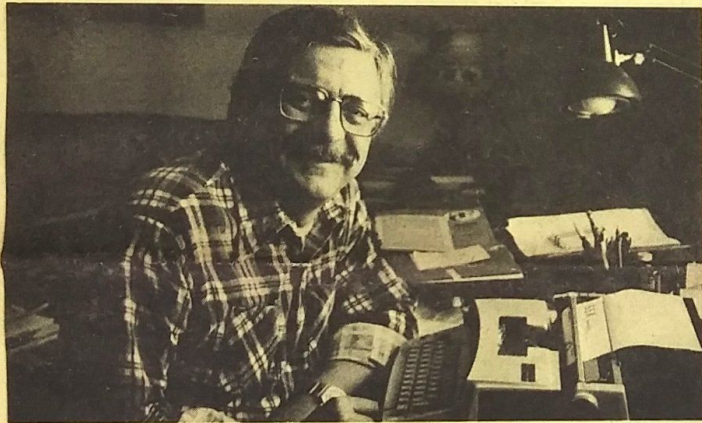




THE SIXGUNNER



MY CORNER

By J. D. Jones

How about that new masthead? Credit goes to Greg and Twila Vanhee for the design and the crew at Art Type of Seattle for putting it together. Thanks, all of you. This is the kind of organization participation I'm looking for — and if another design comes along maybe we'll use it too!

If you have any ideas — let's hear them. Obviously we can't use them all. Some are inappropriate, but mostly we just aren't big enough to be able to get into some of them. Usually they take bucks and that's in short supply in any new organization. The only one I felt really inappropriate was "buy 2000 acres in each state exclusively for members use." I'd love to do it, but if I had that kind of money I doubt if I'd be fooling around with HHI!

Spring is about to spring — I hope — and thoughts turn to varminting, silhouette shooting, fishing, goofing off and dreaming about that big one that got away. Varminting gets a real upsurge in the spring though, and this year T/C is releasing 14" barrels in .222 and .223. In the custom T/C barrel line SSK also offers .17 Rem which seems to be a cutie in the 14" bull barrels. .17 Ackley Bee is also available. T/C will be releasing a new 4X scope to compete with the Redfield and Leupold. The Hutson Mini remains

alone in the mini-handgun scope field. Look for a report from Shippy or Briggs next issue.

Maybe the eight inch Pythons will be available in quantity by the end of summer. Redhawks — who knows? Release dates keep changing.

Dan Wesson Arms is incorporating a couple of things in their .357 that will remove the last complaints I had about the gun. They will cure the problem of end shake developing rapidly and lube build up tending to prevent effortless cylinder rotation in cold temperatures. I'll try to publish SN when the change is made if I can get it. Any D. W. questions — write Fred Hill at the factory — he's one of the good guys.

WW has a 300 grain .45-70 load to compete with Federal's 300 grain load. Haven't received any yet but Federal's is a dandy. No reason WW's shouldn't match it.

Pacific has a new loading press of the heavy duty type with what is supposed to be a dandy priming set-up. No samples as yet, but will try it out as soon as one is available.

Ponsess Warren 200 Pistol Loader is fast — I bought one and set it up for .44 Mag six months ago. All powder measurers won't work with it. That implied line about setting up for two car-

Continued On Page 2



MONTANA MULIE

By Jerry Kraft No. 9

Kelly was due back from Idaho in two days. Then both of us were heading for Montana for a month of hunting . . . and I was anxious.

I'm the gunsmith at Mag-Na-Port. Our most popular conversion is cutting the 29 and Super Blackhawk back to five inches and adding the goodies. After doing hundreds of them, I finally did one for myself. Kelly has shot quite a bit of game with the five inchers but I stuck with my six and a half until now. After having had a Brown Bear hunt on Kodiak Island and an African hunt, both cancelled and working seven days a week for the last year I was ready!

After we got to Montana I sighted in the five incher to hit right above the front sight at 75 yards with factory Federal JSPs. The five incher felt foreign, but good compared to the way it felt as a six and a half. Nested in my new custom made Thad Rybica cross-draw holster, I was really ready.

Twenty days later after not seeing a Bull Elk or even a Mulie worth shooting, I was a lot more "tired" than "ready". My twenty-first day of hunting was along Lake Kootnia which is about 150 miles long and a very

scenic place to hunt. It also has its share of trophy Whitetails.

I found a nice comfortable place to sit and was watching the Golden and Bald Eagles that winter in this area when I spotted three does accompanied by a buck with a widespread rack. Couldn't see how many points, but by the spread I figured it should be pretty good. They were working up to a ridge that was level to me. The stalk would be gravy and my trigger finger was itching. Everything was perfect. I strolled over and met them just as I had planned to. To my disappointment, he was only a forkhorn. I'd never seen a forkhorn like that and his unusual shot and squeezed it off. Instead of folding up, he took off. Dammit, I had shot right over the top of his back! All four deer took off into the brush with me right behind them.

I expected them to be carrying the mail for quite a ways. As soon as I got into the brush, there they were looking

Continued On Page 2

My Corner *Continued From Page 1*
tridges and simply flipping the die head to change calibers is a crock. I think it's faster to change dies than go through all the rigamarole necessary to change the die head.

The tool could be stronger and I can think of a couple of modifications that will help it. On the positive side even considering it as a "one caliber set up" I can reasonably expect to load about 300 per hour with this tool. Leaving it set up for one cartridge I can load one or a bunch without changing dies. It does have advantages and although I'm not greatly enthusiastic about it, I leave it set up for .44 and use it. Wouldn't mind having one set up for each of several other calibers — it's handy, but I don't like their advertising inferences that aren't accurate in my book.

Contact Hilltop Gun Shop, Main St., Odessa, NY 14869 for the latest information on new ammo for Hydra-Shock.

Intended to do something with the .458x2" for this issue and just couldn't work it in. Haven't figured out a few things ballistically as yet. It's accurate and powerful, but shot to shot velocity variations are unacceptable in some loads. The .338 JDJ is a .303 British improved and opened to .338. First time out it performed quite well in both accuracy and power. The 12" T/C gave 2007 FPS with 16FPS extreme

variation with the 225 Hornady over 40.0 H4895 and a Federal 215 primer. Same load with CCI Mag primers gave 1857 average. The .50-70 T/C barrel reacts to the Federal 215 primer in the same manner. More testing on that later. Steve Wynn claims first kill for the .50-70 T/C. 450 grain cast bullets at 1300 FPS are about right for everyday use.

Got a bullet design for a cast bullet in your head? Contact C. W. at Northeast Industrial Inc. 2516 Wyoming St., El Paso, TX 79903 and he'll build it at a reasonable price. His molds are aluminum and stainless. No rust problems, excellent workmanship, extensive line of standard bullets — including the "cast bullet with a copper tube around it bullet molds" as well as a few boat tail designs. If you can dream it up — C. W. can make it. The price is very right too. This relatively new company has a lot going for it. Write for their lists. Send a large SASE or include a buck for his trouble.

Have an old battle scarred sixgun you're thinking of sending back to the factory for a little work? Mark Kowack says you had better specify in writing exactly what you want done and specifically not to do anything else without your express permission. If you don't, your gun may be completely rebuilt and those honorable scars may be covered with fresh bluing and that super slick action replaced with new

parts and we all know how slick they are!

The new Smith & Wesson Van — S & W first had a van customized as a promotional idea. Starcraft R.V. and S & W are both owned by Bangor Punta. Starcraft customizes a ¾ ton GMC chassis (350 CID engine) with many "hunting" van conveniences. Add all sorts of goodies to bring the price up to \$16,799. It's a well put together package as far as features anyway. Sounds to me as if GM and S & W quality deserve each other. For info write — Starcraft RV, West Michigan St., Topeka, IN 46571.

