

[Narrator] Rifles bang and white tails fall up ahead at Country Crossroads, where town and country folks meet each week. Come on along, it's just 30 minutes down the road from Michigan State College. And waiting at the crossroads with his trusty 30-30 is your country neighbor, Jim Porter. [Jim Porter] Ready to go deer hunting? I'm expecting several deer hunters by the Country Crossroads today and some Department of Conservation people, and boy am I going to pump them for a lot of questions that are bothering me. [Clint Ballard] That's so, Jim. Well, I'm glad I stopped by, if that's the case. [Jim Porter] Well, Clint, you sure look as though you're all dressed for the Northland. [Clint Ballard] Well, I'm dressed but not wholly prepared to go north. I expect to go, however. You know, Jim, I've gone hunting now for more than 30 years. Yes, sir, for more than 30 years we've gone, the same group of us, way up in that on the noggin country, and summer, you know, when we get a few frosts, and it's about that time of year, you know, that Northland beckons me. Yes, Jim, the Northland beckons me, those red clay hills, and some deep ravines, and ridge, a knoll with swamps between, its barren rocks and forest leans, that's the Northland Beckons. Yes, the Northland Beckons me, their stars are low and diamond bright, they accentuate the northern lights and make a magic day of night. Yeah, the Northland Beckons me. The The Northland beckons me, there's gray above and gray beneath and around the sun a hazing reef, and tomorrow the winter shows her teeth. The Northland beckons me. Yes, the Northland beckons me. You know, I love to smell the cedar tang, and I love to hear the rifles bang. But most of all, it's the hunting gang that really beckon me. [Jim Porter] I could just see that north country when you're reading that Clint. Fact is I could just see that buck that I'm gonna get right out there in the brush. [Clint Ballard] And you better not see too many of these imaginary brushes bucks in the brush Jim. You get a little trigger happy not and give you some trouble. [Jim Porter] Well, that sure beats all that Clint Ballard how just with a few words he can take you right into that north country. [John Bilek] Well, you going hunting, Jim? [Jim Porter] Why, hello, John Bilek. Say, you're one of those Department of Conservation men. You're just the man, one of those men I was looking for today. You know, I've got a lot of questions about that deer hunting business. They say there aren't as many bucks this year as there were last year. They say that special season was too long last year, and I want to know where to go to get a deer this year. They're going to have that special season again? [John Bilek] Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, Jim. You're going too fast. You're firing too many questions at me at one time What do you say we go someplace where we can have a cup of coffee and talk this situation over? [Jim Porter] Why sure right over here at the crossroads cafe. Well, let's go. - [John Bilek] Let's do. [John Bilek] So you see Jim, there's still plenty of deer left. But we still need that special season. We need it for to harvest the surplus deer that we have or Otherwise a deer will starve. [Jim Porter] You mean right here in Michigan we have such a big deer herd that they starve? [John Bilek] Jim, I'm not telling you I'm going to show you. We have had as high as 50,000 deer starve in one year just because we carried too many over during the winter. [Jim Porter] Well that's, that's certainly uh more than you'd ever dream of. [John Bilek] Now take that picture there that's the way we like to see cedar grow that's the way we'd like to see all the swamp cover grow. [Jim Porter] Well that's green right down to the ground. [John Bilek] Right from top to bottom. It's available even to a snowshoe rabbit isn't it? [Jim Porter] Sure is. - [John Bilek] But that isn't that isn't the way the things are now. Here look at this picture this is the way most of that area is. It's seven feet from that line down to the ground. [Jim Porter] There isn't a thing in there not a, not a leaf of anything. [John Bilek] That's right a snowshoe has to carry a lunch to get across there [Jim Porter] Or ladder or something. [John Bilek] Thats right. Now that's all gone now a fawn doesn't have a chance— [Jim Porter]: No that's right. [John Bilek]: Now here is

the way that thing is eaten up you see that deer there standing on its hind feet to reach that's the way - [Jim Porter] They get about seven feet. that's right. To reach up and get that last- Mom wouldn't have a chance there. - [John Bilek]: A fawn wouldn't have a chance as a matter of fact here's a a good picture of a fawn about January. [Jim Porter] She's a poor little fella. [John Bilek] They get a little shaky little wobbly and first thing you know we come along in the spring time about the last oh last part of February and first part of March and that's how we-- [Jim Porter] He never made it, he didn't quite pull through. [John Bilek] That's right -- [Jim Porter] Well I never realized that they had a deer condition here in Michigan like that. [John Bilek] Oh well I wonder if you could have another could we have another donut miss? [Waitress] Well, I'm sorry sir but there's only one left. [Jim Porter] Well let's take that one and... [John Bilek] Oh I'll now take the jar. I want the jar. I just got an idea Jim I'd like to demonstrate something to you. [Jim Porter] Okay well that certainly is uh