

# SHEEP



# NEWS

## THE SHEEP TRAIN

BY TERRY MEYERS

On a clear, chilly day in late November, a group of wild sheep advocates (some would say “nuts”), boarded a 132-year-old train caboose in Rockwood and headed up the Animas Canyon to look for bighorn sheep. Al Harper, owner of the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, generously donated use of the train and its crew to George Van Den Berg and friends for the day, and what a day it was. The Animas Canyon sheep herd is the result of an introduction of sheep from Georgetown in 2001, the culmination of an idea that began more than 2 decades earlier when George and the late Division of Wildlife biologist Jim Olterman flew over the area. Twenty-eight sheep were loaded on the train in January and hauled to the release site above the Cascade Canyon wye, where they bailed off and nearly disappeared in the deep powder of the snowpack that year. Despite this unceremonious arrival, the herd persisted, and now provides hunting opportunity for three ram hunters each year. Both George and his grandson have been fortunate enough to draw licenses and harvest rams from the Animas Canyon herd.

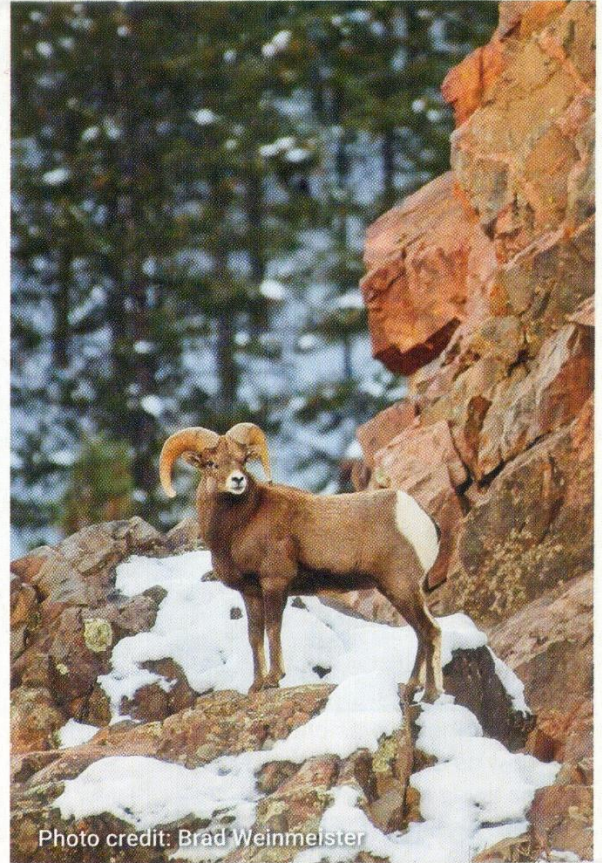


Photo credit: Brad Weinmeister

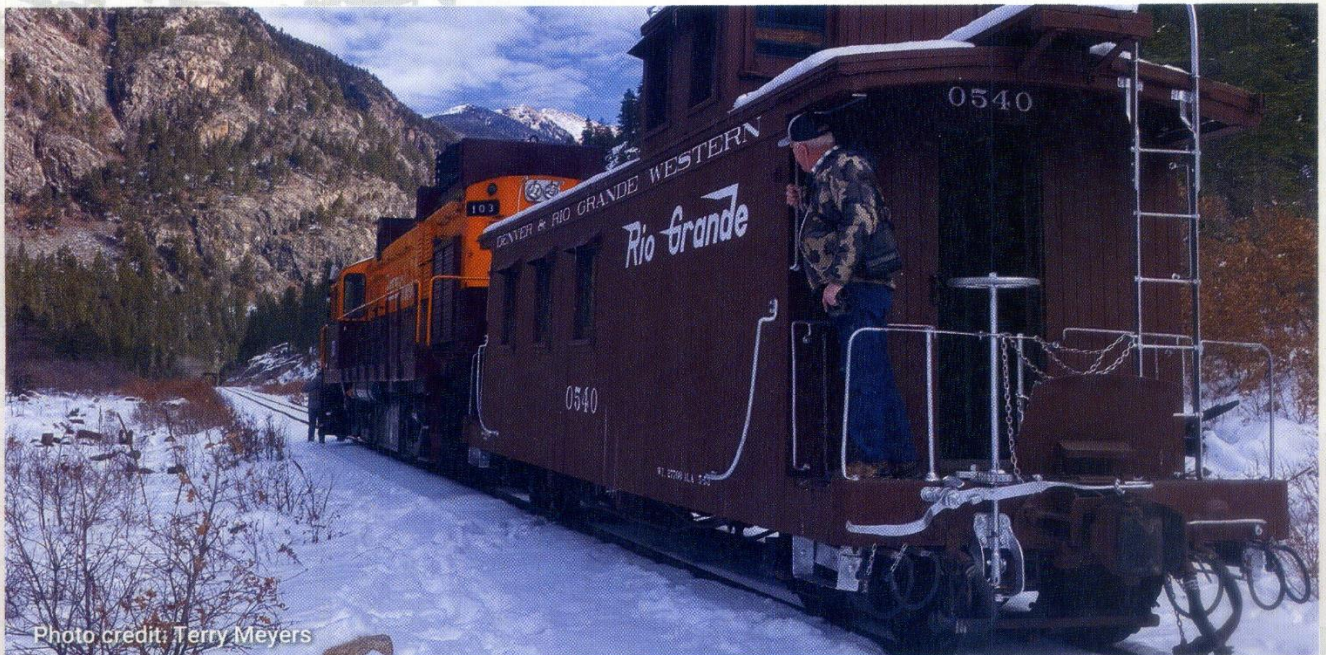


Photo credit: Terry Meyers

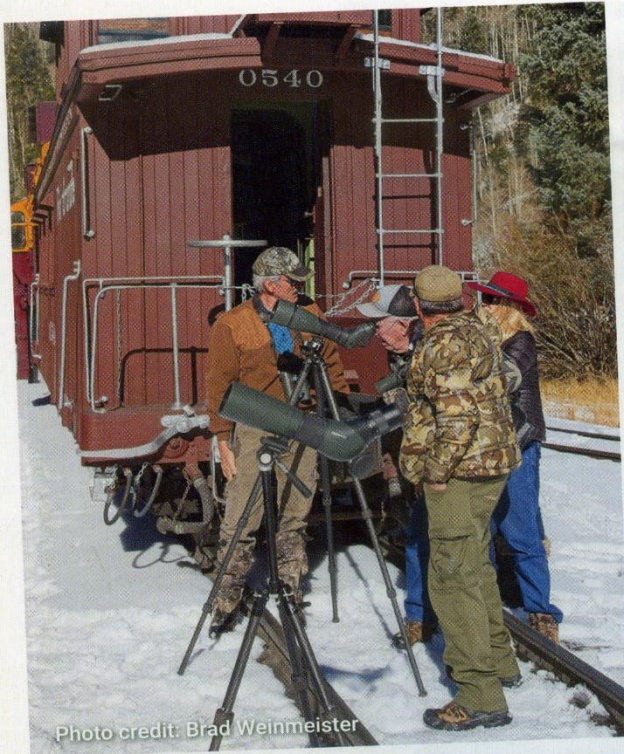


Photo credit: Brad Weinmeister

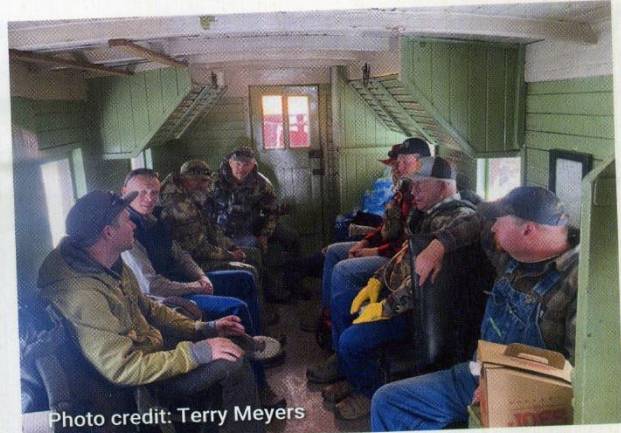


Photo credit: Terry Meyers

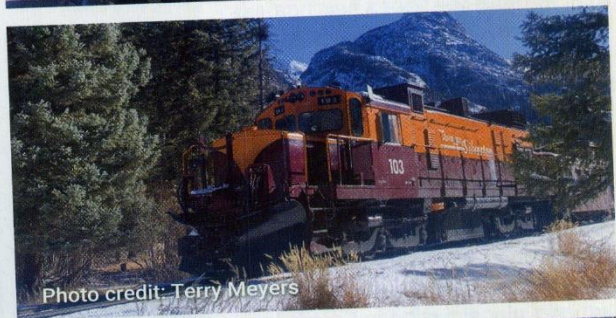


Photo credit: Terry Meyers

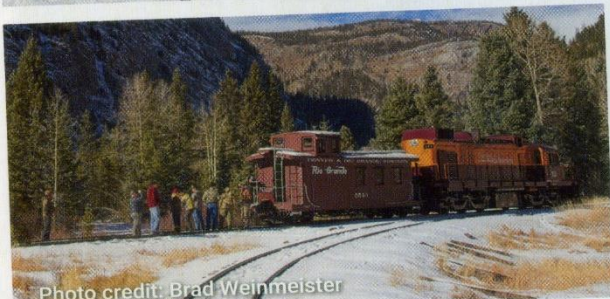


Photo credit: Brad Weinmeister

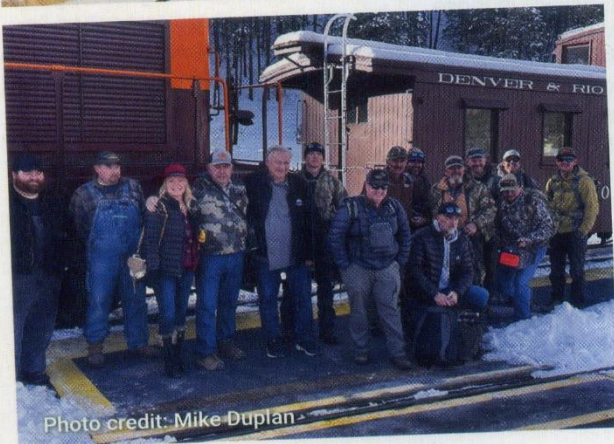


Photo credit: Mike Duplan

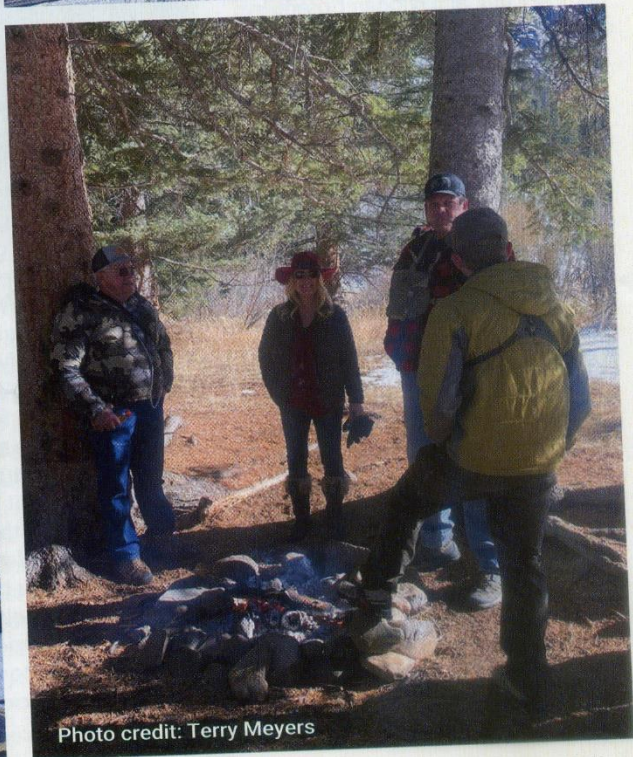