Soap Box Time:

The American Dream is reprinted by courtesy of **The Toronto Sun**. It summarizes my feelings pretty well. Congratulations Donato, for a terrific commentary on a lousy state of affairs and to the Sun for having balls enough to print it. Would your local newspaper print it? As far as I can see holding hostages constitutes uncivilized behavior. Obviously the civilized behavior pattern of our government in dealing with the "hostage" situation is ineffective so far. Americans in Iran have just cause to fear for their safety. Iranians in this country legally and illegally now walk the streets with not one damn thing to fear. I'm of the opinion it's about time to give the Iranians something to worry about. Uncivilized behavior in this situation calls for un-

conventional behavior to effectively deal with it. Since our President isn't out on the campaign trail politicking, he should have thought up some way to kick ass and get something moving. How 'bout it Jimmy? Are you going to be a President or a Peanut Farmer in '81'?"



Montana Mule *Continued From Page 1*



at me. Bam — I snapped one off and missed him again. This time he went downhill over some rocks heading for the timber. When he got to the edge of the timber he stopped for another look and I busted him. Before I shot I thought "Don't, he'll be hell to get out of there" . . . and I did it anyway! I saw the bullet hit him low through the chest and knew he was good, but he still made it about 200 yards damn near straight down through heavy timber.

When I found him he was laying on his back with his horns half buried in the soft soil. Even though the 240 Federal hit his heart he must have died running.

I heard Kelly whistling and called him down. I had the deer gutted and tagged. He was large in the body — probably 240-260 pounds with a 30 inch neck as the rut was on.

When Kelly got to us he started screaming, "Are you nuts? We'll never get him out of here!" And that's all I'm going to say he said, but there was more I'm not going to repeat. I could hardly calm him down.

We laid the deer over a stump to drain and cool while we looked for Julius Robertson, our other hunting partner. Julius is the Chief Deputy of this N.W. County and a crack shot. Two days before I watched him neck shoot a Whitetail with his custom Tomahawk with 4 5/8" Ruger .44 Mag with the new Maverick Peep sight.

When we told him where the deer was he just shook his head and said that nobody with any common sense would shoot anything down there.

Four or five hours later after going to town to get a winch, 150 feet of cable and 300 feet of rope and getting back, Julius looked over the edge and said, "Only somebody from Michigan would do something like this."

Larry and I took the 450 feet of line down. I felt like a mountain climber. When we got to the deer a Bald Eagle was eating the entrails and another was standing on his (the deers) neck working on his chest. It was a beautiful sight to see.

Well, I don't want to talk much about getting the deer out. We got him, but it was a lot of work. Don't know if it was worth it but it was an experience I'll never forget.

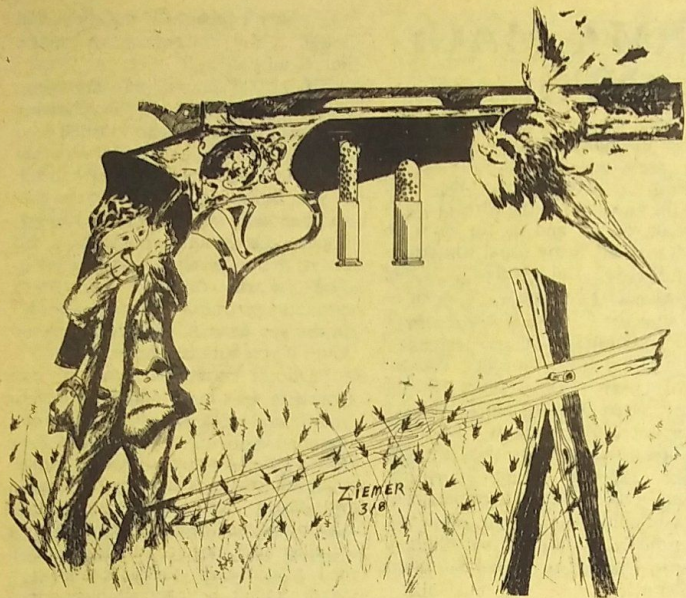


DONATO
TORONTO SUN

THE AMERICAN DREAM

THE SIXGUNNER

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PHEASANTS WITH A PISTOL?

By Mike Donahue
No. 534

I've been hunting pheasant in Iowa for the past six years. My brother, Tim, lives there with this two Irish Setters and with plenty of scouting by them we find lots of game every year. This past season I decided to try my Contender in .44 Hot Shot. This announcement was received with great guffaws of laughter on the part of my hunting buddies who are all dedicated shotgunners. They thought I was crazy for sure until I explained that the max range would be only twenty yards leaving plenty of time for backup shooting with the shotguns. Well, I wanted to show these characters what a serious pistol shooter could do, so I set up a training program.

First I had to find the limitations of my equipment. With this in mind, we got out the butcher paper and went out to the range. Thompsons/Centers choked barrel and Hot Shot cartridge is by far the best shot shell system for pistols ever developed and probably won't be improved upon until Washington, D.C. let's us go smooth bore (not bloody likely). Testing showed a fifteen yard pattern of 18 inches that was very dense with No. 6 shot. The twenty yard pattern was 24"-26" but still even and giving adequate coverage for pheasant. The twenty-five yard pattern was 32"-36" with pheasant-size holes in it. That settled that. We had a 20 yard range limit or let him fly. I hate like hell to leave wounded game in the field and always count them against my bag limit when it happens.

I decided I could afford to practice 100 rounds as I was still waiting on my reloading press. If I couldn't hit 80% on beer cans at the end of 100 rounds, then I'd leave the pistol home. My cohort, David Donaldson, can throw and empty beer can about as fast as a baseball. We put David on his knees ten feet to the side so we would be offered a rising target. He threw without my calling while I had the pistol down in both hands. My hands are small making it very difficult to reach the hammer safety of the Contender, so I knew I would have to go in with the hammer down. This meant I had to cock the piece with my left thumb, get my grip, and pick up the

sights while the can was flying. I knew it would be best to bring the piece up to a normal two-hand position and track from the hips. This seems to be essential to good wingshooting. My .44 barrel is the old type with partridge sights (I hear that the ribbed barrel with bead is easier to shoot.) but by using my regular two-hand hold the sights tended to line up automatically, so I only looked for the front blade and used both eyes.

After practicing about 60 rounds I got ten in a row and then settled into an 85% average. This practice, by the way, is delightful shooting in itself and the No. 6 shot only carries about 110 yards as we could hear it falling on the barn roof. Well, I had attained the desired shooting skill, so now, how to plan the hunt?

The first weekend in November rolled around and we drove to Iowa for the start of the pheasant season. Tim's Irish Setters are the best two dogs I've ever worked behind. I knew I could count on them to hold a bird till we got set. On opening day about 10:00 a.m. after we had gotten a couple of roosters in cut corn, I got my chance. Echo pointed a bird in the fenceline and Shadrack came up to honor. Dennis got his camera ready while I cleared my shotgun and laid it down. (I didn't drive all that way with just a pistol.) I had to cross the fence while Tom got into backup position with his trusty Silver Snipe Berretta. Lance, the fourth member of our party, just stood there and shook his head. I put the Contender in both hands with my left thumb ready to

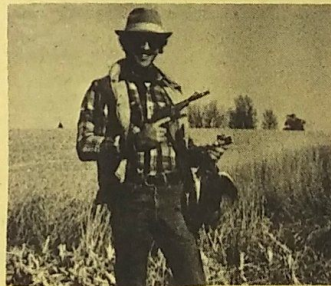
cock the hammer. I took a deep breath and walked in to flush. The dogs had been quivering all this time (about two minutes) but the bird held. This pheasant flushed about four feet in front of me and I had plenty of time to sex it before I cocked my pistol and brought it up. The sights lined up a foot above the bird just as he stopped rising and went into high gear. I started to bring the pistol down when it went off 18" over the bird. Tim downed him cleanly at 30 yards.

Well fellow pistoleros, I had made a crucial mistake after all that planning and training. It had been warm in Kentucky during the practice sessions and I left my trigger set to the 3/4 pound pull I use for target work, but, the day of the hunt it was 35-40 degrees and my hands were just a bit stiff and slightly numb without gloves. Not intending to squeeze until the sights were lined up, the Contender went off on me as soon as I put my finger to the trigger.

