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**Backlashes and Blown Patterns**

By BRUCE L. SUBLETT

The wood ducks are back in East Texas. The beautiful duck that decorates this year's duck stamp has returned to the pin oak flats and creek bottoms after several seasons' absence.

Opening day of duck season dawned gray and humid, just right for hunting squealers. Wood ducks are called squealers because they give a call while feeding that can only be described as a squeal. My father and I arrived at Boles Creek just after daylight, in time to see two bunches of wood ducks flare high and wide when they spotted our pickup. Prospects looked good.

We put in our little flat-bottom boat, planning to float down the creek to an island in the marsh where Boles, Johnson, and Striker Creeks run together. The only problem was that my father hadn't been down the creek in a boat in twenty years and I never had.

Not really knowing what to look for, we set out. The creek was running strong and clear, with enough current for good floating. It's a little creek with not more than 15 feet of open water between the sawgrass-lined banks. I didn't think it was deep, but my eight-foot pole rarely touched bottom.

We were listening for squealers and looking for squirrels as we went along, hoping to make it a combination hunt. Soon we heard what we were listening for, a single squeal. We eased along quietly, wanting to get close before the ducks came off the water.

Suddenly, they were up. I was the only one with a duck stamp, so my father was yelling for me to get them. I was in the back of the boat, so I had to maneuver a little to get a clear shot.

That first shot of the season has a way of getting off target, and I missed clean. Dad was yelling "Shoot again!" and I was saying "They're too far," and by that time they were.

We only saw one other duck that whole morning, a single flying high and fast. We never did find the island, but we hunted a good woods on the other side of the creek. The squirrels weren't stirring much. Of the five we saw, we only bagged one.

You may ask why anyone would drive 170 miles to Rusk county to hunt ducks, especially since the wood duck is a 70 point duck, meaning a maximum limit of two. The bag isn't nearly as important as the experience.

To spend a quiet morning in country that looks like it did before man came, has more value than can be expressed in monetary terms. To see the comeback of a duck that was almost gone a few years ago is a really beautiful thing for anyone who truly loves the outdoors.

The peace of mind taken from an outing like this one makes a man able to cope with city life for another week. It takes a certain feel for the outdoors to get its benefits. Too many go into nature and leave something of themselves instead of taking what it has to offer.

**Women hold 591 legislative seats**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Women increased their ranks in state legislatures by 26 per cent in last week's elections but still will comprise only a fraction of the total membership.

Many women won key races, however, against opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment which must be ratified by five more states before becoming part of the Constitution.

With a dozen races undecided, women have won 125 new seats in legislatures. This brings their total

to 591, increasing their percentage from six to eight of the over-all legislative strength.

Nearly one-sixth of the women were elected from one of the nation's smallest states, however, and for the first time in years one state will be without any women in its legislature.

New Hampshire, which has a 424-member legislature, will have 103 women in its House, up from 89, and will retain its two women senators.

**Burroughs walks away with MVP**

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Jeff Burroughs is right, American League pitchers can look forward to many more years of problems when he comes to bat.

The Texas Rangers' young outfielder gave them plenty in the 1974 season, slugging 25 home runs, batting in 118 runs and hitting .301, and was named the American League's Most Valuable Player Wednesday following only his second full season in the major leagues.

"I probably feel the way I do about the award because I still have a tremendous amount to learn as a ballplayer and many more years to try to learn and accomplish it," said Burroughs.

"Maybe it's modesty, but there's so much to learn and I don't think I've reached my peak yet. At least I hope not."

And how does he feel about the award? "It's a fantastic honor of such magnitude that it almost seems like a fantasy," said the 23-year-old Burroughs.

"I honestly don't consider myself with the people I'm now ranked with, the players who have won the award before. Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle, Reggie Jackson—I see my name with theirs and it just doesn't seem realistic."

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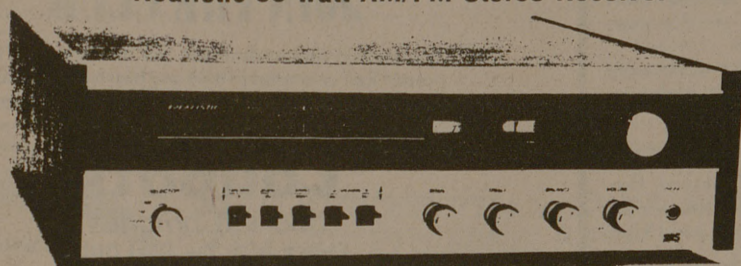
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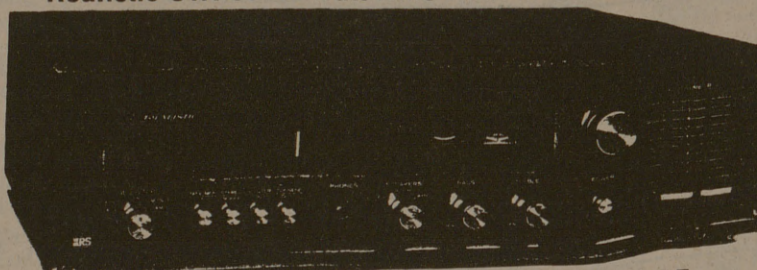
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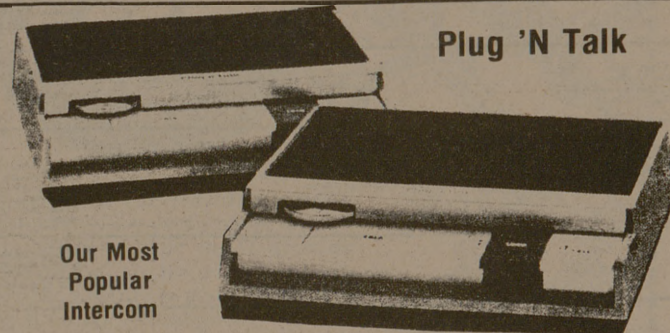
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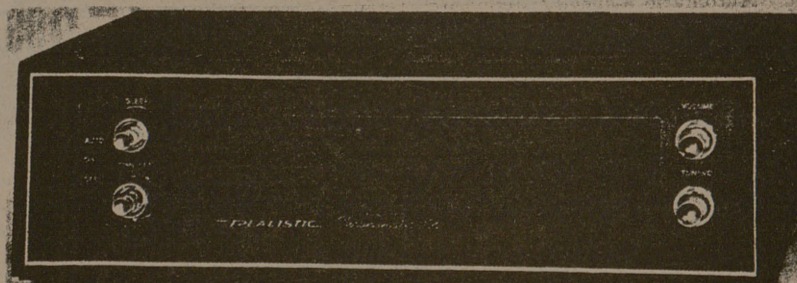
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