SOLD! and Pending

40 Acres V/L
Saginaw County
Asking: \$110,000
Sold: \$89,500

6 Acres V/L
Lapeer County
Asking: \$9,000
Sold: \$7,500

120 Acres V/L
Lapeer County
Asking: \$339,000
Sold: 280,000

Saginaw Bay Lot
Tuscola County
Asking 59,000
Sold: \$46,000

40 Acres V/L
Lapeer County
Asking: \$119,000
Sold: \$112,000



HOT SPOTS

Decided to put a new item in the newsletter this month. This one will be titled "Hot Spots".

Since it's almost April how about we start out with a place to catch some walleyes. Their season starts the last Saturday in April in my neck of the woods. This Hot Spot is in Genesee County, north of Davison, known as Hollway Reservoir and is in the Genesee County Park system.

The lake was formed by a dam on the Flint River. The impoundment stretches from just a bit north of Davison all the way to Columbiaville in Lapeer County.

I believe the deepest part of this lake is around 25 feet, which would be in the old river channel, but most is less than 10 feet in depth.



Excellent fishing in the lake for walleye, pike, bass, catfish, and pan fish. Some very nice crappies are caught here as well, mostly on minnows under a bobber.

My Hot Spot is actually below the dam. Take M-15 to Stanley Rd east to Oak Rd north to Carr Rd and east to the entrance of the Park.

Fishing is good on both sides of the dam. The side opposite the parking lot can be accessed by walking the catwalk over the dam. The walleyes can be taken on all the usual walleye baits, plus minnows. My son and I have found our best success on live minnows. These we've fished both on floating jig heads, and also on perch rigs. Last spring in a couple weeks time we had caught and released probably over a hundred fish. Nearly all were around the 12 to 14 inch range, just a tad shy of the required 15 inches. Best fishing for us was up in the spillway of the dam or right along the wall. Long handled nets are beneficial here as the water is often 6 feet or so below the wall. We also discovered this is a great place to catch channel catfish and large carp while fishing for the walleyes. Some carp we saw landed were in excess of 20 pounds.

Good luck folks, and remember the walleye season doesn't start till April 30th.

Pinned Alive in the Mud

When Ryan Muirhead set out to fill his whitetail tag on the final day of Minnesota's muzzleloader season, he never imagined he would stumble upon a huge elk that may rewrite the record books. The way he found the animal is even more extraordinary...it was pinned flat on its back with its antlers stuck in the mud. Steve Hill of Field and Stream talked to Muirhead and got the amazing story of this record-book elk, how he freed it and got to keep the trophy rack.

Ryan Muirhead set out on the morning of December 12 with hopes of filling his tag. What he found instead—a huge 9 x 10 elk pinned flat on its back, alive, with its massive antlers stuck in the mud. Muirhead was able to free the animal, though it died from the ordeal two days later. This tragic freak occurrence should rewrite the record books.

Muirhead and a couple of buddies were on state land in northern Minnesota's Kittson County when they spotted the elk. "We were planning to go out for the morning watch, but it was just too cold at 25 below," he recalls. "We decided to drive around and see if anything was moving."

Rounding a bend in a gravel road, they encountered an odd sight: About 30 yards from their truck, 8 yards beyond a barbed wire fence, a bull elk lay kicking in the snow. "He was on his back, chest heaving, steam pouring from his nose," Muirhead recalls. "He'd been kicking for quite a while and he was worn out."

On closer examination they saw that the animal's antlers appeared to be embedded in the muddy ground, pinning its head to the snow. "He'd stuck himself like turtle upside down. No way he was moving."

They eventually decided that something needed to be done to help the animal. "He was an old bull and he wasn't going to live forever, but you don't want to see him die like that if you can help

him."

The men sought help from a local rancher, who supplied a two-by-four, which they used as a lever to pry the rack from the ground.

The bull didn't go far. "His legs were like Jello," Muirhead says. "He kind of staggered to the fence and fell down. We all backed off and let him be. His back leg was bloody where he'd been kicking his antler, his chest was heaving. You could tell he was worn out and not happy that people were close to him."