Well, my hunting buddies were getting interested in my plan at this point and during lunch they weren't laughing quite as hard. Afterwards the temperature was approaching 60 degrees and I got a clean kill at 14 yards involving an almost duplicate scenario. The Contender still went off a little before I was ready, but I had gotten lined up quicker. I was more than satisfied with my success on the second attempt and my buddies were certainly impressed. I paid for the beer at the end of the day and got to tell the story several times to unbelieving ears.

Next year I'll set the trigger to 5-6 pounds so that I will have something to offset the mild doses of adrenalin and cold. I always wear ear protection at the range and had never heard the Contender discharge. I still haven't heard it even though I fired it twice with uncovered ears. My buddies tell me that it's loud. I think the important lesson here is that even with rigorous planning and training, you cannot foresee all the conditions of the hunt, therefore, if you want to do it with call and finesse you need everything you can possibly get going for you.

By the way, after determining pattern



Here's one I didn't miss. This style barrel has been discontinued by T/C.



It's hard to believe I missed this shot.

and range limitations, I knew there would be no significant loss of velocity in 20 yards, so I went to No. 9 shot. You get better coverage with the smaller shot and at 20 yards or less there will be plenty of penetration and energy transfer.

I would like to thank Dennis Wolter of Cincinnati for the beautiful pictures which are as of this writing at the lab being enlarged. We're all looking forward to next November and I'm thinking of trying the Contender on Kentucky dove in September.

Cold Feet But Just You Wait

By Bud McDonald
No. 334

I hunt in Wyoming every year and 3 years ago bought a Ruger Hawkeye with a 2.5x scope to pop jacks and dogs with "after" the hunt was over to kill the remaining time until we were ready to go home again. Gradually, while in the off season, I found that I got more comments from the pictures of me and the Hawkeye with dead jacks and dogs than on my deer and antelope!! Also found that I couldn't wait to get the "meat on the pole" so I could start with the fun; hand-gunning.

Two years ago, I had a Ruger Mark I target "built" with 4x Leupold, grips and trigger worked over from which I've enjoyed more than any gun I've ever had. The jacks caught hell and I filled the pot several times with sage hens and cottontails. The dogs were still taking it on the chin from the Hawkeye as the range was a mite tall for the .22. Well, I got that Mark I home and started in on the squirrel population. Then and there I said next year I'll get a deer with a pistol as the little gray targets (not to mention some fine eating.) fell to it.

Went out and got a 14" 357 Herrett with 3x Burris!! I still am amazed with the accuracy of this fine pistol. I found that 26.8 grains of W296 with CCI large pistol primers and spear's 140 gr HP the best suited for my needs.

I don't like telling the rest of this but in Wyoming this year I got cold feet with the T/C. The reason was distance! Most shots were 250 yards minimum so the T/C stayed in camp. On the second day I dropped a beautiful 26" spread mulie with my custom 308 Norma Mag at the incredible distance of 60 yards!! I was and still am sick. My hunting buddies and I were busting jacks and dogs at over 100 yards with 357 Herrett. I would have had the Mulie mounted if I'd have gotten it with the T/C but those "not quite a trophy" horns went on a board with many others that the Norma had dropped over the years.

I didn't get cold feet during the Virginia white tail season however. On the first day I was watching eight turkey's at around 80 yards through a lot of brush waiting for one to hit an open spot when two spike bucks came into view. They were 150 yards away when I first saw them and they kept feeding toward my stand. I followed them in the burris 3x until I was sure of a hit then touched off a 140 grainer at the larger of the two. The shot was a head on one and the spike dropped in his tracks. The distance was approximately 75 yards. As I was in a tree stand the bullet had a "down hill" route. The spear 140 grain HP entered the upper chest and

Continued On Page 4

Cold Feet *Continued From Page 3*
 came out near his balls. I wish I could tell ya what his insides looked like, but I normally neck shoot my deer and by the time I'd gutted him I was completely gagged out. It was a mess, but no meat damage at all.

This year the .308 Norma Mag and the Hawkeye will stay home while I'm in Wyoming with the .357 Herrett and a custom XP-100.223 w/Reinhart Fajen stock and 3x Burris that I've been working on for 5 months. If I get my .375 JDJ in time I'll let you know how it does.

Soon as I get back this Oct., you'll get a story complete with pictures!



MY HERO

By Robert J. Brown
 No. 155

I have a hero that has taught me handgun hunting, loading and sportsmanship. I have never met the man, but if I ever saw him, I sure couldn't miss him in any crowd. His words of wisdom I have followed and found them to work very well.

I started getting serious about handgun work in '59. Now funds and other things didn't allow me to do everything I always wanted to do, but I stuck with it. I have articles he wrote from '59 to date.

My hero has probably shot more game with the handgun than most people have seen.

I imagine everybody is beginning to suspect my hero wears a twenty gallon hat, smokes cigars and pipe, and totes a four inch 44 Mag. as often as he wears his hat . . . The Father of the 44 Mag., ELMER KEITH.

Without his exploits, I'll bet a lot of us wouldn't be Handgunning today. His experiments have helped us all to better ourselves. If you are a cast bullet shooter, you can't find a better design than the Keith bullets. In fact, in my opinion, you can't find a better bullet — period — for a sixgun.

My hero lives in Idaho by way of Montana and Oregon and writes informative and understandable stories. My copy of **SIXGUNS**, an autographed one, gets a lot of use, for I can't remember all I read. I am looking forward to "Hell, I Was There."

If it wasn't for Elmer, I probably wouldn't be enjoying the handguns as I do. . . . How about you?

REVIEW: DEATH IN THE LONG GRASS

By Peter Hathaway Capstick

Peter Capstick has written a most exciting, humorous and informative book about African dangerous game. The author was a professional white hunter for some years. His experiences are extremely well told. Frankly, I seldom find a book about hunting as enjoyable as I found this one. This is the best I've read. John Taylors **AMERICAN RIFLES** (now out of print) is No. 2.

Capstick has a way with words equalled by few. I wouldn't guarantee every word is 100% fact — but based on fact dressed up for entertainment value. There is a vast difference in clinical terminology describing death and the way Capstick does it. See for

.38 SPECIAL NORMA MAG: TECHNICAL INFO

Since announcement of the .38 Special Norma Mag, we have had many inquiries about the astounding performance of this cartridge. For your background information, the 1542fps muzzle velocity and 580 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy are achieved in a 6 inch (including chamber) test barrel.

Amazingly, due to our unique powder, chamber pressure stays down right around 17,000 c.u.p., the same as a standard .38 load. The .38 Special Norma Mag doesn't even come close to the 19,000 c.u.p. pressure requiring Plus P designation. Thus, it most definitely can be used in handguns which safely handle standard .38 Special ammo.

Even when tested in shorter barrels as other brands are, .38 Special Norma Mag ammo still holds its magnum edge. In a 4 inch barrel revolver, for instance, muzzle velocity averages 1225 fps, developing than other brands, and they all require Plus P designation limiting their use to special handguns.

The powder in .38 Special Norma Mag ammo is highly progressive, creating even more advantage in longer barrel guns. In a 7.7 inch (including chamber) test barrel for instance, muzzle velocity is a sizzling 1667 fps, developing a whopping 679 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy. And, of course, the pressure remains at the standard level.

.38 Special Norma Mag ammunition is a true ballistic breakthrough in line with Norma's historical innovations in the ammunition industry.

Velocity/Energy Summary

Barrel Length	Muzzle Velocity	Muzzle Energy
4 inch revolver	1225	367
6 inch test	1542	580
7.7 inch test	1667	679

Well, there you have it — Normas side of it anyway. Now let's get to my side.

I received two boxes of test ammo and promptly shot them up. In the early Seventies I tested every 38 Special round I could get my mitts on. The Norma 110 was the hottest of the lot of them. It was accurate too; in fact most 110 grain ammo I've checked was excellent in the accuracy department.

Naturally, I chose a miserably cold, windy, rainy day to go out and play. Took a Chiefs Special, 4" Combat and 6" S & W PPC gun as well as a 10" T/C.

yourself from the following excerpts:

"The man-eater gave a terrific tug and the claws ripped forward tearing DeBeer's scalp loose from his skull until it hung over his face like a dripping, hairy, red beret."

