

The Miracle Bear Story

By Max Greiner, Jr. 10/2/08©



Jim Beard and Max Greiner, Jr. with the bear Max killed with his seventh arrow on the seventh day of his seven day Idaho hunt!

The following true story occurred in September of 1976, when bowhunter and wildlife artist, Max G. Greiner, Jr. asked God to speak to him personally. Max, 24 years old at the time, was a Christian and forth-generation **Southern Baptist**. Professionally, he directed the art and advertising department for **Jennings Compound Bow, Inc.** As a volunteer, Max worked at the state and national level for the protection of bowhunting.

The incident recorded here forever changed Max's life and has profoundly affected thousands of other people who learned of this story in person, in print, on the radio and television. This incredible miracle "opened the door" to literally hundreds of other documented, supernatural miracles experienced by Max and his family since that remarkable day.

During the seventies and eighties, Greiner personally shared this **Miracle Bear Story** with some of the top bowhunters in the world — now, 32 years later, Greiner shares this incredible story with our readers.

The very first time I experienced the supernatural, miracle-working power of God in my own life was on a black bear bowhunt in September of 1976. I was 24 at the time, a newlywed, fresh out of **Texas A&M University**. Because of my love for art and archery, I had recently taken a job with **Jennings Compound Bow Inc.** to create their nationwide advertising.

In the fall of 1976, I joined friends, Jim Beard, Mike Palmer, Robert Todd, Jim Ross and Dr. Bob White, and his father, "Spike" White on a bowhunt for black bear and elk, in the beautiful Rocky Mountains near McCall, Idaho. Our guides for the archery hunt were Ray Rawls and Dean McGuire.

I chose to hunt black bear on this trip, rather than elk, because I had already taken a bull elk with a bow. Therefore, the guides gave me the choice to follow the hunting dogs or hunt from a tree stand overlooking a bait.

I decided to patiently sit in a tree for six days, 13 hours per day! Each morning I got in my stand well before daylight, and sat there quietly until dark. I never saw a bear! By the end of the most boring week of my life, I was very disappointed; especially since tracks and droppings revealed that a bear was actually coming to my stand, every other night, when it was not legal to hunt! The hunt was scheduled to be over the next day, which was Saturday.

However, on Friday night, all the hunters and guides decided to go into town to celebrate at the local saloon. I decided to stay in camp by myself since I didn't have anything to celebrate. I thought I was alone in camp until my friend, Jim Beard, of College Station, Texas, came up and sat down beside me.

Jim believed God wanted him to talk with me. Earlier in the week, Jim had taken a nice bull elk with his bow. Normally, our conversations pertain to archery and our outdoor adventures. However this time, Jim began to express his concern over our mutual friend, Mike Palmer, who did not believe in God at the time. (Today, Mike is a "Believer." He owns the **Palmer Bow Co.** and hand makes incredible recurve hunting bows.)

Jim told me how the year before, on a previous bowhunt, Mike challenged Jim to have "his" God show him a bear, if He was real. Like me, Mike had not seen a single bear after a long hard week of stand hunting.

So, Jim accepted the challenge and asked God to show Mike a bear the next day, which was the last day of their hunt. God answered Jim's request and Mike saw a giant bear, but was not able to take a shot! However, God got Mike's attention!

Beard's story fascinated me. Even though I was a "Born Again" Christian at the time. I had no idea God was still willing to talk with people or work a miracle for them. I had never

even heard of a "modern day" miracle. I assumed the days of God speaking personally to people and working miracles had ended with the New Testament.

After sharing his amazing experience, Jim left. I then leaned back against my sleeping bag in the dark and meditated on Jim's inspiring testimony. Then, spontaneously without thinking I said to God:

"Lord, I didn't know you were still working miracles and talking to people! If you would ever like to talk to me, I'd like to listen!"

Immediately, a strong thought came into my mind, which was not my own. It startled me! However, somehow I knew it was God!

I now know this was a "Prophetic Rhema Word" from the Holy Spirit of God. This message from God was instantly "downloaded" into my mind! Here is what God said to me that night in Idaho 32 years ago:

1.) **"You will kill a bear in the morning."** 2.) **"It will be the same bear you have been hunting all week."** 3.) **"It will come off your stand."** 4.) **"You will kill the bear with one arrow."** 5.) **"It will die instantly."**

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In spring of 2008, Dr. James Dobson, internationally respected founder of "Focus on the Family," flew to Kerrville, Texas and prayed over the 23 acre "Sculpture Prayer Garden" that is being built now on Interstate 10 by The Coming King Foundation. Pictured left to right: Max, Sherry, Dr. Dobson, Justin Evans and his wife Diana Shay (Greiner) Evans.

