

Snipe Hunting and Cow Tipping

By Hap Hansen

One of the definitions of perception in Webster's Dictionary is this: a physical sensation interpreted in the light of experience.

When I was a kid, I remember hearing stories about 'snipe hunting.' Snipes are long-billed wading birds and are not hunted by anyone. That fact, however, didn't prevent the 'big boys down at the pool hall' from inviting an innocent, unsuspecting high school freshman, with no perception whatever, to accompany them on a snipe hunt.

As the story goes, on a dark night the big boys would take the freshman a mile or so from town, station him at the end of a corn row, give him a gunny sack, and tell him to be quiet until they got to the other end of the field and began chasing snipes toward him. Somehow or other, they got the perception-lacking freshman to believe the snipes would jump into the sack to hide, at which time he would close the sack, thereby catching the elusive bird. While he was waiting, the big boys would drive back to town, leaving the freshman shivering in the cold and holding the sack. Eventually, he would walk back to town embarrassed, enlightened and snipeless, but now full of perception. I remember hearing stories about snipe hunting, but I never went on a hunt. And I never met a freshman naive enough to really believe junior and senior 'big boys' would allow a freshman to do anything with them.

Later on, there was a new way to embarrass the uninitiated and unperceived. It was called 'cow tipping.' Apparently, some town kids actually believe that late at night, when the moon is in the crescent stage, one can sneak into a field and tip over cows who are sleeping while standing.

Having grown up on a farm, I must say I have never witnessed a standing cow that was asleep! A few hired hands maybe, but never cows. Even if cows did doze off while standing, they would have to be sound sleepers if a group of kids were to sneak up, tip them over, and the cows never awakened.

I have even heard a few young people claim they have been on a cow-tipping trip. More than likely, they were at the local tap room, tipping tumblers of Tequila!

At least some of our young people are using their perceptive imaginations. It's better to try to convince some high school newcomer that it's fun to go snipe-hunting or cow-tipping, than to convince them that it's fun to smoke pot or snort cocaine.

Excuse me, I hear cows snoring! I'm going to try my hand at tipping one over!