Muirhead still had the evening deer hunt ahead, but he couldn't get the bull out of his mind. "I just had to go back; I knew he wasn't going to make it far." On Tuesday, December 14, Muirhead returned to the site with his wife, Josie. They found the bull 600 yards back in the woods.

"It was sad to see a wild animal like that not be able to get up and run and do what he wanted to do. He'd pick up his head every now and then, but he could barely lift that rack. And finally he just stopped picking up his head. To stand there and watch him die, it was tough. It's tough to see."

Muirhead contacted the Minnesota DNR, and conservation officer Ben Huener took the carcass into Roseau for a necropsy. After skinning the elk, investigators found puncture marks in the skin cause by a broken rib and by drop tines that were pinned against its back while it lay upside down.

"Being on its back for couple of hours doesn't work well with a large animal," Huener says. "I really can't imagine there would have been much to do for the animal. I'm guessing the initial impact of falling on its back pretty much did it in."



DNR biologists removed a tooth for aging, but results are pending. Huener says estimates put the bull at "8 to 10 years plus," which he notes is far older than most bull elk in the wild. "The animal was on its way down; it wasn't as big as some of the other bulls, though obviously it carried more mass on its head than some of the animals."

Interestingly, the bull was found in an area where elk hunting is prohibited. "This is the only way this could have happened legally," Huener says.

He praised how Muirhead handled the situation. "Calling the DNR was the right thing, because this was the only way he could possess the animal legally. Now he can have it mounted with pride and have all the proper paperwork."

No one has explained how the big bull came to find himself pinned on his back, undone by his own majestic antlers.

A local landowner had spotted the herd on the move about 2 ½ hours before Muirhead and his buddies found it anchored in mud—he believes the herd was headed to bed when they crossed the road and jumped the fence. "I imagine the whole herd was coming off the field, and he jumped the fence, tripped and somehow flipped upside down and stuck himself," Muirhead says. "A freak accident. But nobody really knows for sure."

WARNING! Religious Content

This story is personal about the church my family and I attend called Restoration Church www.myrestoration.org. It's a Christian church so if you'll be offended in some way... now is the time to go to the next story.

Restoration Church is 2 1/2 years old and is a small nondenominational church. We have been "portable" for a couple years, meeting in area schools and even sharing other church buildings. It's made church a little more challenging but we know that God has called us to this time and this place—downtown Imlay City. So I don't start boring everyone with details I'll come right to the point.

We need a building. You know how "things" work out sometime. One person mentions a need, who knows another person, who heard about another, and so on. We have been looking downtown Imlay City at older used buildings—not even a church building—unless God has other plans. We like to stay open to His perfect will.

God uses all types of churches for all types of people. If all churches were the same I guess we'd all be the same. Restoration Church has culturally relevant messages without white-washing Biblical truths. We are into OUT-reach not into IN-reach just to fill a chair on Sunday so we can count noses and nickels. We are part of the larger Body of Christ called the church and don't get caught up in denomination lines. We believe in and take part in the Great Commission found in Matthew 28.

Restoration is small but we have a mission and need help. I've actually known people who have had buildings or property donated for \$1.00. Kind of like one of those Ephesians 3:20 moments,

He "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us"



This is a picture of our Small Group after a Community Service Project we did Spring 2010 at Borland Elementary School in Imlay City. Yes, that's me the tall guy, giving the pastor "Bunny Ears".

I'd like to share a quote from our Small Group study material called Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby,

"Frequently, the reason we do not join God is because we are not committed to join Him. We want God to bless us, not to work through us. God's work in you will bring a blessing to you and others, but the blessing is a by-product of your obedience and experience of God at work in your midst."

If you don't know a person who knows a person but feel lead to donate financially I've given contact information. Donations are tax deductible. If you'd like to talk more about what we need, feel free to contact me or our pastor below.

We want to continue to reach people in Imlay City. We've come to the place that we need a home.

RESTORATION CHURCH
P.O. Box 95, Imlay City, MI 48444
Pastor George Hunger
pastorgeorge@myrestoration.org
www.myrestoration.org

RESTORATION CHURCH MISSION (Condensed version)

Restoration Church exists to **RESTORE** those who are far from God; and **EQUIP** them to be all they were created to be in Christ.