"Slowly the blind, semiconscious De Beer realized that the great weight was gone, that the lioness wasn't biting him anymore. As from a long distance, he could hear Colin shrieking over his pain. He rolled over, face-up on the dirt, listening to the lion chewing on the young man. Automatically his crushed hands began to feel around for a weapon, anything. His broken fingers touched something hard: in a flash he realized that it was a rifle barrel, the fallen .243. Ignoring the agony of broken bones, he tried to grasp it. It seemed stuck. Somehow he tugged it free, the sudden release

One advantage to the Oehler 33 with skyscreens is convenience. I blocked the screens from the wind with the pick-up, ran the wires through the vent window and sat the clock on the dash. This is my usual wintertime chrono set-up. The less than 2" Chief clocked 1021 FPS, the 4" Combat — 1219 and the 6" Bull barrel averaged 1391. Interesting, my 4" averaged only 6 FPS from Norma's claimed velocity from a 4" revolver. Norma Honey, here is your Gold Star for telling the truth! The 10" T/C .357 will break two grand with a properly loaded .357-110. Doubt if approximately 1700 FPS .38 Specials will get much use in the one shooters. Accordingly, I didn't clock the T/C because I picked up a barrel without a roller in it.

The Chief had Pachmayr grips on it and is ported. The little 110s barked from the shorty, but didn't bite on the back end. Accuracy at about 100 was iffy because the 110s shot quite low. The 4" did quite well. I picked out a rock in a bank and stuck 5 in what looked like about a 4-5 inch group with one at 11:00 six inches out that I blew.

Considering the wind and conditions I was amazed and probably lucky. Took a ride looking for wild dogs. Didn't find any, but shot up most of the ammo playing.

Most of you know you can beat 1225 with a 4" with 110's hot handloads. But — you are not going to do it without getting into at least Plus P pressures. Some manufacturers specifically warn against Plus P loads in their .38s. This can be used in any .38 Special that's safe with modern ammo. And that specifically excludes guns made before heat treating started.

Pulling a round I found it was loaded with 17.2 grains of a ball powder that looks like WW296 or H110. The new Speer No. 10 Manual lists a .38 Special Plus P load of 12.7-H110-110 Speer at 1146 FPS from a 6" Ruger. There went another not so good idea.

The only drawback I see with this cartridge is its price — around \$23.00 per box. Damn — I wish I had a pressure gun, 100 pounds of that powder and a week to play! Looks as if the rest of the guys are going to have to play "catch-up". The next couple of years might be kinda interesting in ammo development.

making him fall backward. Awkwardly, he reversed the rifle, found the safety, and, still unseeing, listened to determine where to fire. By the sounds the lioness was standing over Colin's body. He triggered the first shot, then, as fast as his smashed hands could work the bolt action, fired twice more. Silence blanketed the camp.

"Colin! Are you all right? Colin?"
 "Yes, Dad, I'm all right," answered a pain-tight voice. "But you've shot my hand off."

"Nairobi has an impressive cemetery of lion-killed white men . . ."

"Another hunter friend of mine reports that, upon seeing his first lion at close range, his client threw away his rifle and ran like a lunatic straight after the big cat. The lion, fortunately, wasn't having any, although what

might have happened if the client had caught him might have made interesting reading."

"If 12,000 pounds of screaming, screeching, infuriated elephant bearing down on you has somehow rattled your nerves to the point that you miss that six-by-four-inch spot on his forehead, or your bullet fails to penetrate the two-and-one-half feet of tough, spongy, honeycomb bone that protects his brain, then you may as well forget it. The most talented mortuary cosmetician in the world couldn't rewire you so your own mother would know if you were face up or down."

"I don't know how many African poachers meet their makers trying to melt the lead from the joints of a gasoline vapor-filled drum, but I have heard of two cases, both spectacular. One old Masarwa Bushman I knew in Botswana, who had apparently mastered the process, had killed six buffalo, all with the same bullet, which he would dig out and reroll into rough shape between small sheets of flat iron."

"A condition often mistaken for that of true roguehood may occur when elephants, especially bulls, become rip-roaring drunk on the fermenting fruit of several trees . . ."

"What happened, Old Boy," he said looking at my face. "Have a hairy, did you?" I pointed to the dead bull and told him about the freak first shot and how Silent saved me from the statistic books. He shook his head, shrugged, and walked around among the seven dead jumbos in my section, popping each one a couple of times with his Browning 9mm. pistol to be extra sure."

"Only luck placed me just downwind so he didn't scent me, although I must have smelled like a locker room in Yankee Stadium after a doubleheader on the Fourth of July . . ."

"Wham! Whock! The bull kept running along although I could see the second shot strike like a shell on a concrete bunker."

If that doesn't have your mouth watering for your own personal copy, you are probably also immune from cancer.

The book doesn't contain much in the way of handgun hunting. Surprised at popping elephants with a 9mm just to make sure? I was surprised to read it although I was aware of the practice by many "croppers" and that a 9mm had enough to do it. Nope — this book isn't pistols; but it's a hell of an exciting hunting book. (GUNS BOOKS, Dept. S 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108. \$10.50 prepaid)

Holsters & Handles

By Tom Frick No 23

Carrying a handgun while hunting usually involves long heavy guns and has often been less than comfortable for me. No problems for awhile; then they drag down on the belt, get in the way and weigh about as much as my old '97' after a long day of hunting and lots of sore spots and/or muscles develop. The big, long barreled guns have always been too long in belt holsters when sitting. The fine Bianchi and Safariland holsters are great for carrying but also poke into the dirt and twist your belt when you scrunch down against a stump.

This season I tried out a new style. For me it's the best yet and may be

Continued On Page 5

worth trying if you haven't. The Jackass Shoulder System is an X strap centered in the back and across both shoulders. It is fully adjustable and no belt connections are needed. The well fitted holster rides horizontally, is easy to reach and extra ammo can be carried in pouches under the off arm. It carries either my 4" or 8 3/8" M-29 with equal comfort in its open end style. The gun is secured by a thumbbreak strap and releases in a smooth natural draw.

I've tried every replacement grip on the market and even carved on a lot of them but couldn't be satisfied with the way they fit my rather short broad fingered hand. Stock "N" target grips just barely get an OK; the rubber Pachmayr too narrow. Mustangs too thick and Herrett's several styles just didn't do it for me. If a .44s kick is too much for you; you don't have the right grips on it or just haven't shot it enough. It is the fit of the grip that gives you comfort and consistency.

Mustang's new Rangfield rubber grips finally showed on a local dealers shelf and I had to try them. The first one fit the 29 perfectly. With factory .44s it felt like a .357 compared to a lot of grips. I found comfort and control I didn't think was possible. The 'K' frame are smaller inside to fit the smaller frame. Outside dimensions of the K and N frame grips are identical for the same feel and pointability with both sizes. Tried a set on a Commander. Great feel and at \$14-16 they are a steal. They might be well worth trying.

MONTMORENCY VENSION HASH

By Tom Frick No. 23

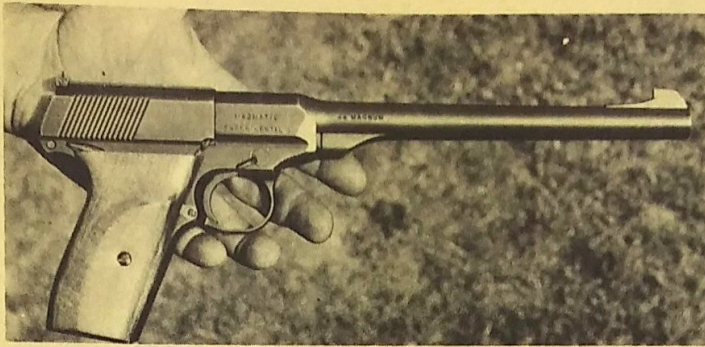
Hangunning for Deer! After two seasons of Metallic Silhouette we were anxious to try for the real thing! We had our favorite guns sighted in and ready to go.