hard to believe that we have that loss here in Michigan. [John Bilek] That's right. Now [Jim Porter] I'll take the donut then [John Bilek] Now I wonder Miss, if you have another jar a smaller jar and uh uh two small jars in fact and maybe some dry beans? [Waitress] Well I'll look in the kitchen and see [John Bilek] All right if you will. Now Jim, this jar here, I'd to have it represent the deer's summer home [Jim Porter] The summer home? That's, where the deer are going to live and eat in the summertime. [John Bilek] In the summertime now you realize they have two homes they have a winter home and a summer home their summer home is much larger than their winter home because of the winter conditions that forced them to live in only a small part of their area. [Waitress] Is this all right? [John Bilek] That's fine, thank you. Let's just... let me take the whole thing and set it down right here. [Jim Porter] There's the beans. [John Bilek] You take the beans there. [Jim Porter] I suppose you want this open don't you. [John Bilek] Yeah, we'll have that open now. Now this is the summer home. This is the winter home. [Jim Porter] This is the deer. [John Bilek] Those will be the deer. Let's put the deer in their summer home. There we are. Now Jim... [Jim Porter] That's about the proportional I suppose to the winter to the summer area. [John Bilek] Well uh that's right but in uh in [indecipherable]. In the [indecipherable] district this winter home only makes up about 11 percent of the area total area. And yet they've got to spend 25 percent of their time on this 11 percent. [Jim Porter] I see those, those deer are going to go on that range there. [John Bilek] Now here Every year we lose some deer to Spawn losses when they're first born. [Jim Porter]: I see. [John Bilek]: Some and now we always use a few to predators. So we'll just take them out and put him in there. [Jim Porter]: Coyotes and dogs and bobcats. [John Bilek]: and every year we use it. We lose a few to killed on highways. [Jim Porter] Yea. Wouldn't make that amount too much, but... [John Bilek] You'd be surprised I have been keeping record of deer in the [indecipherable] District and find that in three years I have something like 1,800 deer killed on highways. [Jim Porter] That's unbelievable. [John Bilek] It sure is. And then there's always the unsportsmanlike fellow that goes out and poaches. [Jim Porter] I suppose we'll always have those scoundrels around. [John Bilek] I suppose as long as there's people, we'll have them. And then there's natural losses, old age and things of that type. Now Along comes the buck season. (Jim Porter: Yeah) We harvest a few. Well, that'll be quite a harvest. That's right. We'll take some off for the buck. (Jim Porter: Yeah) Now what we're gonna do is winter is here. Now we've got to put them in. - [Jim Porter]: That's what you got left when Winter comes. - [John Bilek]: That's Right, now we've got let's put these deer in the winter yard. Now we'll just pour them all in. We'll try not missing any here. Yeah, the yard is filling up all it. [Jim Porter] she's falling you're gonna lose some You still got a lot of them left there. [John Bilek] That What starves every year. That's the surplus. [Jim Porter] That's the little feller we saw dead in the snow. [John

Bilek] He's in with this group here. Now. I'd like to demonstrate to you What would happen with a special season? [Jim Porter] Now go through this again. [John Bilek] Let's pour it back. (Jim Porter: Okay) [Jim Porter] Wait, we can put them in here now. [John Bilek] Now, we've got farm mortality again, haven't we? We've got predators. (Jim Porter: Predators) [Jim Porter] Old age. [John Bilek] Well, old age. (Jim Porter: Highway kill.) Highway kill. And a poacher, haven't we? (Jim Porter: Poachers.) Okay, now comes the buck season. We'll take out our buck season. And now we've got the special season. [Jim Porter] Special season coming on. [John Bilek] Now we've got the special season. Let's take out the special season deer. Let's take out. They kill more than a rifle than a buck hunter do now. Let's put these deer into their winter yard Now we've had the special season and a regular buck. [Jim Porter] I see- [John Bilek]: you see what happened- [Jim Porter]: That certainly tells the story on that special season. You don't lose all those- [John Bilek]: The home is big enough to carry the remainder- [Jim Porter]: It makes sense. I never saw it like that before but say you haven't answered those other questions I had I want to know where to go to get my buck this year. [John Bilek] Well, Jim I'm not gonna duck your question on that. Ilo Bartlett is staying right over here above the General Crossroads store and he's got the latest dope, the latest information on the deer. He's just coming down from the North Country. What do you say we go over and see him? [Jim Porter] Let's do it. Let's keep going. I won't say we've left quite a mess here. [John Bilek] Well... [Clint Ballard] You know I wonder what our hunting gang is doing now and but they're getting ready to go hunting just like I am. You know this matter of getting ready to go hunting is a rather serious matter. Every one of those boys has got a little domestic problem he's got to figure out. He's got to get permission from my wife every year and every year. you know i call that little bargaining that goes on the family cartel the family cartel long about november one hubby goes and finds his gun to clean an oil and polish it then drags out