

DECEMBER 6, 1984

Dry weather and the poor grazing conditions have ruined our deer hunting business. Mertzson and a lot of other outposts are missing the deer hunters' trade. I haven't had one call for day leasing since last summer. Like any other drouth weary herder, I'm cherishing the privacy but missing the coin that goes with the game.

Hunting stories, however, are on a boom. I'm working on a report of a deer that was killed in Montana that's going to make the Boone and Crockett Club look like they were allowing unicorns to be recorded. The sheep and cow doctor that helps us at the story. As soon as he figures out a way to get those big horns through the port of entry leaving Montana to Texas, we are going to make those guys that go around writing chit chat on the Abominable Snow Monster sound like they've been sent off to cover the May dance in the Pygmy colonies.

From what the doctor says, the rack is too big to get through the port of entry without sawing off some of the points. I can tell by putting his snapshots together that he's right about it being a huge spread, but what he failed to do was to bring a picture of the Montana border itself.

I am not about to ask one of those blabbermouth truckers over in San Angelo on the Montana weight and width laws. As sure as they got involved they'd blow my story and have it spread that they'd seen the deer standing by a roadside park posing for some tourists.

You sure don't want to use truck drivers for anything else except driving a truck. They are good hands at drinking coffee and eating chicken fries, but in case you need a witness, pick a sailor or leave rather than one of those guys. Anybody that gets to believing truckers' stories needs help and better get it as fast as he can.

The first audience I tried the story on was a disappointment. However, a presidential election year weakens credibility. The group I used aren't amateurs. In the years I've had coffee with them, they've beached one 64-foot tidal wave, made some above average calls on constitutional law, and settled several delicate points in the earth and celestial sciences, not to mention what they've contributed to big league football rules.

But they are being irresponsible in doubting my word. Large animal vets are among the world's best judges of space. Every working day finds them working with head catchers and squeeze chutes. I'd say that an intern at an insignificant animal hospital could do a better job estimating width than a tomcat with a perfect set of whiskers.

It looks like I'll either have to go to Montana or find a deer that big in Texas. Keep count who has the last laugh. I'm not going to let this big chance for a story be ruined by a bunch of Angelo coffee drinkers. We'll get those horns out some way or other if it takes all winter.