Lonny Watsons 4 5/8" Ruger .357 had been converted to .44 Special and used with 17.5 grains of 2400 under the Lyman-Keith 429421 cast bullet. Jim Brayton's 6 1/2" Ruger .357 was now a .357/44 Bobcat Magnum and my M-29s (8 3/8 Blue with 4" Nickel in reserve) were loaded into the Blazer and we headed north into Michigan Whitetail country with high hopes of bringing back a hatrack or two.

After a cold November week of sitting in snow, peeking through pines, laying under logs and tramping out timber, all we had seen were a few does and what seemed like thousands of Redcoats.

One of the big spots of the hunt was an original recipe we concocted. We called it Montmorency Vension Hash after that County which bears at least a million of our footprints.

Here it is. Take about two pounds of last years Deerburger; mix with about a pound of fresh ground sausage and fry until brown. Pour off any grease and add a sack of Potatoes O'Brian (Frozen Food Dept.) which consists of diced potatoes, onions and red peppers. Add salt, pepper, BBQ sauce, a cup of red wine and whatever else you feel like to spice it up. Simmer until done. It's done whenever the smell is more than you can stand or your feet thaw out. Serve with hot coffee, bread and jam. Don't forget the rest of the wine. **JUST BE SURE TO HUNT INTO THE WIND THE NEXT DAY!**



WHAT IS IT?

Jon W. Powers (No. 201) of Holly, MI is totally responsible for the design and actual building of this gas operated .44 Magnum semi-auto.

John has built several of them, incorporating design improvements in each succeeding model.

Briefly, it is a gas operated rotating bolt semi-automatic .44 Magnum with quick barrel change capability — on the order of 30 seconds or so, starting with when you reach into your pocket for the hex key. Nothing too outstanding about that — right? Now consider that the replacement barrel can be any length, .44 Mag, .45 Win Mag or .45 Colt caliber and no other change is necessary. Even the same magazine works. But you'll never ever see it that way because Jon doesn't like the things necessary to incorporate the .45 Win Mag into the design.

In addition to design time, it now takes 400 plus hours to carve one out. Jon calls it the MagMatic.

I've shot the gun a good bit and it's accurate, reliable and very tough. I've put loads through it I won't even mention and with a scope under lousy conditions kept them in cigarette pack size groups at around 100 yards. I feel quite sure those loads would possible jug chambers or split them in a M-29 or at least stretch the frame. A Super Blackhawk or Abilene might take them but I'm not going to try it and find out.

Size-wise Power's gun is big — but it's much smaller than an AutoMag and certainly much easier to hold and shoot at equivalent power levels. According to Jon — the .45 W. M. offers no more ballistically than the .44 Mag and the changes in the gun necessary to make it work just aren't worthwhile.

No one knows if, much less when it will be produced and none are for sale at any price. At least not at \$20,000 anyway. Anyone want to go higher — I'll ask him — all he can do is refuse the offer!

FIRING LINE

Congratulations on a great issue of the *Sixgunner*, a lot of super reading. However, being a novice at hunting with a handgun and I do mean novice, since the only game I've hunted have been metallic chickens, pigs, etc., I would like to see some "how to" type articles. For example, I would like to try my luck on some groundhogs this spring, but since I've never hunted this pesky varmint before, some information on how to go about it would really help.

By the way, does anyone know where I could pick up a copy of the first issue of the *SIXGUNNER*? Judging from the letters in the second issue I feel like I've missed a lot of good reading.

Keep up the good work, it looks like *Handgun Hunters International* can only be a big success.

Chuck Hoff, No. 594

Gun; A weapon with a metal tube from which a shot is discharged by the force of an explosive.

Brother Shooters & Hunters,

I started this letter with the above definition just in case there is any doubt as to the actual meaning of the word "gun."

This metal object that we all seem to love and care for better than our families and second to our dogs.

These weapons of death dealing black, which have been blamed with everything from destroying great Indian tribes to the clerk at the local news stand. These weapons seem to be the root of all evil. How can we put a stop to this most terrible metal creature with the tube growing from its frame?

Where do these creatures live? Shall we look in the forests, the cities, outer

space? Do these guns go to school to learn how to do the deeds that they do? Are there good guns as well as bad guns? I can't ever remember seeing a gun dressed in a white hat, so I guess they're all bad.

Doesn't the above sound stupid! A gun can be anything from a great partner on a hunting trip to a beautiful work of art. A gun can be the difference between freedom and communism. The gun is as American as our flag. America, the home of the brave. Remember that!

What has happened? Why do our own people wish to disarm the American? We the people are America. It is time that we really started looking at these people that seek political posts in our country. Let's find out what the real issues are. When you cast your vote, make sure that you don't waste it.

Guns are nothing more than an object. A gun can not do anything unless there is a person to pull the trigger. Guns don't rob or kill! People are the problem. It's people that are good and bad.

I spent eight years of my life as a uniformed police officer. I also served my country in the United States Army. I've seen the results, both good and bad from the power of one bullet. It's all in the way it's interpreted. I would venture to say that the gun has saved more lives than it's taken. I know we've all read about violent crimes and how everything from baby bottles to coat hangers have been used to kill people not just guns!!!

With all the money that's spent on trying to take our guns away, why haven't they been able to get down to brass tacks and get the drugs out of the

schools? Are our big government people not concerned that the kids of today will be the leaders of tomorrow? Isn't the health of our children important?? Dope makes dopes! The courts would rather punish the gun before it will punish the man behind it. I can't believe some of the things I read in the news anymore. Our police aren't even allowed to defend themselves. Crime pays!! The time for Americans to be counted is now.

Write letters to your elected officials, ask questions and demand answers. You put them in office and your tax is keeping them paid. We have the rights and we should learn what they are.

To own a gun is part of our heritage. I am still an American and still get chills when I hear the Star Spangled Banner. May God truly Bless America.

Dan Bogdanský, No. 016

Just a few lines to let you know the "Sixgunner" is an outstanding gunners paper.

I have subscriptions to "Shooting Times," "Guns & ammo" and "The American Handgunner" and none of them come up to the "Sixgunner" for handgun hunting, reading and data.

Please keep up the great work. I purchased my first .44 Mag, a Super Blackhawk, in 1970 and now have a S & W 6 1/2" 29 and a T/C Super 14". Will send in some hunting stories when I get a little time.

J. A. Julius, No. 371



Regarding my .45 Colt license plate you photographed in San Antonio . . . I quite naturally get a lot of comment from the shooting crowd I hang around with when shooting competitively or hunting. However, I'm a little weary of the non-informed when they ask me if that means I am advertising a malt liquor. I throw my hands up and grimace while I patiently explain that the beer is Colt 45 not my .45 Colt. And then some say "What is a .45 Colt?" This causes me to mumble under my breath about what is this Bambi-loving world coming to. The negative thing about easily identifiable plates would come under the heading of "infidelity." You just can't sneak around motels with easy to spot personalized plates. On the occasions where I am completely legit, they even smirk when I write in that plate number on the registration form. They think that I am making it up . . . and I'm with my wife, for God's sake. But what the hell. I could have told that even when I am Mr. Nice Guy, it rarely pays off. Any *Sixgunner* readers contemplating getting personalized plates — think it over carefully.

Mike Thill, No. 612

Mike is the Managing Editor of *The American Handgunner*.

I just took time-out from reading my February issue of the *Sixgunner* and had the urge to drop you a line and a couple of photos from a 1978 Texas Hill Country hunting trip.

As you can see I took a nice boar javalina and an Axis deer. The javalina was taken at 50 feet using a .357 Model 19 loaded with factory 158 gr. J.S. Points.

Continued On Page 6

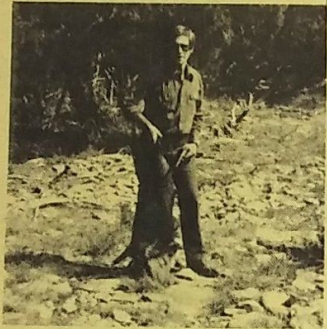
Firing Line Continued From Page 5

I was extra pleased with my Axis deer. It was a 97 yard shot. The deer was down to stay after the first shot, but I gave it another two shots for safekeeping. After this kill I made a believer of my guide: He was a real nice guy but for the few days that I was with him he made a few comments that didn't exactly encourage me to take a long shot with my .44 Mag. However, I knew my gun and its capabilities and proved them both on that trip. I used my Super Blackhawk loaded with factory 240 gr. J.S. Points on that deer.