What is hunting here? Good wife is eyeing every move. He knows full well she disapproves, says she. "What's all this fuss about, you getting all this rubbish out cluttering up my kitchen so?" Just as though she didn't know. Then hubby says, "remember dear, the hunting season's drawing near." "I'd hoped," says she portraying fear "you'd pass the hunting up this year. Who knows, perhaps you might get shot. Besides, it costs an awful lot. With common sense, it doesn't rhyme. You really can't afford time." She stands her ground just like a rock. Permission is her trading stock. She knows quite well she'll be so nice when he agrees to pay the price. Likewise, just how her time to buy. The time is always on her side. November rides he can't obey for then a bargain must be made. He realizes he can't win. Buyer's market begins. So he suggests it might be good while he's wandering in the woods for her to visit all around with relatives who live in town. Now he's really tempting faith. She just shies up and smells the bait. then flanks him with a counter move. She knows he's likely to approve, says she. "The Jones would like to be my host. The Joneses live out on the coast." He's in a hole. He's got to punt. Give up the ball or miss the hunt. She's got him now in full retreat. Her terms he knows he's got to meet. The rising market's hard to know just how a price may go. His situation now is real. So he shuts his eyes and buys the deal. Fears and money cares now cease as she lays down the terms of peace. Of course, I'll make the trip by air, and I haven't got a thing to wear. You know, I'll have to look my best. The Joneses always are well-dressed. Well, there's little left for him to choose. It means new gowns and gloves and shoes. But he oft before has been through the mill and a sickly smile okays the bill. But then, as opening morning nears, more like a bargain it appears, with hopes of thrill and fun and mirth, he knows he'll get his money's worth. now you could only look inside of homes and see the hunters tied to bargains which in normal times you'd bet your boots they'd never sign that pale pre -season worried look would read just like an open book. Now the little

drama you would hear is reenacted every year different setting different scene but all in all the self same theme. Hey come to think of it I've got a little unfinished business with my wife. I wonder where she went? [Jim Porter] Well they always said that Ilo Bartlett of the Department of Conservation knew his stuff about this deer and you certainly enlightened me about a lot of things already. [Ilo Bartlett] Well Jim we don't have all the answers but we know a lot about it and as I've been telling you in these starvation areas where uh uh there are short of food in the winter the pond or the does just don't produce the number of fawns they should. In fact it's quite a ways down from some of the other areas; and and the weight of deer too. Uh the weight is down you, you take deer the same age- [Jim Porter]: Same age?- [Ilo Bartlett]: And from these two areas, and uh starvation areas deer weigh a lot less than they do out in the other uh in the good food area. [Jim Porter] Well that's the way it is with the cattle. [Ilo Bartlett]: That's right. [John Bilek]: Well, you know in this the starvation area that I work out Jim. Ten does only produce eight fawns, whereas they're capable of producing 20 fawns for every 10 does. We, even have occasional those producing triplets and sometimes four. [Ilo Bartlett] But the thing that the hunters are most interested in, these antlers; and that I think these two heads here on the wall certainly, demonstrate what I'm talking about. I just [Jim Porter]: Beauty up there. [Ilo Bartlett]: You betcha. You take that one Jim, he come from a good food area. He come from the southern part of the state where he had lots of food when he was young. But this other one here come from Johnny's area. This is another one. This is that area I'm talking to you about. [Overlapping Speech]: They're all... [Jim Porter] Well, of course, this one is a as an older buck. It's got ten points there. Be about ten years old. (No), you know, they want only about two years old. [Ilo Bartlett] Those deer are the same age (the same age?) They're both a year and a half old. Yes, sir. [Jim Porter] Somebody told me wrong on this. [Ilo Bartlett] Oh that's right. A lot of a lot of people are wrong on the way they age deer. (Indistinguishable) Here Johnny show him on that, uh... [John Bilek] We don't age here by antlers by points on antlers Jim. We age them by teeth. Now these are-- [Jim Porter]: Got some jaw bones-- [John Bilek]: These are jaw bones from deer. (I see) and uh they're on a half year of age. This is six months, a year and a half, two and a half, three and a half, four and a half. The reason for that is that we collected these jaw bones in uh in the fall of the season. [Jim Porter] Well that's the way we tell the age of sheep and we used to on horses when we had horses! Alright now, they have three baby teeth and a first permanent molar that's at six months at six months. At the and those three baby teeth will be replaced when they're a year and a half old. Here at a year and a half old these teeth are replaced but notice the third baby tooth here it has three crowns on it: one, two, three. That's one tooth from there there and notice that a year and a half it has two crowns on it. It's replaced with a double crown as compared to a triple crown. all you got to do