

## **Motivating a Young Person in Survival**

**By Joseph Parish**

Have you ever wondered what would be the best way to get a younger person such as a teenager involved in your survival efforts? Well I think I may have discovered an excellent way to accomplish that task for you. This year I have been signing up my thirteen-year-old grandson for various hunter safety courses with the state of Delaware. I am a firm believer that children should be properly instructed in the safe use of firearms at a young age. The age that is best for your children will better be determined by you since only you know how mature your children are and if they are ready for weapons use. Children who are deemed old enough to handle a firearm responsibly should not only receive training in the safe use of the weapon but also in how to behave properly at a shooting range.

Granted these hunter safety training courses are a lot of work and very time intensive but at least the child learns the safety principles from professionals with years of experience under their belt. Once your child has the basics well under way, it would be time for presenting the "rewards". In our case, I purchased by grandson a 20-gauge shotgun so he could hunt deer and various game birds such as wild turkey. Naturally here in the state of Delaware in order to hunt wild turkey you must once again attend another safety course.

Once all the hunter safety classes are completed its than time to take that young boy to the field. A couple of good hunting days often ensure a lifetime of interest and preparedness, especially if they are fortunate enough to bag a deer or turkey. The key to success is to get them involved in the shooting and safe handling of the weapon.

My grandson has received instructions in the use of rifles such as 22 calibers as well as 20- and 30-gauge shotguns. He is versed on the safe handling of pistols as well as the art of using bow and arrows. During his spare time he has a pellet rifle which he uses for target practice and if needed could be employed to hunt for small game such as rabbit or squirrel. We enjoy taking the pellet gun and participating in shooting contests in our back yard.

I would like to stress that anytime a youngster is using a weapon of any kind adult supervision should take place. Above all make sure that you follow all the safety rules as well, children learn from our example.

Shooting and hunting is not the only activities that my grandson has learned in order to provide a measure of self-reliance. This past year we have attended a trapping class offered by the state and we have both signed up and completed various "Gander Mountain" training sessions. These hour-long classes included such topics as Rod and Reel Maintenance as well as fly-tying. The classes are fun and young children quickly pick up the principles rapidly. Our state parks offer various training opportunities as well. We have attended instructions centered on determining the animals in an area from the

paw print that they leave and classes on obtaining our own maple syrup. He has even learned the skills associated with butchering, cutting and processing the animals he has killed.

I remember as a young child visiting the dump in the early evening with an uncle and using the rats as target practice. Those were the good "ole days." Passing good knowledge of the outdoors to younger generations is quickly becoming a lost art and becoming a lost phase of our history. Only you and I can keep it going with our children and grandchildren.