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I was totally shocked, because I knew at that moment, without a doubt, that the Holy Spirit of the living God had just spoken directly to me!

In my excitement, I immediately got up and went over to Jim Beard. I told him what had just happened and He said, “We’ll see.” (We laugh now because at the time, Jim was a Methodist and didn’t know God was speaking personally to anyone but him!)

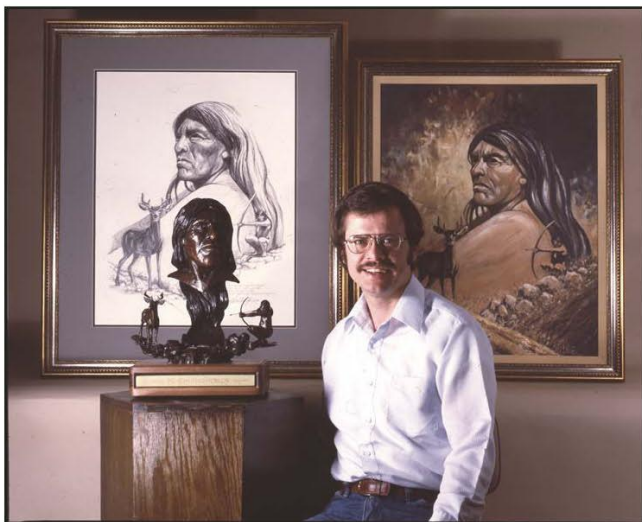
The next morning, I witnessed my “revelation” to eight hunters and guides around the breakfast table. I realized that if I did not share this “word” from God, and the miracle actually happened, no one would ever believe me. So, I made an announcement to everyone, that these events were about to happen that very morning. After sharing my strange “God” experience, there was an uncomfortable silence in the room.

Finally, everyone began to laugh, assuming that I was just kidding around, which I am known to do. However, I told them this was not a joke. I explained again that God had actually spoken to me and said that these events would happen in the next few hours!

Now, everyone was really uncomfortable. Several in the group did not believe in God, heaven or hell. Finally the head guide, Ray Rawls, spoke up and announced to everyone that I could not hunt that morning because we were not going to the stands. Since it was the last morning of the last day of our hunt, two hunters in our group were going for one last dog chase.

Puzzled by this statement, I asked Ray in front of everyone: “There must be some way I can hunt this morning?” Ray responded that there is no way. Then, he paused and said that the only conceivable way that I could hunt, which wouldn’t happen, would be if the bear actually was located at my bait.

However, Ray said they would not go to my bait unless there was no fresh bear scent at the other 20 baits. On average, in those Idaho mountains, black bears visited Ray’s baits at least every two or three days. There was statistically no chance that all the other baits would go untouched by bears. It was mathematically impossible.



Max Greiner, Jr. and his “Ishi” artwork



The Greiners moved to the heart of the “Texas Hill Country” in 1981, which is just south of where Max harvested his first whitetail deer at age 17.

I said, “That’s fine, I’m bringing my bow anyway!” I knew I had heard the voice of God and was filled with faith. I didn’t understand why God wanted me to shoot this bear, but I knew it was going to happen! Everyone, with the exception of Jim Beard, thought I was nuts!

Because this was the last hunt of the week, everyone in camp decided to follow along in pickup trucks to get in on one last bear chase. This included “Spike” White, who was there filming the entire week’s hunt in order to make a promotional movie for the guide. He had no idea he was about to capture a miracle of God on film!

As we all headed for the trucks, the senior guide, Ray Rawls, told me to ride with him. For the next two hours we checked the 21 baits as I witnessed to Ray about Jesus Christ and His reality in my life. To Ray’s consternation, every bait was untouched by bears!

By mid-morning, we had checked all but the last two baits and none of them had been visited by a bear the night before! This was statistically impossible! The guides and bowhunters were stunned by the unfolding events. As we reached the fork in the road, Ray shook his head, cursed and looked at me straight in the eye. He then said in obvious frustration: “Max, there are two baits left, yours is one of them. Which way do you want to go?”

I responded with a big smile and faith God had given me and said: “Ray, it doesn’t make any difference, but if you want to go where the bear is, he’s at my bait!”

