

# Do wives and hunting mix?

**SURE, BUT DON'T INVITE  
YOUR BUDDIES**





# ■ Barry Arnold made two promises to his wife about the hunt, and he broke both

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**T**he vast majority of hunters are men, and most hunting camps are all male. Have you ever thought about taking your wife hunting? What would it be like? How would it change the experience? Would she even agree to go?

Barry Arnold, the senior pastor at Cornerstone Church in Gresham, grew up in Galena, Alaska. As the son of a missionary in a community of mostly Athabascan Indians, hunting was part of the routine.

"We hunted rabbit, bear and moose, not for the sport of it, but because the nearest grocery store was 300 miles away. Shopping meant heading out with a rifle and dog sled team, boat or on foot. In some ways, it was less like hunting, and more like harvesting. If we didn't hunt, we didn't eat."

Barry married Vicki, a non-hunter from Glide, Ore.

"In many ways, we're very different. I love the outdoors. She doesn't like it. I love hunting, and solitude. She likes being at home, and doesn't like dirt, bugs or the cold," Barry said. "We're a great couple, but we aren't alike. We're not opposites, but in some ways, it's close."

Despite their differences, they've been happily married for 38 years.

Each year, Barry and Vicki's family of five consumed two moose, lots of caribou, salmon, rabbit and an occasional bear.

They typically shopped at the nearest Safeway, in Anchorage, just once a year.

But Barry wanted to share something that he loved — hunting — with the woman he loved, so he coaxed Vicki into going hunting.

He made two promises to convince her: That she could shoot her own rifle, a .243, and that it

wouldn't be too cold.

Vicki remembers, "He wanted me to experience it; he was always helping me to become more Athabascan."

In early February 1987, he figured the time was right. The cupboard was getting bare, and they needed meat for a spring Bible camp for children that was right around the corner.

In some ways, it looked to be an easy hunt. The moose were herded up in a series of sloughs and lakes just across the Yukon River.

It would be a daytime hunt - the sun didn't even rise until after 10 a.m., so she wouldn't have to get up in the middle of the night.

The snow was heavy, and the moose typically didn't even try to run. Barry recollects, "She wasn't thrilled, but she was pretty game."

## FIVE DO'S AND DON'TS OF TAKING YOUR WIFE (OR GIRLFRIEND) HUNTING

Barry Arnold offered this advice to husbands (and significant others) who are thinking about asking their wife or girlfriend to go hunting:

■ If the desire to hunt isn't there, don't force her to go hunting with you. Or anyone else, for that matter.

■ Be realistic about expectations. If it's likely to be cold (or hot), dirty, wet or buggy, admit it.

■ Don't make promises you can't keep. That especially includes the weather.

■ Don't take her along with your buddies. At least on the first trip, make it just the two of you.

■ Keep it short. Your first trip should be a day trip, or one night, max.

Vicki Arnold shot the bull moose during her first hunting trip with her husband, Barry Arnold. Barry coaxed her to go hunting with promises that he couldn't keep.



# WIVES

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Barry's first promise was broken before they left the house: It was cold - 22 below zero. She layered up, pulling on multiple layers of wool socks and borrowed moose skin boots.

"We did what we could to keep her warm, but this was in the days before electric socks," Barry said.

They traveled about a mile and a half by snowmobile. By the time they found a moose, Vicki was pretty cold.

"We got within 150 yards of a bull moose with one antler. We didn't care, we weren't hunting for a trophy."

Barry typically tossed antlers on top of an old shed.

Vicki rested her .243 across the windshield of their snowmobile. She'd practiced before, and could hit what she aimed at, but she had never shot an animal.

She squeezed the trigger. Nothing.

She tried again. Nothing.

The firing pin was frozen.

He handed her his own rifle, a Remington Model 70 loaded with 180 grain Federal factory loads. Barry's second promise was broken.

Her first shot was good, straight in the chest. The moose didn't go down. In fact, it didn't move. A second shot did the job.

Vicki helped skin the bull, with the process only interrupted by the need to build a fire. Her feet and the tip of her nose were frozen. It took two trips on their Arctic Cat Pantera to haul out the meat.

What's Vicki's take on the experience, looking back 28 years? "He pretty much said that I had to shoot a moose, because it was expected of the wives in Galena. I did it to make him happy," Vicki said. "Later I found out that none of the Athabascan women hunt; it's the husband's job. It wasn't a fun trip for either of us. It was too cold. I was proud that I did it, and I'm not opposed to hunting. He thought his gun was too big for me, but I could handle it, and I hit what I aimed at. It didn't kick me over."

Although it wasn't repeated, both have fond memories of the trip.

A tradition among the Athabascan peoples is that some of the meat from a "first moose" is given to an elder to demonstrate respect.

Vicki proudly carried some of the meat to an old friend, Jimmy Huntington, who passed away a few days later.

Both Barry and Vicki love moose, and seldom eat beef, even today.

Most years, Barry flies to Alaska to visit friends and to hunt, but he goes without Vicki.

"For me, hunting is something that I do alone. That's the way I like it. But don't do the math on flying to Alaska to hunt to fill your freezer in Oregon. Moose is the most expensive free meat you will ever eat."

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Freelance writer Bill Leslie of Sandy contributed the stories that appear on Pages 2, 4, 6 and 10 of this HUNTING 2015 special section. Leslie is a writer and small business consultant. He has written about many subjects, from business, to history, to genealogy, to hunting. He just completed his first novel, "Time for A Change," a mystery involving Portland's Shanghai tunnels.

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you're a hunter or angler who lives in East Multnomah County, Sandy, Boring, Mount Hood villages, Estacada or Eagle Creek, and have an interesting story to tell, let us know. We're already looking for story ideas for the 2016 edition of this special section. Contact Executive Editor Steven Brown at 503-492-5119, or send an email to [sbrown@theoutlookonline.com](mailto:sbrown@theoutlookonline.com).