It has everything to do with what we want FOR people rather than what we want FROM people, and we call it our 4G's:

GIFTS – Every person has been given gifts (talents) to be used for God's glory. Through active participation everyone will find their place and become all they were created to be in Christ.

GROUPS – Small groups is where we connect with others in a significant way, committing to friendships where accountability and care can be given and received while learning and growing through Bible study and prayer.

GROWTH – Truth is, we choose to become all that He has called us to be. Restoration Church actively invites others to be a part of our church community and as a result physical growth will also occur.

GIVING – Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." As followers of Jesus, we believe in giving our time, energy, and resources for the furthering of God's kingdom.



ON THE MARKET



35 Acres Tuscola County Mayville Area \$140,000

Hunt, Fish, Camp. Fish in the 26' deep stocked pond, hunt deer and turkeys in the woods out back, ride the trails thru the woods. Natural gas at the paved road front. Front third of property is a rolling hay field with pond, back two thirds is fully wooded. Heck there's even a couple raised deer blinds out back for this fall.

29 Acres Lapeer County Elba Area \$75,000

Partially wooded on paved road near Potter Lake with power, sewer available, driveway, trails. Consists of small trees, bushes, scattered pines and open areas. Many potential building sites some with panoramic country views and wildlife. Property is made up of 2 parcels. Sewer assessment to be assumed by buyer. Bank owned property being sold as-is and with Quit Claim Deed. Buyer to verify information.



89.5 Acres Isabella County Coleman Area \$130,000

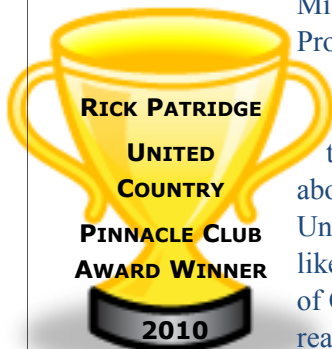
Trail leads from driveway thru woods to scattered open areas and a nice pond. Bank owned property sold as-is with Quit Claim deed. Easy access from paved road near US-10. Buyer to verify all information. Bank financing available for qualified buyers.

200 Acres Alcona County Black River \$345,000

Hunters paradise with newer cabin on county road. Cabin is 32x40 with 2 bedrooms, bath, electric baseboard heat, well, and septic. Lots of trails on the property provide easy access for hunting, hiking, ATV's, etc. Mix of oak, maple, poplar and pines with lots of wildlife including deer, turkey, grouse, bear, bobcat and woodcock. Parcel has national forest on 2 sides. Great location only 1.5 miles off US-23.



2010 Pinnacle Club Award



Many of you may not be aware that Michigan Outdoor Properties joined forces with United Country Real Estate about May 2010. United Country is like a Century 21 of Outdoor Recreational properties including

Vacant Land and Homes on Acreage. I recently received the "The Pinnacle Club" award for sales associates who have achieved over \$1,000,000 in closed sales volume in one year. Since May, when we joined United Country, I sold over 1.6M. Total for 2010 was almost 2M. Who says Real Estate is slow! 2010 was my best year yet. Thank you Lord!

INBOX DISSAPPEARANCE

Here is my official apology to anyone who sent an email around March 3rd and I never responded. I got a virus and lost everything in my inbox. Over 200 emails. Contact names, numbers and who knows what else! So if you think I'm ignoring you it's just not true. If we're still speaking— please send another email to patridge1@charter.net or give me a call or text at 810-597-1327.



Buying? Selling? Need to Know Stuff.

How do I get paid? Pretty stupid question considering I'm a Realtor. No salary, only commission. That means there are 2 equally important things that pay the light bill at my house but also can effect you as a seller or buyer.

SELLING

Obviously, I work hard to sell my listings. I truly feel it's an honor you choose me. Many think a Realtor tries to get owners to "give" away a property. Honestly, that doesn't make sense since the more money an owner makes the more money I make. BUT if a property is overpriced the more

money I spend in advertising, gas, time and the longer an owner is disappointed in lack of interest. Don't let a Realtor try to "buy" your listing by telling you it's worth more than it actually is. Base your price on RESENT SOLD comparables not un-sold listed properties. A bank will only finance appraised price. This is what I do. If you ask me what it's worth—I'll tell you. It will be a price that will make us both the most money the market will allow.