I was strangely calm, certain that the prophetic revelation God had given me was now coming to pass in front of eight witnesses, who just a few hours before had laughed at me. They weren’t laughing now.

Ray turned the truck toward my stand. As we approached my bait area, the dogs who were still inside the dog kennels, picked up the scent of a bear and began to howl like crazy! Ray slammed on the breaks and jumped out of the truck. He ran over to my bait, looked at the ground for tracks and then yelled: “Max, this is your bear!”

The dogs were released, as men, hounds, and the camera man ran down the mountain after the black bear!

I was still strangely composed at this moment. I grabbed my archery gear and 35 mm camera as I calmly walked down the mountain alone. Everyone was ahead of me following the sound of the baying hounds.

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This unusual composure and calm assurance was unusual for me. Normally, my heart would be racing with anticipation, as the adrenalin pumped through my veins. Not this time. Instead the “peace of God” was on me. I knew this bear belonged to the Lord!

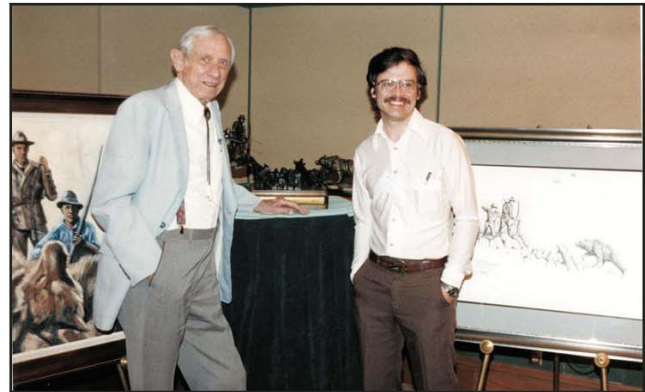
The mature 350-pound black bear treed a short distance down the mountain, in the top of a giant Idaho spruce tree. I am a decent shot with a bow, but this shot was difficult. It was almost straight up about 35 yards. Only the bear’s “white patch” over the “kill area” was visible, due to limbs and foliage.

I remember saying to God: “*Lord, couldn’t you have put him in a shorter tree?*”

However, I was totally confident that I would kill this bear with one arrow, since three of my five predictions had already been fulfilled. All that remained now from my prophecy was to kill the bear with one arrow, and for it to die instantly. (Killing a bear instantly with an arrow almost never happens.)

Everyone gathered around the tree as still cameras and a movie camera recorded the remarkable unfolding events. I slowly removed an arrow from my 8 arrow bow quiver, calmly aimed at the small vital lung area, which I could see. Only a 10” portion of the bear’s chest was visible, due to two tree limbs the bear was standing on.

I prayed and then released the arrow; positive it would find its mark. The arrow sliced through the thin crisp mountain air and slammed solidly into one of the tree limbs, just an inch



In March of 1987, Max unveiled the “Pope & Young Art Project” which raised thousands of dollars for the Pope & Young Club and the National Bowhunter Education Foundation. The artist is pictured here with the art and his friend, world famous bowhunter, Fred Bear.

below the vital area! I couldn’t believe my eyes! I missed! I was shattered!

Pulling my second arrow out of my eight-arrow bow quiver, I drew my 65-pound **Jennings Compound** bow back to full draw again and released. This time the arrow centered the other limb, just above the kill area, less than 12” from the first arrow!

Now, this was great shooting for me, but the bear was still untouched! My next four arrows missed the bear and tree entirely, and are somewhere in Idaho to this day! I was really

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rattled now. Fear set in as I realized I had only two arrows left!

It was at that exact moment of discouragement, that God sent Jim Beard over to me. He calmly looked me in the eye and said: "Max, tell me again exactly what did God say to you?"

I repeated to Jim that God said: 1.) "You will kill a bear in the morning." 2.) "It will be the bear you have been hunting all week." 3.) "It will come off your stand." 4.) "You will kill the bear with one arrow." 5.) "It will die instantly."

Jim then smiled and said to me: "Max, God didn't say it would be the "first" arrow."

I had assumed in my humanity, that God meant the "first" arrow. I had misinterpreted a legitimate "word" from God! (I have since learned this happens to people all the time. God communicates truth to us and we immediately add our own interpretation, which is sometimes wrong.)

