

# Alberta with Brad Fenson Adventures

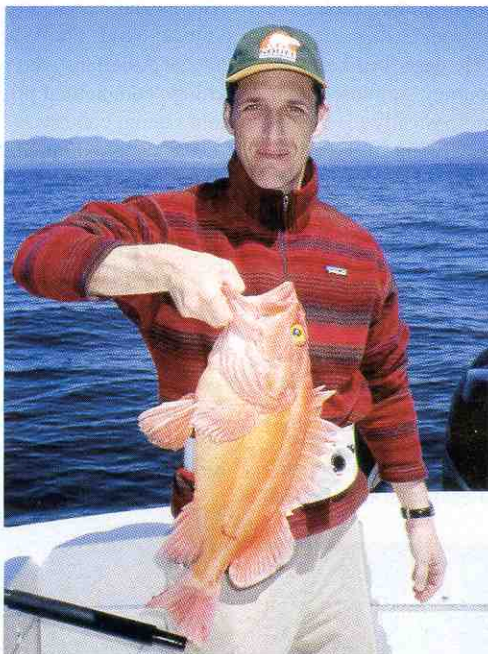
## Life is short.

**L**ife is an adventure and finding ways to make it rewarding and special is the key to having a rich existence. Since I was a young lad I can remember heading into the field or out on the water with family and friends on hunting, fishing and camping adventures that have made me a lucky man, rich with memories and life experience. I am fortunate to come from a family that always enjoyed the outdoors that included hunting and fishing as a regular pastime.

Growing up our family would head to the lake and set up the old canvas tent and spend time at the lake during the summer. Catching walleye, pike and perch was part of growing up and from an early age I learned to appreciate the resource and the time spent with family.

We graduated to a cottage and spent our summers there as kids. Hours were spent down at the dock casting our favorite jigs and

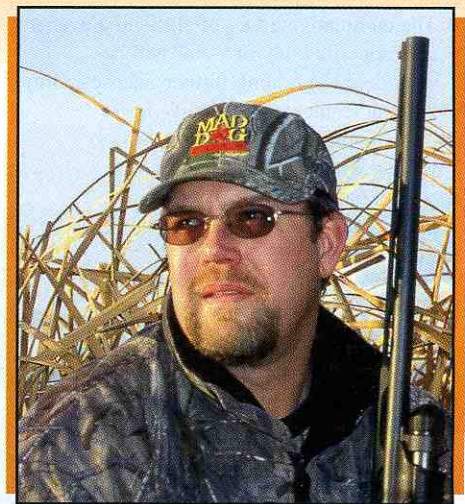
lures with the hopes of landing a few fish. Our persistence normally paid off and we usually came home with a few fresh fish that could be fried up for dinner. Those memories are burned into my mind as though they were yesterday and I wouldn't trade them for anything.



*"Tim with a red snapper caught on our last outdoor adventure together."*

I can remember one particular day when I was fishing with my brother Tim and we managed to catch an 8 and 13-pound pike from our shoreline position. We weren't very old and it was a feat just to land the fish on our own. We were jumping and screaming with excitement as we packed up our gear and anxiously headed back to the cabin to show off our catch. It was all we could do to get the heavy pike back to camp, giving our young arms a workout that strained them beyond their ability. However, the excitement provided

enough adrenaline that we finally dragged those fish back to show them off to the entire family. Along the way one of the neighbours stuck their head out the door and offered us a



photos Brad Fenson

quarter for one of the fish. "No way," was the quick and sure fired response. This was an event we had to share with everyone at home.

When I was old enough to take the boat out on my own my younger brothers and I would be on the water for a day of fishing on a regular basis. Rain or shine we always made plans for fishing together. My youngest brother, Tim, would often join me as we trolled the flats with our favorite plugs. We shared some great times together, talked about life, fishing strategies and just had fun. To me, that is what the outdoors is all about; spending time with people that mean the most to you to create special memories. Camping and fishing with my brothers and sister obviously had a big influence on my life.

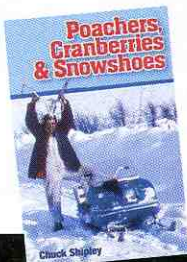
We often visited relatives on the farm and the boys would spend most of their time hunting sparrows and gophers with their pellet guns. As we got older we graduated to .22s, once we proved that we were responsible and careful. It was just more time outdoors. Looking back it was the perfect training for becoming a full-fledged hunter later in life. I couldn't even guess how many pellets or .22 shells we went through over the years. It is mind boggling but boy, did we have fun.

