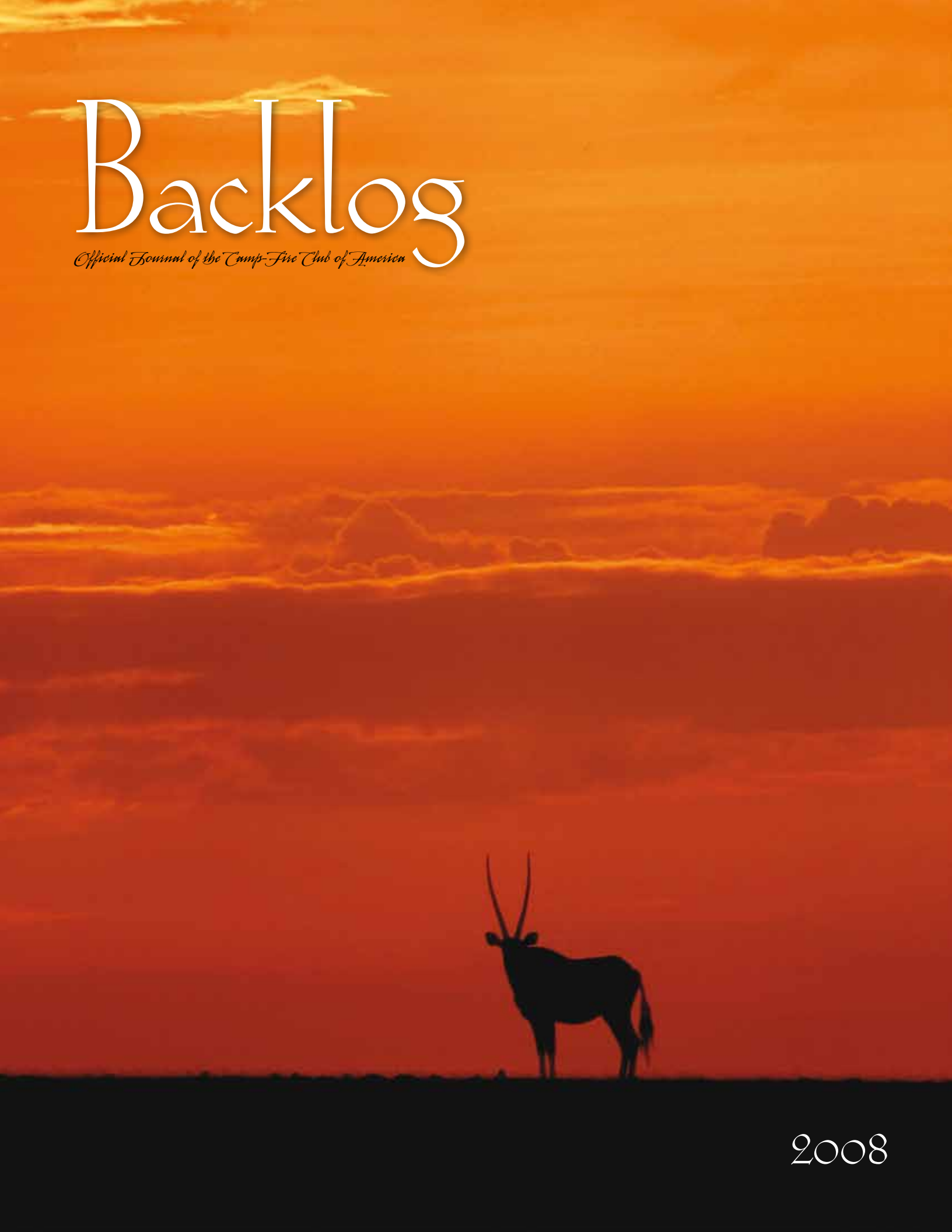
Backlog

Official Journal of the Camp-Fire Club of America



2008

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Peter D. Culbertson

President's Message

It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to have served the Camp-Fire Club of America and its membership for the past two years as the 58th President. This remarkable and unique 112-year-old Club continues to perpetuate itself through the involved, dedicated individuals that give up their energy, intellect and time.

To quote Winston Churchill:

"You make a living by what you get.
You make a life by what you give."

There are numerous people who should be recognized, and should someone not be mentioned, please forgive the oversight.

The dedication, time and leadership given by the Officers and members of the Board of Governors is greatly appreciated and highly respected.

Our Membership Committee Chairman, John Behan, with his committee, in the past two years has provided the Club with over 40 new members. This has helped overcome heavy attrition and brings the Club to a total of 467 members. By all accounts, this is an outstanding achievement.

Len Vallender, Chairman, and Jeff Gronauer, Deputy, of the Conservation Committee have traveled thousands of miles this past year involving Camp-Fire with conservation groups all across the United States and with the U.S. Government, Department of Interior. The members of the Conservation Committee have taken great care of the lakes and forest on our preserve, and we commend them for their leadership and hard work. Through their example these men support our Code of Ethics.