With renewed faith and confidence, I drew back my "seventh" arrow, took aim and released the string. The arrow, true to its destiny, found its mark, penetrating the heart, lungs and spine! The bear died instantly! It fell to the ground with a thud! We all stood in amazement of the events we had just witnessed.

On the seventh day of the hunt I killed my bear with my seventh arrow! It was a solemn moment.

This miracle forever changed me and my understanding of God. It also had a profound effect on everyone at the foot of that tree that day, and thousands of others who later heard or read this story.

Years later, in 1990, I asked my agnostic scientist friend, Roy Marlow, to calculate on a computer the probability of these events occurring exactly as I predicted. Roy, an avid bowhunter and employee of the respected **Southwest Research Institute** in San Antonio, did not believe in God at the time, though years later this would change.

Roy structured the mathematical probability problem two different ways, based on the facts. Assuming the bears came to the 21 baits every third night, the odds of the events occurring were one in two billion! However, if the bears came in every other night, the odds were 330 billion to one that all these events could occur! My scientist friend said he had no idea how to calculate the probability of my ability to predict all five events before they happened.

In the years since this amazing 1976 miracle, I often wondered why God gave me this wonderful experience. In 1982, I think

I finally got my answer. God wanted a deeper, more personal relationship with me. He intervened in my life using bowhunting circumstances I could understand to get my attention. Secondly, God wanted me to know He was still talking to people and working miracles in our modern world. Thirdly, God wanted me to have a "personal testimony" of His supernatural power. He gave me one that I could share with my friends and family, most of whom were hunters, wildlife scientists and archers.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ caused a bunch of fish to jump into the fishing nets of the disciples (Luke 5:1-11). Jesus was not interested in catching fish; He was interested in catching men. Jesus revealed His deity in a way that they could understand. Longtime bowhunting friend, Jim Beard says it this way: "Max's bear story is not about Max getting a bear, it is about God getting Max!"

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Editor's Note:

If you would like to go bowhunting with God, or want to know how to get to the "Happy Hunting Ground," write or call for Max's free brochure "Where Will You Be in 1,000 Years?" at: **Max Greiner, Jr. Designs**, P.O. Box 290552, Kerrville, TX, 78029 - (830) 896-7919. Or, you can visit his website: www.maxgreinerart.com. Look in the Table of Contents under "God Stuff."



Bowhunters to the Bone!

Not many people go bowhunting on their honeymoon, but in August of 1975, artist, Max Greiner, Jr. did with his beautiful bride Sherry! You see, Max asked God for a wife that could carry a 40 lb. backpack, canoe whitewater, shoot a 50 lb. hunting bow...and look like a woman!

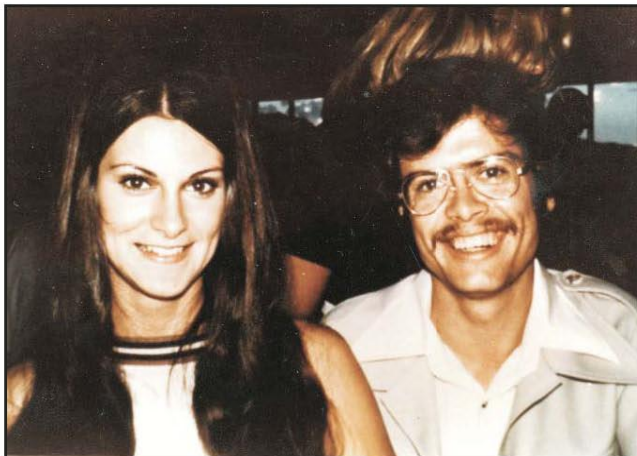
God answered Max's prayers with Sherry, who still puts up with him after all these years! The couple makes their home on a 127 beautiful acres in the **Texas Hill Country** near Kerrville, which is about 30 miles from the famous **YO Ranch**. This part of Texas is a bowhunters' paradise, where the whitetail deer and wild turkey outnumber humans!

The Greiners live in a creative, passive solar, earth sheltered, rock house designed by Max, who has a design degree in **Architecture** from **Texas A&M University**. Each Greiner room has a view through a two-story wall of glass to the atrium and canyon. This space is filled with plants, boulders and two full size (varnished) juniper trees which support a "free form" rustic stairway and balcony. A small stream flows through the atrium and ends in a small waterfall. The living space has deer, raccoon and turkey tracks stenciled across the stained concrete floor, which serves as the thermal solar mass for the house.