Again, I'm proud to be a member of HHI — keep up the good work.

Ron Desiderio, No. 369

That was one fine Axis Ron got — unfortunately the photo wouldn't reproduce will in B & W.



Ron with his javelina.

Congratulations. HHI is a good idea. I like the articles and am especially pleased to see the pro-Americanist sentiment in letters to **THE SIXGUNNER**.

Dan Page
No. 336

You have one fine organization. I'm proud to be a member. You can count on me renewing my membership each year! In regards to Tom Walsh, No. 31's "Missed But Didn't Get Rained On", thank goodness there is someone else out there that hunts like I do. We all can't connect everytime.

Jon Palisin, No. 569

We've got a fine organization. Without all of you — it's nothing!

JDJ

Congratulations on the **Sixgunner** magazine. I read it from front to back immediately upon receiving it. I like the idea of articles written by people who do hunt and reload their own ammo. I hunt and am constantly working up various loads for my guns. Perhaps I will try to write an article for the **Sixgunner** at a later date, (it might not be worth printing, but I will try.)

Terry B. Williams, No. 443

I would like to report of legislation in the House of Rep. (U.S.) concerning handguns. It's the "Federal Firearms Law Reform Act of 1979". The new bill, H. R. 5225, would remove many of the existing restrictions on law abiding users and sellers of firearms and ammunition.

At the same time, if enacted, the new law would increase the penalties and limit parole for criminals using firearms.

H. R. 5225 would eliminate regulation of those engaged only in the sale of ammunition, would permit purchases of firearms across state lines by law-abiding citizens, would exempt from federal regulation private collectors of firearms and those purchasing

up to 50 pounds of black powder for sporting uses.

Hearings on H. R. 5225 will be scheduled before the House Judiciary Committee during 1980. My own Rep., Congressman Eugene N. Atkinson and 75 other Congressional sponsors, recently introduced this bill. I urge all readers and their friends, relatives et al, to write their congressman to support this bill. Also, please join the NRA if you haven't done so already. Gun Control, just like cancer, has to be fought with a check and a check-up. Check-up on your congressman and yourself to see what's being done for Anti-Gun Control and send a check to those who are fighting for it in Washington.

Ed Thoma No. 487

Issue No. 3 is another good one. Again, the members' articles were written as well as most of the "salaried" gun writers and were a lot more interesting.

Larry Kelly's Mag-Na-Port prize is a nice gesture from a nice guy. The two times I've taken pistols to him to be worked on, he gave me a grand tour of the place and shot the bull for a half hour. I've met some other guys in the gun business that wouldn't give you the time of day for less than a grand. He's got class.

Best .44 Mag load? No question about it. A tie for first place; 240 sierra, 23.5 gr. WW 296; 250 Keith lead SWC, 24.0 gr. WW 296 — both shoot into 1 1/2" at 25 yards, hit like a ton of bricks and kick the piss out of you.

Larry Rogers, No. 48

.44 Mag load — 23 gr. — 2400-240 Sierra JHC. I've killed a lot of small game with it, one deer and one black bear. Also know of two moose killed with it. It is an excellent penetrator and expands a little over .44 diameter. It usually will do six inches or better at 100 yards. Keep up the good work.

Jerry Highland No. 99

This has to be the best shooters organization yet! The down to earth, tell it like it is or was, anyone can do it, letters and articles are refreshing. After years of reading all of the big gun magazines I thought I was the only one who came home empty handed or missed.

What Is It — Jon Powers .44 Mag auto — I shot it at Tellico last year — very nice.

Seems like everyone has a special Limited Edition collectors item for sale at a price you might be able to afford but probably wouldn't want to take out into the rocks and mud. How about a HHI hunters special at a reasonable price to take out and SHOOT! A hunters .44 Mag. For example; cut a SBH to 6", port it, put in a red insert, white outline rear, Metalife SS finish, grips and Charter Member on the topstrap. It could be more simple but a hunters gun.

How about designing a handgunners hunting jacket or vest. Most everything available now is clumsy with any holster. Duck, down or leather would be OK — maybe a sewn on shoulder holster.

Tom Frick, No. 23

OK guys what do you think. A SBH hunters gun could be done for about five bills. Might be able to get fifty or so out if enough guys are interested. If you are seriously interested let me know. So far quite a few things have been proposed, and most of them were good ideas — that definitely does not include the suggestion I should buy 2,000 acres in each state exclusively for the use of HHI members. JDJ

"WHAT IS IT?" is a 'Mag-Matic .44 Mag semi-auto blow back operated handgun. The brainchild of Jon Powers. I met Jon at the 'Second Chance Street Combat Shoot' when he had only one proto-type. The response at the shoot was fantastic. He could have retired right then and there if he could have filled all the "orders." The gun is smooth to shoot, very accurate and the recoil was good. I am a 'gun nut' and stand in awe of anyone that can have an idea and then put that idea into a workable piece of machinery. Jon Powers has a winner as far as I and a lot of other "shootists" are concerned.

I would like to compliment you all on the **Sixgunner**. It is very good reading.

As you can tell by this letter I'm no writer, but I am in the process of composing a piece on how upset (pissed off) I am about the "antis" trying to push their beliefs on everyone else. There is no way in hell they can justify their cause. Their lying and misrepresentation has got to catch up to them sometime. They are totally dependent on people not caring enough to find out the truth. Just accept what is written and don't get involved, seems to be what I run into a lot. I had a guy at work tell me "guns are only made to kill people." Boy, I hadn't heard that one for a long time. I talked until I was blue in the face. All I got out of him was, "sure, I keep a 12 gauge shotgun loaded at home."

He has a different idea of handguns now but he's definitely not "going to the line" for us. He promised to not believe everything he reads without giving it a little thought first.

James F. Yeoman, No. 216

In sorting through some gun mags, a copy of the December '78 **American Rifleman** has an article on a piece looking amazingly similar to your "What Is It?" pic in the last **Sixgunner** issue. I seem to remember barely pulling through a near fatal case of the "vapors" after finishing that article. How about an update on Mr. Powers' "Magmatic"?

Steve Metz, No. 247

"The **Sixgunner**" is looking great — I enjoy reading others experiences and thoughts on handguns. What Is It? on back page of February 1980 is a Jon Powers Magmatic .44 Mag Autoloader as described by one J. D. Jones in Dec. '78 **American Rifleman**!

John Taffin, No. 76

I've read your latest newsletter and saw some articles on the November episode of **Hawaii Five O**.

I saw the episode and after wrote CBS. The enclosed letter is CBS's response to my original letter as you can see, I've responded as well. If you wish I will keep you up to date on any future correspondence.

Don Weir, No. 616

January 29, 1980

Dear Mr. Weir:

Your correspondence regarding the CBS Television Network series **HAWAII FIVE-O** has been referred to me for reply.

We are sorry to learn of your objection to a recent episode involving the use of a hand gun. Although contemporary social problems are sometimes chosen as a background for the interplay of characters, our programs are designed solely to entertain — they do not purport to be

factual explorations or didactic studies. The episode in question, which traced the use of a single hand gun, was clearly fictional and its presentation in no way implied that we were advocating gun control — indeed, the CBS Television Network does not take editorial positions on any subject.

Thank you for taking the time to let us know of your reactions to the program — your comments have been shared with those executives responsible for this area of our broadcasting. It is our hope that future CBS presentations will be more to your liking.

Cordially,
M. Holyoak

February 2, 1980

Dear Ms. Holyoak;

I have received your correspondence and am sorry to say I feel no better about what I saw than before, Mr. Lord's performance in **HAWAII FIVE-O** was an attack on all who collect and enjoy responsible use of handguns.

