

Gilman Archer's Aim Nets Him Awards

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Steve White

GILMANTON — Steve White's aim is true.

So true in fact that it takes two and one-half pages of paper to list all the awards he has won, not to mention the three "Robin Hoods" he has shot.

"Robin Hoods," which many archers never experience in a lifetime, occur when one shoots an arrow into a bull's-eye and then hits the arrow he has already shot with a second arrow so that the two, in effect, become one. White achieved one of his "Robin Hoods" in competition and has an award for it.

The Robin Hood Award, however, is not the 17-year-old archer's most cherished. That distinction goes to a 1982 trophy won at the New Hampshire Bowman Championship when he was only nine. The award for placing first in his division, he says, really motivated him to continue with the sport.

Although many of his awards are packed away in boxes in the home he shares with his mother, Marguerite "Peggy" and sister Colleen, 22, the 1982 trophy and a few others are kept out.

The other favorite awards include one from the 1987 New England Indoor Championships, held in Lunenburg, Mass., and one from the 1989 New Hampshire Bowmen Championship. The latter award was in the men's division in 3-D outdoor competition where the targets are lifelike animals rather than bull's-eyes.

White, now a senior at Gilford Middle-High School, took up archery at the age of six when his father, Steve Sr., now of Concord, became interested in the sport.

The two belong to the Belknap Bowmen and travel together to competitions throughout New England and as far afield as Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Michigan, New York, and Delaware.

The Belknap Bowmen, an organization of more than 100 amateur and professional archers and their families, meets on Friday nights at the Opechee Park Clubhouse in Laconia. In winter, club members shoot inside the clubhouse, while in summer they take their shooting outdoors to Gunstock and other places in the area where they concentrate on 3-D targets.

The opportunity to travel, meet new people, and learn new styles of archery is one of the things that White enjoys most about archery.

"Travel," "fun," and "challenge" are all words that crop up when he talks about his sport. If it weren't fun, he says, he wouldn't do it, adding that he dislikes competitions where the archers are too serious.

The challenge White finds in archery is the challenge of beating himself, of "gaining a point on my score" rather than of besting the other competitors. "If you go against the competitor (rather than yourself), you lose every time," he says.

Although both his father and mother are very supportive and provide the archer with all the basics of his sport, he works hard to earn the extras to keep him in keen competition. For the past four summers, he's worked for Flynn Electric to make enough to buy a very special bow he wanted and to equip himself with special accessories as well. His employer, David Flynn, he says, has been especially helpful to him as a consistent sponsor in his various competitions.

An all-around outdoorsman, White also hunts and fishes, and uses his archery skills in both pursuits. He also hunts with a gun and fishes with rod and reel. His last deer, a seven-point buck, was felled with a gun the season before last. He has yet to get one with his bow but he is confident that he will. In fact he's already out scouting the territory. "If you pay your dues and work hard enough, you're going to be successful, it will come to you," he says.

In addition, White enjoys bicycle riding, canoeing, and playing frisbee.

White also gets satisfaction out of instilling his love of archery and the outdoors in those younger than he. Whenever asked, he volunteers to shoot the "Arrows of Light" during ceremonies held by various Cub Scout Packs and Webelos signifying members crossing over to Boy Scouting. After the ceremony, he usually sticks around to answer any questions the boys or their parents may have about archery, and inviting any with a real interest in the sport to visit the Bowmen's club and try it out.

Now that he is almost through high school, White plans to join the U.S. Marine Corps. He is due to report for basic training early next year.

Again, he will be following in the footsteps of his father, who served two years with the Marines. He says he believes the Corps will give him the same opportunity to travel, to encounter new people, to meet new challenges and to have fun that competitive archery has. And, he hopes to be able to continue with his sport while serving in the Marines.

Kim Rogers, a Gilford Middle High School student interested in sports writing, assisted in preparing this report.