is open a deer's mouth look into it If it has a double crown it's a year and a half or older. From here on we go by where, but if the teeth are nice and sharp and the crowns are high. We know it's a year- [Jim Porter]: Up to a year and a half, you can tell and that's what you did on these two before they were mountains, (that's right) You know they're a year and a half old the lies I never realized that starvation made so much difference on the quality of the deer. [Ilo Bartlett] I'll show you- [Jim Porter] Very much of the area that's troubled with that. [Ilo Bartlett] Well, it's quite a little bit Jim a whole lot more than we wish there was, Because it's spread quite a little now. We have one patch over here and lake in the Waco County. About 1200 square miles. And then up here in Montmorency around Atlanta and Alcona and Mont Roscommon some of Kalkaskan some of Masaki, about four thousand five hundred square miles over there. And It's spread out to that so that We're losing deer from starvation most years in practically all of that area. Well that's that's the way the story

is Jim. It's, it's worse than we wish it it was but that's some of the area where well Johnny told you were about the starvation and what happened to the deer herd the overflow of the beans. [Jim Porter] Yeah, I understand that all right but you know there's another thing that bothers me Bart. Suppose that I went to the up in the deer country and was lucky enough to see a deer and a good enough shot to get one, didn't get buck fever, what would I do with the critter? I I never, I never dressed out a deer. And I'd be out there in the woods with the deer. What would I do? [Ilo Bartlett] Well there there are a lot of things you can do Jim. Uh there are a lot of different ways to dress out a deer. I think the first thing that that should be done is when you uh after you shot your deer you see him go down you want to go up to him and kick. Don't punch him with the butt of your gun because your gun might go off that's another safety angle, but you'll go up and kick him and if he's dead if he doesn't move, well then the first thing when you know he's dead, is to put your tag on him. Put your tag on his antlers on one antler or if it's during the special season one that may be a door upon, either cut cut a hole in the jaw and run it through the jaw and lock it. Or possibly through the ear some don't like to put it through the ear because it might tear out. Some fellows use a knife this this knife isn't too bad Jim that that's okay for hunting knife some of them like a great big one. But sure you need a sharp one all you do is it just take a knife you can even use a pen knife and make a little incision right back just with head between the hind legs. And then run your two of your fingers in underneath and run the knife right up through and cut the hide from underneath so you don't cut the hair. You see if you slice right down from the top then the hair is all cut into bits and it gets on the meat afterwards. But you cut the hide from underneath and it leaves a nice clean cut you don't have any loose hair hanging around. Then after you get the hide cut clear up to the breast bone you go back and make an incision through the meat into the body cavity and then open that clear up to the front too. Then uh of course you uh a lot of the hunters feel that you have to take the *** organs out and uh cut those out and throw them away because they say if you leave them in too long way that imparts a real uh strong flavor to the meat but that uh that well you can do that if you order you can leave them in. I've seen lots of hunters coming down with with them left right in. Then after you've got the body cavity opened up so your, your intestines are are in the open but then you can start pulling them out it's a rather messy job and if you put a bullet right through their body cavity why it's still quite a little bit messy. But you can roll them out pretty well it isn't too bad then you cut around the diaphragm and loosen that up and you reach clear up in and cut the heart and the lungs loose. By cutting off the the windpipe you pull that out and you want to be sure and save both the liver and the heart because they're very good eating. Some people throw the liver away because they're, they're afraid it might have liver flukes in it. But in the Lower Peninsula especially you don't have to worry much about it. It's it's all good eating. And then when you get everything all cleaned out there probably will be a lot of blood left in it. And you well the next thing to do is roll him upside down and and let the blood drain out. Of course the blood up in the chest cavity isn't drained out yet but well some hunters open them up the whole length even open up the chest cavity. I don't think that's necessary but a lot of hunters do it let the blood drain out good because it's lovely cake in there and call applies later on. So that well you know a farmer likes to have when he dresses the critter he likes to have things pretty well cleaned out. Then oh just step off to one side and cut a stick with a sharp point on it maybe a fork and a sharp point and stick the heart and and the liver on it and then you're all set. Well the next thing, Jim, how are you going to get it in? Well if you've got a good strong husky hunting partner someplace close enough where you can holler at him that's that's the way. You want to call him and get him up there and tie your buck rope on him and start dragging him.