I suppose I should have expected your reply to be exactly what it was, after all you are a woman and it is about gun control! Did that statement offend you? If so perhaps now you understand it was not the program I objected to as much as the irrational, irresponsible, irrevocable statements made by Jack Lord, and the fact that "responsible" network executives allowed these statements to be aired.

I find it hard to believe you have taken the time to view the episode in question. If you had, you could not in good conscience say, "its presentation in no way implied that we were advocating gun control — indeed, the CBS Television Network does not take editorial positions on any subject".

If the above statement offended you, I am sorry. It was not my intent to offend, only to demonstrate how one statement made without regard for its content can deeply offend. I sincerely believe that Jack Lord may have been playing police roles a little too long and perhaps it has affected his ability to respect the rights and opinions of others. I would appreciate you forwarding a copy to Mr. Lord as I feel I have an apology coming.

Cordially,
Donald Weir, No. 616

Editors Note:

As usual, more BS from CBS!

◆◆◆◆◆
MAG-NA-PORT WINNER

Dear J. D.,

I'll pick Mike Mettley's "Beginners Luck" for the free Mag-na-port job.

Reading his story made me remember my first handgun kill on a deer.

Even through now most of my hunting is out of state, I still get a charge shooting a spike horn in Michigan.

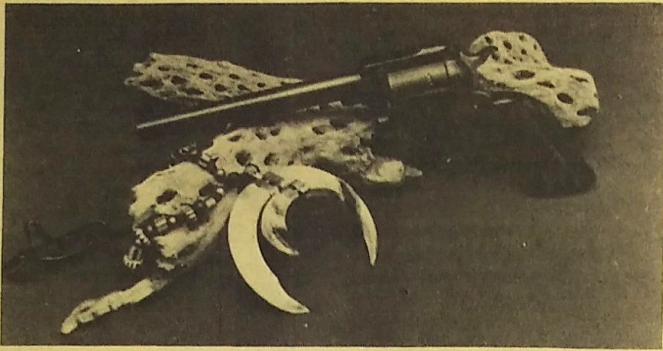
The thrill is still there!
Sincerely,
Larry Kelly

I was very surprised when I received the letter saying I won the Mag-na-port job for my story.

I would like to thank Mr. Larry Kelly publicly for his gift. I really do appreciate it.

One more thing on my mind before I go. J. D., I think you're doing a hell'va job!

Michael R. Mettley, No. 561



New England Boar Hunt

By John Reinhart

No. 495

I had an interesting experience a few years ago while boar hunting in Vermont which further convinced me that while the modern rifle has its place in the field, the handgun, in capable hands, also has its place.

In an attempt to find and collect a relatively close cousin to a European Wild Boar I had booked a three day hunt at the Wild Hill Preserved hunting camp located in the scenic mountains of northern Vermont. Vermont is one of the more aware states which allow handguns for hunting where rifles are permitted.

In a classic duel of rifle vs. handgun I teamed up with a rifle toting hunter from the state of New Hampshire who had brought what he felt was the ideal hog gun, a Remington 700 in .270 Cal. with open sights. I would be using my old model Super-Blackhawk .44 with a home brewed load of 22 grs. of 2400 behind a 250 gr. cast lead SWC. An adequate load for 200 lb. boar.

After spending a long morning along a beautiful mountain ridge, seeing nothing but a whitetail doe, we decided to get out the dogs and head for a swampy area which lay near a small lake. (Caught a few trout while we were there too) Bill Richter, our guide and camp manager, took charge of the two boar hounds and the three of us entered the swamp ready for some action. Seems like when ever you mix hound dogs and hogs together at close range things have a way of getting stirred up. After an hour or so of wading through knee deep fern and brush my partner let go with three shots from his .270 after which the sound of a mad hog could be heard running away from us heading for cover. Certain that he had connected at least once, we took up the hogs trail and started after him. Running down and baying a wounded boar can get wild even under the best conditions.

After a couple hundred yards we got to the bayed hog. The dogs had got there first of course and had cornered him in a patch of small spruce trees along a stream. All we could see was three dark figures mixing it up, barking and snortin' at each other. After a few minutes of trying to distinguish what to shoot at my partner took a five yard shot and connected with a high neck hit but not enough to knock the hog off his feet. Seconds later the hog came in our direction stopping in the middle of the stream. While thrashing around with the dogs in the water the hog was finished off with a three foot shot with the .270. In boar hunting this scene is repeated hundreds of times each year. Still

most hunters would not think of trying on boar with anything short of their old faithful hunting rifle. In my opinion hog hunting is handgun hunting at its best.

While we field dressed the first hog of the day and headed towards camp, the dogs had taken up the tracks of another hog and were heading off in another direction. By this time it was getting late in the afternoon and we were losing light fast. Bill and I headed off in the direction of the barking dogs. After covering about a half mile of ravines, streams and what have you, we came to the top of a ravine where we could see the dogs and hog mixing it up at the bottom, approximately fifty yards away. Working my way down the ravine, keeping cover between the hog and myself I was able to get within fifteen to twenty yards of him while the dogs kept him worried. He never knew that there was anyone around until I let one go and connected with a good broadside hit just behind the ear. He dropped in his tracks never to be heard from again. Of course the dogs had to climb on him and get in their last few insults. The bullet penetrated the hogs head and buried itself in the ground. He had a nice set of tusk and would have weighed in somewhere around 250 lbs. A nice boar for North America.

The point to all of this is to say again that handgun hunting under certain conditions for most game can be a most enjoyable experience, most rewarding when a trophy head of game is taken. I'm sure that you handgun shooters reading this journal realize this and plan on pursuing your game further.

For those of you who are interested in a true boar hunting trip I would suggest you contact Webster Keefe at Wild Hill Preserve, Ely, Vermont 05044 (802) 333-9171. Wild Hill is a truly wide open hunting camp ran by professionals who have taken every measure to provide each hunter with a real boar hunt. They also welcome handgun hunters.

IF
KENNEDY
WINS
YOU
LOSE!

BUCK FEVER

By David Kline
No. 545

I have been interested in handguns since I was old enough to hunt, but always thought of them as; inaccurate, short ranged, lacking power and not for serious hunting (small or big game).

A couple of years ago, I started carrying various handguns (.357 Mag, .45 Colt, .41 Mag) with me hunting white-tails as a back-up to my .270 Win. M-70, for possible finishing off of wounded deer, but have never thought seriously about taking only a handgun out the first day of buck season, until last year — "79".

I bought a Thompson/Center Contender chambered for the .30-30 Win. in a ten inch bull barrel, with a 1½X Lobo pistol scope, all in a T/C shoulder holster and sighted it in at fifty yards with a Speer 110 gr. RN, backed by 22.0 grs./H4227.

It really feels funny walking through the woods without a rifle in your hands.

One advantage of carrying a handgun became apparent the first day of the Pennsylvania Buck Season, as it was pouring down rain. I kept my Contender under my raincoat with one of the buttons in front open, so I could pull the pistol out of its holster and get it into action, if needed. This kept the scope dry and water out of the bore, a problem I would have had, if I had been carrying a rifle.

I saw two deer right off the bat, from my stand, under a large hemlock but neither had any bones on their heads. Half an hour later I heard a shot in front of me, very close and after about thirty seconds heard another shot. A few seconds more and a hunter appeared in front of me, then a six-point buck came running between myself and the other hunter.

The buck was only about thirty yards from me, hurriedly tip-toeing through the brush, but I couldn't shoot because of the other hunter and when the deer was behind me, he was moving too fast through dense brush for a sensible shot.

I walked home and changed my soaked clothing and came back out till noon, but saw no more bucks, only a few does. I had to work that afternoon, so that ended the first day for me, just as well as it was miserably wet anyway.

The next day I was in the same place at dawn. It was not raining today and after about a half hour, I heard something coming up from below, just over the bench where I couldn't see. Then a small doe appeared at about the same place I saw the buck the day before.

As the doe paralleled my right side, I saw more movement from below. At first, I thought this was the pair of fawns, I had been seeing all spring and summer hanging around together, but I then saw the fluorescent glow of spikes.