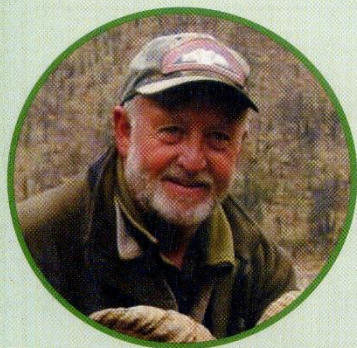


Photo credit: Terry Meyers



BOB STRONG | EDITOR

# FROM THE EDITOR



**As I write this, the year is winding down toward the holidays and I am putting the final touches on the winter edition of THE BIGHORN.** The end of this year, however, is unique to me as it also signals the end of my first year as editor. Although the detail and minutia of putting a magazine together is not my strong suit, I am a bit surprised how much I enjoy the endeavor on a project level.

Working with successful sheep hunters turned authors is an interesting and absorbing interaction. Our authors are proud, darned proud, of the animal they have taken and want to share their adventure with other mountain hunters. With differing levels of writing skills, they simply want to memorialize their adventure as best they can for their peers. There is fulfillment in being recognized into the fraternity of the successful. A published story is like an official placard of success similar in nature to a trophy on the wall.

Those who have never hunted sheep or goats will have a hard time connecting. But to those who have buckled on the pack and climbed the rockslide and scree; who have been pinned down on a ridgetop by pounding lightning; to

those who have found the rams, then lost them, only to find them again; to those a hunter's tale has deeper meaning. There is a type of empathetic bonding, a kinship of mountain hunters gained only through the experience of having been there. Due to the difficulty in drawing a license, being published as a successful mountain hunting veteran is a literary achievement our authors may not ever be able to repeat in a lifetime. Because of this, it is important that each adventure is showcased in a manner consistent with the author's hunting effort