Now if there's snow on the ground and dragging it isn't too hard he'll slip along pretty good you always want to drag him with the head so the hair will slide right back nice and smooth and uh well it isn't it isn't too bad especially if you've got a partner. Now you you generally tied the buck rope onto the antlers if you tie it on the front feet where the head drags and the antlers stick in the ground and you have an awful time but tie it on the antlers so that when you pull it pull the antlers up off the ground and they're not sticking in the ground and stopping you all the time because it isn't anything any more disagreeable than having the antlers catch on a bush or something and give you a good yank after you got started. When you get him into camp first thing you want to do is hang him up because you want to get that body heat out of that animal you want to get the body heat out of him so it'll cool off that's one of the first things that the butchers tell you to do. That's what they like to do first is uh to get the carcass hung up so the the heat will get out of it now you've got this skin on here uh it's an insulator and uh you want to get that body cavity propped open so the the heat will get out of it. You know that even though you have opened him clear up to breast bone that hole isn't isn't any too large so that there is a chance of uh uh of it uh all sort of souring on you I guess. The way they might call it you just uh pull a body cavity open stick a stick in there prop it open then if you want to take some newspapers and uh wipe the the blood out some fellows like to do that some fellows don't but it's it's generally a good idea. Well that's that's just about all there is Jim. To dress the deer out it isn't too hard you you can do it you can even do it with a pen knife. [Jim Porter] I believe I could do it now but you know there's another thing that I think about ongoing deer hunting is the danger of going up there into the woods and all those bullets flying around. Seems all be awfully unsafe out there. [Ilo Bartlett] Well that's what a lot of people think Jim but actually you're safer in the woods hunting deer than you are on the streets in Detroit dodging traffic or even on the road up and back. [John Bilek]: Well I don't I think there's something else to bring out in that one accident is too many, but I think if you check into it you could find it most of Were avoidable, and it could be avoided if they were just if they were just exercise a little care. I don't like to see so many days accidents I think that one is just too many and I think they can be avoided. [Ilo Bartlett] An awful lot of those accidents You are self-inflicted yeah, and a lot more are inflicted by hunters in your own party (yeah), that's that's the sad part of it. Even father and son is a Very common accident. [Jim Porter]: I read them. [Ilo Bartlett] It's just something that shouldn't happen. (Yeah). [Jim Porter] Well in other words The time for me to worry is when I'm on the road going up there and coming back and in the woods I'm all right. [Ilo Bartlett] That's that's right Jim. [Jim Porter] Well in other words if we just simply play the rules of the game, Use good equipment treat, a gun as if it was a gun, And if we're lucky we may get a buck, and anyway we're going to have a lot of fun, and get home safely. But you know I wouldn't have had to ask all those questions at all because here in the mail today I see that Ilo Bartlett has sent me a supply of deer hunting information bulletins and these bulletins He's got a bunch of them here And if you want one of these deer hunting information bulletins if you'll just write to me here at the country crossroads I'll be glad to send you one and another thing I was talking with Clint Ballard and he promised me that he'd run off some of those original bullet Original poems of his that he gave on this program and if you want either or both of those why you just say so now you can get this deer hunting information or you can get the original poem poems by Clint Ballard just by writing to me here at Country Crossroads Michigan State College box 231 East Lansing remember that address is Country Crossroads Michigan State College box 231 East Lansing well glad you came along folks hope you come along next week you have time and good hunting to you. [Narrator] By video recording you've just gone by Country Crossroads where town and country folks meet

each week. Today's special deer hunting features were presented by Ilo Bartlett of the Department of Conservation Game Division and John Bilek, a district game supervisor from Mayo. Our thanks go to Clint Ballard for two of his original falls. The waitress was Ruth Glass, and Kay Eyed was the hunter's wife. Your neighbor at the crossroads was Jim Porter, who with all his friends was brought to you by the Cooperative Extension Service. Stop by again next week for Country Crossroads, just 30 minutes down the road from Michigan State College.