



# THE MOTHER'S DAY BEAR

—by Tana Hall Kohler—

**M**y mom drew out in Utah for the spring black bear hunt in 2001. This hunt was just reinstated through the efforts of a local sportsmen's group, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. Our whole family had put in for the drawing, but mom always seems to be the lucky one who gets the tags.

On the first weekend of the hunt, my mom, my Uncle Brad and I met up with Wade Lemon, our guide, and his help, Ed and Dan Hickman. In the first canyon we hunted we struck a bear track right off the bat. A huge, reddish-colored boar led us on a twelve-hour chase, taking us through canyon, after canyon, after canyon. It seemed it would never end. We finally pulled the last dogs off the bear's trail at 7:00 that night.

The next weekend, Mom and Brad went down to Price without me. On this hunt Wade's son, Kaylan, joined them. They treed a sow the following morning and decided to let her go. That afternoon, mom called and said she needed my hunting expertise, so I hustled down to meet them. I just barely had turned sixteen and it was a long way for me to drive- especially in Salt Lake City's traffic. I arrived alive and was just a few hours late.

The next morning, we decided to split up so we could cover more country. Wade, Kaylan, Brad, my mom, and I went up one canyon while Dan and Ed went up the other. We had no success with the strike dogs, and soon found ourselves on top of the ridge. It was a little frustrating so I threatened Wade that I'd beat him with a stick if he didn't hurry and get Mom a bear on Mother's Day. That sped things up a bit.

My mom can be pretty demanding when it comes to hunting. She told Wade she wanted a bear that was the color of her hair, and it had to be the new muzzleloader state record. She wasn't asking too much, was she? After all the pressure we put on him, he knew he had to meet a woman's demands.



Lesla Hall, Wade Lemon and some of the hounds that were used for the chase.

Wade decided to walk down the hill a little way and soon found a two-day-old track. He decided that we should drive up the ridge a little farther. Instantly his strike dog went wild, Wade let him go, and to our surprise the bear was only a couple hundred yards down the hill. The race was on!

We were able to see the bear break over a saddle with the dogs in hot pursuit. It was a huge, red-colored one! Wade said to us, "Brigham, this is the place." There is nothing more exciting than hunting bears with hounds- in our opinion, it beats spot-and-stalk and baiting hands down. The only problem is a hunter needs to be in good shape to fully enjoy hound hunting.

The bear took the dogs way down into a steep, nasty hole. It was a hard go to reach him but we did it. When we approached the thick timber in the bottom the boar was bayed up. Wade had seen him climb up a tree. We eased in close, nice and slow, and began pulling the dogs back out of the way. Mom's first shot was a good one, but it took two more to get him on the ground.

Mom got the bear of her dreams. It actually was the same color as her hair and should go number two or three in the state with a muzzleloader. It was fun to be able to see my mom get such a nice bear. It was fun to hunt with her and the rest of the guys.

Thanks go out to the guides for their efforts to make this hunt a success. It was a great hunt for us.



Lesla Hall's bear measured 19 13/16", which is number three in Utah with a muzzleloader.