BUYING

Working with buyers is always a gamble—nothing personal guys. I've spent years working with buyers only to

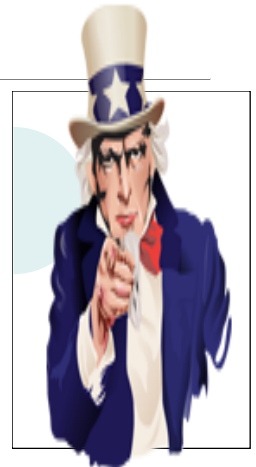
have them call on a sign and write a purchase agreement with another Realtor. It happens, I don't loose sleep over it. Some people just don't realize I can sell any listing no matter whose sign is out front. If you drive by a sign or see a property on a web site—that's fine—just tell them you're already working with a Realtor and I can set up the appointment and write the Purchase Agreement. It's how I get paid back for gas and chips. If it's not my listing I become your Buyers Agent (not 007). I represent you. So if the seller mentions they REALLY want to move to Florida I can pass that info along to you which may translate into a better price.

No Surprise Property Tax

People ask me all the time what the taxes are on a piece of property they are looking at. Quite honestly, it doesn't matter what they are. Wow, I really sound like a jerk! But it doesn't matter BECAUSE as soon as the property is sold the taxes are going to go UP. Really. I've had a lot of buyers who looked at a lot of properties and when they come to me they have never been told this important detail. It would be terrible for someone to buy a prop-

erty, be surprised when they get their first tax bill just to find out they really can't afford what they just bought. Remember in the 80s when they put property tax caps on everything? Once a property is sold that cap comes off. It's fair game for Uncle Sam. If the person selling the property has owned it for 30 years their tax bill will be MUCH lower than what the new owner will pay. Taxes are based on Taxable Value NOT State Equalized

Value too. Make sure you know the difference. There is a couple different ways to find out roughly what you'll pay. Call the township assessor or go to www.migov.com/propertytaxcalculator



Land Contract VS Bank Financing



The economy has played havoc on some peoples credit and they hope Land Contracts are the answer. Yes, there are Land Contracts available. I have never seen a Land Contract though that the owner doesn't require a significant down payment, a good credit report, and an interest rate equal to or higher than a bank. They also usually like short term contracts (which equals a higher monthly payment) and they usually hire an attorney to draw up the contract. If you own

property on a Land Contract usually the owner will not allow you to make any changes to the property including cutting trees. Why the large down payment on Land Contracts? Because if the owner gets the property back when a buyer defaults on the Land Contract they want to make sure their costs are covered. A Bank typically requires 20% down (I very rarely see down payments on a Land Contract any lower), can offer up to 30 year financing (which equals lower monthly

payments), and rates that are close to what you'd see for a home loan. I also tell people about Bank Financing because many people don't know Banks will even finance Vacant Land. Vacant Land financing has only been around 10 years or so. One of the banks that offer 30 year financing is Greenstone Farm Credit Services. You can check them out at www.greenstonefcs.com. Other banks offer special financing options if you buy one of their bank owned properties.

LOOKING TO BUY OR SELL PROPERTY?

GIVE ME A CALL.

Rick Patridge 810-597-1327, patridge1@charter.net, www.hunting4land.com

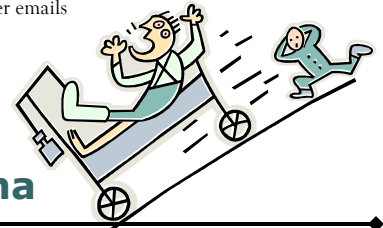


MICHIGAN OUTDOOR PROPERTIES

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Martha

A woman's husband had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months, yet she had stayed by his bedside every single day.

One day, when he came to, he motioned for her to come nearer.

As she sat by him, he whispered, eyes full of tears, 'You know what? 'You have been with me all through the bad times. When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you stayed right here. When my health started failing, you were still by my side... You know what Martha?'

'What dear?' she gently asked, smiling as her heart began to fill with warmth.

'I'm beginning to think you're bad luck'



Another Crazy Sign

I saw this sign while showing property in the
Imlay City area.

NO HUNTING
NO ONE
GO HOME

I wonder if I can hunt here?