Thank you Tony Rice and Steve Sayer, Co-Chairmen of the Endowment Committee, for their outstanding accomplishment in growing the Endowment Fund. You are building a strong financial base for Camp-Fire.

Kudos to Jim McCosker, Pistol Chairman, for all the great improvements he has implemented on the Pistol House and Range. I also appreciate his ever-constant concern for safety and the implementation of the new Skirmish event in the Outing. Think safety.

Trig French has spent hundreds of hours of labor and a great amount of personal funds in building the 200-yard rifle range. It is a landmark that will be appreciated by the entire membership. Thank you, Trig!

For our great Mid-Winter Dinner and Dance, Clambake, Father and Son Day, Ladies Day, Member/Guest Day and the Big Game Dinner, thank you David McConnaughey, Entertainment Chairman. I also tip my hat to all the committeemen. We enjoy the fun.

The House Committee Chairman, Larry Centore, has removed the term "kitchen" and replaced it with restaurant. The Friday Night Dinners are always sold out, and our diners enjoy outstanding menus prepared by Larry and Chef Armand. Both have made it a true pleasure and great fun to dine at Camp-Fire.

To the Sports Activity Chairman, Walt Noonan, and his Shotgun Chairman Harry Madsen, Rifle Chairman Bill Doughty, Fishing Chairman George Utley, Campcraft Chairman John Hayes and all the hard-working committee members, a great big Thank You!

Our Club has 23 working committees listed in the White Book. In reading this message so far, I hope that our 40 new members see just how important member participation is. As a new member, get involved, select a committee that appeals to you and seek out the Chairman; he will welcome you with open arms. We are a very unique member-run Club. You will get back 10 times what you put into Camp-Fire.

The 100th June Outing was attended by over 220 members and guests, an all-time record. Many thanks

David E. Petzal

So You Haven't Been to Africa?

It's come to my attention that there are members of Camp-Fire who have not been on safari. In these sorry economic times it's easy to not go, but the times are not always going to be sorry. Do you think you'll go someday and that you've got forever? I assure you--you don't.

The reason you should go to Africa, assuming you like big-game hunting, is that the continent is home to the best big-game hunting in the world. In terms of quality, quantity, and variety, nothing even comes close. Moreover, it is also the greatest big-game hunting *bargain* in the world. You can, with no trouble at all, spend $15,000 for an Alaska moose hunt and not even see a shootable bull. For that kind of money, you can have one hell of a safari, and I guarantee that you will come home with at least a couple of major trophies.

The people who have not gone usually come up with a standard list of reasons. Let's look at them.

IT COSTS A FORTUNE

Over the past several years the average number of safaris to the African countries with big-game hunting has numbered 25,000. Are all of these people rich? Not likely. The truth is that you have a huge number of options in planning a safari, and your costs are controllable.

The Camp-Fire herd that went to South Africa in July 2008 was able to save massive amounts of money on air fare by booking its seats as a group and making the reservations in February. The cost for each of us was a shade over $1,700, round-trip.

There are cheap countries and expensive countries. Namibia is very cheap; Tanzania is expensive; South Africa is, for the most part, a bargain; Botswana is somewhere in the middle. How much a safari costs is determined not only by country, but by type, and by what you want to shoot. If you want a real, honest-to-god tent safari out in the ass-end of nowhere, that costs a lot. If you want a ranch hunt, which South Africa has perfected, that can be very inexpensive. If you want to kill a lion, a roan, and a sable, you will have to pass up the new Ferrari, but if you want a gemsbok, a kudu, and a waterbuck, that will be no strain at all.

If you'd like to save lots and lots of money, you can go during the off season, which is August through April (their spring and summer). During the peak safari season, from May through July, the weather is cool and beautiful, and there are no bugs and serpents. When it gets hot, you don't want to be there. I've done this twice and know whereof I speak. But it is, by God, cheap.

THE GREAT DAYS OF AFRICAN HUNTING ARE GONE

Technically, this is true. When Russell Barnett Aitken went to Africa in the 1930s, the vast herds of game (and I do mean vast) were virtually untapped. Huge beasts of all species were constantly underfoot, and license fees were dirt cheap. (There was a time in Kenya when lions were considered pests, and if you shot one it was regarded as a public service.)

In 1981, when I shot a roan and a sable in Zambia, the license for each was $750. In most countries now, it is ten times that, but you do not have to shoot a roan and a sable. Or you can hunt for a roan or a sable and forego other critters.

It's not nearly as easy as it once was to collect a really impressive trophy, but the fact is that they are still available and that every year people come home with them. Do you want an elephant with 100-pound tusks?