This edition of The Bighorn is more diverse than prior volumes under my watch. Andrew Allen relates the story of his excellent ram in a guided horse pack hunt involving a complicated stalk topped with a long rifle shot in the wind. Brian Ackerman writes a wonderful tale of friendship and his buddy Shannon's successful, but very physical, bighorn hunt in southern Colorado. We also have a goat hunt by Austin LaCombe who not only packs out a goat but also finds himself an emissary between the hunting community and the non-hunting hikers on the trail. Finally, in a short but poignant

photo essay, Terry Myers relates a unique sheep-spotting day with legend George Van Den Berg and friends in Animas Canyon.

While understanding the importance to our members, we at The Bighorn are consistently working to better each edition. Well-written hunting tales, professional grade photography and a quality format all contribute to the total package. Being worthy of our authors, our membership and the organization is the goal.

So, here's the challenge: many of you have a Colorado bighorn on the wall, the embodiment of your own hunting achievement. Why not "Take pen in hand" and submit the memories of your adventure to us for publication? Or, if a full feature story is too daunting, send us a good photo of your trophy with a fact-filled caption sheet for consideration in our new "Good Shots" section. In either case, we cannot guarantee publication but we will try. Send submissions and constructive feedback to [stone.fortytwo@gmail.com](mailto:stone.fortytwo@gmail.com)

**Bob Strong**  
Editor