I have always been more active as a hunter and angler than the rest of my family but we have always found ways to continue sharing the outdoors together. My dad still joins me on an annual fishing and hunting trip. My sister lives in a rural area and I plan a hunting trip in her neck of the woods to tie in a visit and a meal of wild game at least once during the year. My brother Dave is an ardent fly-fisherman and loves to get into the woods when his job allows him to. And, most of my basic wild game recipes originated from mom's kitchen.

My brother Tim has done some hunting over the years and actually provided me with some contacts where I still do most of my big game hunting today. It is my favorite spot. I can still remember the day Tim shot his first deer on that property. We had set up on a series of

### Memories from a game warden's file

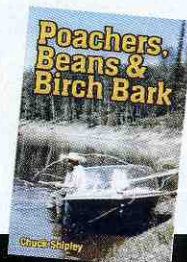
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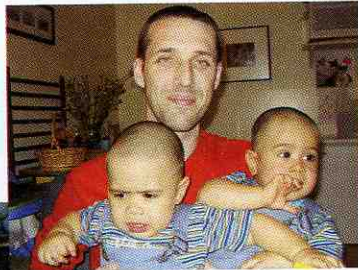
active game trails and got in position early with the hopes of catching the deer moving from their feeding areas back to their preferred bedding habitat. We weren't sitting far apart and shortly after sunrise I heard a shot from Tim's direction. Seconds later I could hear screaming coming from the direction of the shot and a sense of panic set over me. I sprinted to the top of the hill where I saw Tim lying on the ground rolling around screaming. I turned numb with fear and bolted to see if he was in trouble. Running to his side with an urgent panic in my voice Tim sat up and said, "Sorry, didn't mean to scare you, I'm just so excited about getting my first deer that I'm having my own little celebration." I fell onto the ground beside him and we both had a good laugh, as I congratulated him on his accomplishment.

Tim moved from Alberta shortly after that and went to University. Unfortunately, while pursuing an education, Tim was diagnosed with cancer and underwent surgery for a brain tumor. It was a major operation but Tim overcame the odds and carried on to complete his studies then moved to Indonesia to teach English. He met his wife, Any, overseas and enjoyed life to the fullest.

However, cancer once again altered Tim's life direction and he was forced to return to Canada for treatment. He endured years of treatment, surgeries, trials and tribulations. But, not once did he ever complain about what life had dealt him and he continued to

live each day to the fullest and even managed to plan a family.

Last summer I had a chance to take Tim fishing on the ocean. Tim had never fished for salmon or halibut on the salt and I lined up a trip out of Port Renfrew with Hind Sight Fishing Charters. Tim had been through a lot in



*"Life is short. Spend your quality time with the people that mean the most to you."*

recent months and our Captain John Wells assured me that the outing would be well suited for Tim. We cruised offshore 25 miles to the Swiftsure Bank and had an exceptional day of angling. Tim caught his first halibut, red snapper and an assortment of rockfish. It was simply spectacular. We then broke out the trolling rods and Tim soon was battling a 17-pound chinook before

trying his hand with the coho. It was a day to remember. Tim smiled from ear to ear and we reminisced about our times together as kids.

That evening we stayed at the Soule Creek Lodge Bed and Breakfast. It is a neat little spot overlooking the ocean and parts of the coastal forest habitat. We sat out on the deck and watched a pair of black bears on the hillside. The humming birds visited by the dozen to work over the flowers lining the deck rails. It had been a long time since Tim and I had spent time outdoors and our

angling/outdoor adventure was really special.

Tim passed away on October 22, 2005 after a valiant struggle with cancer that lasted for more than 13 years. The loss of my brother leaves a huge hole in my life that I will never be able to fill. We spoke on the phone almost every night for the past year. He mentioned our fishing trip on a regular basis. We went on our west coast adventure in June and the black bears we watched were heavy in rut. Their antics and behavior were really something to watch. Tim remembered it all as though he had seen it 100 times as reruns on television. Being able to take my brother on the trip was something small that I could do for him but it was something huge for him at a time in his life when every day counted. I am so glad we went.

Life is short. Make the most of it and spend your quality time with the people that mean the most to you. Tim has twin boys that just turned two and Uncle Brad is already planning to take the boys on their first fishing trip because that's what life is all about. The outdoors is special and can be tied to some of the best times in a person's life. Don't put off today what you may regret tomorrow, and live life to its fullest. ■

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