



Karen Bernecker of Retsof, New York, travelled many times to Canada and Illinois in hopes of getting a trophy-class whitetail. Lo and behold, she found her biggest buck right in her home state. Main beams are excellent at 27 1/8 and 26 inches. Largest circumference is a whopping 6 6/8 inches. Even with the broken brow-tine, Karen's whitetail grosses 161 6/8 inches.

It was Sunday afternoon, October 17, 2010, the second day of bow season, and I was heading into our "Coffin Corner" stand. My husband, Art, and I had hung, trimmed, and marked yardage earlier in the year to get ready for the season. It was a warm sunny afternoon, and I had on my light camo, with my heavier camo packed in my backpack knowing that when the sun goes down it gets chilly.

At around 5:30, I stood up in the stand because experience has taught me that deer movement usually increases in the last hour. There were a couple of does and a small buck in the winter wheat field that I was watching. All at once they all stopped feeding and looked towards the woods behind me. I was anxious to see what would step out. When I saw the right side of the buck, I thought, *He might be the "Lucidal Buck" and he's a shooter!*

He came out and I ranged him at 44 yards, too far for me to shoot. With my bow already in hand, I stood and watched the buck grunt and chase the does in the opposite direction of the field. I thought I had nothing to lose, so I grunted and snort-wheezed. Now he didn't turn on a dime or come in on a string like some hunters say, but he did slowly walk back towards me. I couldn't believe it, he was at the 30-yard marker, so I drew back my Mathews bow, picked a spot, and watched it hit. This is something Art reminds me of over and over again while we are practicing. The buck jumped, ran 10 yards, then slowly made a big "C" in the field, stopping and

# THE LUCIDAL BUCK

BY KAREN BERNECKER



walking along the way. I knew the arrow was still in him.

I stayed in the stand until I saw him exit the field. By this time it was getting dark. I texted Art that I had taken a shot and was looking for blood, but couldn't find any. After telling him where the shot hit, we agreed it was a liver shot and opted to back out of the woods and go home. We knew not to push the buck; it would be best to give him three or four hours. Now I had not told Art that I thought it was the Lucidal Buck, I just told him it was a respectable deer.

I went home and at 9:30 p.m. Art, myself, and our nephew Cody, who was 12 and in the stand with Art that night, headed out with flashlights. We looked and looked, but found only one spot of blood at 11:30 p.m. Since it was cold and not going to rain, we decided to leave and continue our search in the morning. We called our friend Ron Kelch and told him about my buck. He would be at our house at 8:00 a.m. to help us track it.

After a sleepless night, the three of us headed into the stand on the four-wheeler. I was cutting across the field en route to the stand to tell them where I had seen the buck leave the field, when I saw blood and a lot of it. Art and Ron had gone to where we had found blood the night before. They followed the blood trail into the woods and found the broken arrow. As Ron walked up over the top of the hill, while Art and I looked for more blood, we heard Ron say, "I found him and he's down." Then he added, "It's the Lucidal Buck!" As we ran up to the trophy, Art was so surprised it was him. I was thrilled and thanked God to have the opportunity to harvest such a great animal.

Art, Ron, and Cody had all seen and watched the buck before the season, I had not, and during the last couple of weeks no one had seen him; he had moved down from the bean fields into the woods where we had the Coffin Corner stand. After taking lots of pictures and texting everyone we knew, we field dressed the buck and then took him to school to show Cody.

The buck weighed 210 pounds and was aged at eight or nine years old. He grossed 161 6/8 and netted 139 1/8, making the New York State Big Buck and Pope and Young books. The buck's main beams are 27 1/8 and 26 inches long. There are 43 inches of circumference measurements with the largest being 6 6/8. The inside spread is 18 1/8 inches. The right brow was



Karen with her New York whitetail. This state is starting to produce some outstanding bucks, and another magnificent one will be featured in our fall edition.

freshly broken off, which we think he did when he ran into the woods after the shot. We have looked for it numerous times, but have come up empty-handed.

This is the second deer I have harvested with my bow in my 20-year hunting career and my biggest deer with either bow or gun. Thanks to Art for all the patience he shows and all he has taught me in the hunting world! I have been truly blessed.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** The buck got his name from the chemical plant where he was living. He would crawl under a 10-foot-high fence with three other bucks to feed half a mile away in a soybean field. The buck was shot in Livingston County in Western New York, half a mile from my home. 🍀



Another fight. Garry Donald photo.