Whitetail deer, wild turkey, wild hogs, coyotes, bobcats, and aoudad rams can be observed right outside the Greiner's window. Even mountain lions and bald eagles have been seen on the Greiner ranch. It is a place of sanctuary for the Greiners. Sherry has even instituted a special hunting rule: **"If it is named and tamed, it can't be aimed!"**

Back in 1975, Max took his new bride backpacking and bowhunting for elk in northwestern Colorado. However, before they packed into the wilderness for a week, they attended the 1975 **Pope & Young Banquet** in Boulder, Co. It was there they got to meet many of their bowhunting heroes for the first time. A friendship began with Fred Bear after he learned they were bowhunting on their honeymoon!

Sherry was not surprised by a bowhunting honeymoon. Their first date in high school was a duck hunt, and the second date consisted of a bow fishing adventure! When she was pregnant in 1984, with their first and only child, Diana Shay, Sherry tried to arrow a whitetail deer on the same day she delivered the baby! She would have done



*In August of 1975, Max and Sherry Greiner attended their first **Pope & Young Banquet** in Boulder, Colorado, before backpacking into the wilderness to bowhunt elk on their honeymoon.*

it except she missed her shot! Her excuse was that the contractions were already five minutes apart! This lady archer has taken whitetail deer, mule deer, antelope and wild turkey with her bow. However, these days she prefers to make pets of the wildlife!

Max's bowhunting efforts from Texas to the Arctic Circle, have allowed him to harvest deer, elk, caribou, antelope, bear, cougar, wild boar and a variety of other smaller game, including wild turkey and giant alligator gar.

In the seventies and eighties Max was best known in archery circles for his enthusiasm for the sport, his bowhunting and wildlife art, and for his volunteer efforts to promote and defend bowhunting. By age 17 he had taken his first deer, formed his first archery club at his high school and published his first article in a **Bow & Arrow** magazine.

In 1975, Max was one of the original founders and leaders of the **Lone Star Bowhunters Association**. He also served as the youngest Bowhunting Vice-President of the **Texas Field Archery Association**. At about the same time, Greiner started the **International Bowhunter Education Program** in Texas, and later in California, serving as the first State Chairman.

The couple moved to California in 1976 to accept an advertising and art director job with **Jennings Compound Bow**. While in California, Max was asked to join the select seven member **Bowhunting & Conservation Committee** of the **National Field Archery Association**. This group later formed the **National Bowhunter Education Foundation**, under the leadership of William H. Wadsworth. Bill was one of Max's heroes and mentors. Greiner would eventually head this non-profit organization that spread bowhunter education across America and the world.

In 1978, the Greiners moved back to Texas and started their fine art business. In 1985, Greiner was able to raise about \$100,000 for the NBEF through the sale of his **"Ishi"** drawing prints, painting prints and bronze sculptures. Then, in 1986 his **"Pope & Young"** artwork raised thousands more dollars for the **Pope & Young Club**.

Today Greiner artwork is collected in all 50 states and over two dozen countries. It is in the collections of Presidents and Popes, Governors, business leaders, music, sports and movie stars, as well as a bunch of old bowhunters!

Well known owners of Max's artwork have included people like President Bush, Governor Mike Huckabee, Johnny Cash, Wynonia Judd, Chuck Norris, Jack Nicklaus, and Christian leaders like Pope John Paul, Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, James Dobson, Rick Warren and Robert Schuller, to name a few. Business leaders have included the CEOs of **Coca Cola** and **Chick-fil-A**.

Well known bowhunters who have owned Greiner's art include M.R. James, Fred Bear, Tom Jennings, Chuck Adams, Doug Kittredge, Jim Dougherty, Jim Easton, Earl Hoyt, Bill Wadsworth, Tink Nathan and Doug Walker, to name just a few.

Over the years, Greiner artwork has raised millions of dollars for worthy causes, including wildlife conservation, medical research and Christian ministries. Currently, Max and Sherry are building a non-profit **Sculpture Prayer Garden** on **Interstate 10** in Kerrville, TX. It will feature all of Max's monumental Christian bronze sculptures and the large bronzes of other Christian artists. The purpose of the free garden park is to bring glory to God and to introduce people to Jesus Christ. For more information on this unique evangelistic project, visit: www.thecomingkingfoundation.org

For more information on Greiner artwork, or to view the Greiner studio home and ranch, visit their website: www.maxgreinerart.com
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