I waited until the spike buck was directly to my right before I made a move for my handgun, so the buck wouldn't catch me moving. I was sitting with the deer to my right backside and tried aiming with one hand, but was too shaky in this awkward position, so I moved around a little bit and put both hands on the Contender.

I could already see myself showing off my buck and handgun to my friends that said I was crazy for hunting with only a pistol.

I don't know what happened, but buck fever must have attacked me, because I shot and the buck just stood

there. Panic struck me, how could I have missed such an easy shot? I stared in disbelief, maybe he will fall, but he didn't.

I quickly reloaded and shot again as the deer walked into some heavy brush. Again I missed! The spike seemed confused and took a couple of quick steps into deeper brush and stopped. I thought to myself, "Now, David, slow and easy."

Reloading, I circled around the hemlock and leaned my left shoulder against the trunk. After the third shot the buck ran up over the hill out of sight. I sat there dumbfounded for a moment, before reloading and started walking to the area where I first shot; muttering to myself, "I know this gun is shooting 1½ inch three-shot groups at fifty yards, how could I have missed?"

I found no blood or hair anywhere and after walking perhaps one hundred yards in the direction the spike buck had been moving, concluded that I missed him cleanly.

I hunted the rest of the morning without seeing a deer, then went to work. They were the only two bucks I was all season, though I did see a good many does.

Even though I didn't get a buck, I had fun and I plan on hunting again next year with a handgun, only after I get the much needed practice on ground hogs and chipmunks this spring and summer.

The **Handgun Fever** has gotten me and I don't think I'll be getting much use out of my .270 Win. from now on, except maybe some super long range crows.

I like the extra challenge of hunting with a handgun. Next year will be different.

By the way, I did get my deer finally with a T/C 50 cal. Hawken muzzle-loader in PA's late deer season, then only after missing one.

SWAPPAHUNT

Living in a prime turkey hunting area, I can offer someone a real good chance to bag a nice gobbler. Birds around here will go 16-24 pounds with beards 3 to 11 inches long. Times short this year. The season opens April 15 for two weeks. I've got the place to stay at the hunting grounds. If you can't make it this year — try '81'. I'd like to hunt in the north or west.

Mark Hampton No. 227
Summersville, MO 65571

STORIES

Your stories and letters are needed for the **SIXGUNNER**. Don't worry about grammar and spelling. If you have a story to tell; just write it leaving a space between the lines. Tell it like it was and it'll probably get printed. June issue stories should be mailed as soon as possible and no later than May 1. If we get enough stories, the **SIXGUNNER** will grow larger.

NEW! World's Smallest Pistol Scope.

HANDGUNNER II
By HUTSON
Tiny But Tough!
Only 5½" long/1.7X/Internal
click adjustments/Patented unlimited
eye relief/Fits T/C rail mounts for
S&W, Ruger, Contender.
Send for FREE BROCHURE.
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SIX GUN SCABBARDS

By John Taffin
No. 76

Anyone who shoots more than casually reloads. First, factory ammunition is too expensive to shoot extensively. Second, the reloader can tailor his ammunition to suit his particular handgun and need. Third, there are some calibers for which no suitable factory ammo is available, such as the .44 Special and .45 Auto Rim, and until recently the .45 Colt. Anyone wanting to develop the full potential of these rounds, has to reload. The same holds true for making your own holsters.

Why make your own holsters? (1) Cost — good holsters are expensive and well worth it. Leather is expensive, right around \$5.50 per square foot at retail now, and labor is even more expensive. If you make your own, the only cost for labor is your spare time and you can spend as much of it as you want on your own individual holsters. (2) Each holster you make is truly custom-made; the large manufacturers can't afford to do custom work. (3) You can experiment with different styles of holsters at minimum cost. Different styles of carry, different angles, different decorations. Were the old time gunfighters really able to attain a fast draw with the leather available at that time? Duplicate the old time designs and see for yourself. (4) Satisfaction. It's a great feeling to do something yourself. (5) Your hobby could become a business. John Bianchi started making holsters for fellow police officers. Now he has the largest such business in the world. I've been making holsters for myself for 25 years, since I was 16. For the past 14 years I've also made holsters and belts on a custom basis, only for the local Sixgunners who want

good sturdy outdoor equipment, and for those who have an idea that they want to see come to life.

We have available the best selection and best quality handguns in the world. Granted, none of the major firearms makers still make them like they used to, but does anyone make anything like they used to? We also have many top quality holster manufacturers, but when I started shooting 25 years ago, I realized that if I were going to have all the handguns I wanted, and all the different types of holsters I wanted for each handgun, something would have to give. At today's prices a good quality belt and holster rig can easily run \$100 or more.

My first big-bore handgun was a Colt SA .38-40x4¼", mint condition purchased in 1956 for \$90. That was two weeks pay then. With it I also bought a Lawrence belt and holster and a box of ammo. That was the last box of factory ammo I ever purchased and I still have 12 rounds of it left. When I next bought a Colt SA .45x7½, I also purchased an Arvo Ojala fast draw rig and reloading equipment. In ensuing years, I have shot only reloaded ammo (unless someone gave me some factory ammo) in all my handguns. I also have purchased very few factory made holsters. If a shooter has just a few handguns, he would do well to purchase top quality holsters for them and be satisfied. If however, he wants to experiment with different styles, or owns many handguns, or just wants to become involved in a fascinating sideline to shooting, second only to reloading, making your own leather items is the answer.

Many holster manufacturers make

each holster to fit a variety of handguns. When you make your own it will fit your revolver or auto exactly. If you look at their catalogs, you will see some revolvers grouped together to fit the same holster. This makes a perfect fit impossible. If you have any kind of a customized revolver, or a different than standard barrel length, it is very difficult to find a satisfactory holster. Many shooters have Super Blackhawks or Blackhawks cut to 5½". Try to find a holster to fit. Try to find a holster to fit one of my favorites, the Colt Bisley, or a 5" Smith and Wesson custom .44 special, or a Colt SA with a special front sight, or a custom bull barreled Ruger. If you want a holster for a 3½" model 27, you will usually have to settle for a 4" holster, a slight difference, but a difference. I have four 7½" Blackhawks, an old Super, an early 7½" .45, and two .44 flat-tops. It takes three different holsters to obtain the fit I think you should have in a holster. The only answer for the real sixgunner is to make your own. With a little effort and practice you will find, just as in reloading, you can equal or better factory production.

How do you start? First study. Obtain all the catalogs you can and study design. Go to sporting goods stores and study holsters first hand. Once you start making your own you will find ways to improve on standard designs and adapt to your own personality and style of carry. Once you start making your own you must decide if you wish to start with a minimum investment or buy all the tools to really turn out top quality leather. I would advise the former as a start. You can always add tools later.

As a minimum you will need: heavy weight paper to make a pattern, a very sharp knife or razor knife, two needles and some heavyweight waxed thread, and of course some leather. You will find you can turn out some very serviceable rigs with this equipment. Look under leather in the yellow pages, and almost everyone has access to a Tandy leather store. They will sell you virtually any size leather you desire.

For less than the cost of one good holster, you can purchase all the equipment needed to make top quality holsters. I would suggest the following: a pair of heavy duty shears, a supply of needles and waxed thread, a stitching groover, a stitching spacer, an edge beveler, a skiving tool, a supply of fasteners for safety straps, and a setter for same. If you want to lace

your holsters instead of sewing, you will need florentine lacing and special needles. The only expensive item is the leather shears. Later on, you may wish to add decorating stamping tools, or basket weave stamps or even carving tools. All of these items can be purchased by mail or in person at any Tandy store. They also carry an extensive line of both natural and colored leather. For holster purposes, the heaviest weight available is usually the best.

A word about leather. Some leather is absolutely worthless for holsters either because of quality or thickness. Probably less than half of a cowhide is suitable for holster making. Only the back of the hide is of the quality necessary for holtermaking. When you get into the lower side or belly of the hide, the leather becomes stretchy and is worthless for our purposes. If you can't look at the whole hide, you can usually tell the quality of leather by looking at the fleshy side. If it is smooth, it is probably pretty good. If it is stringy or wrinkled looking, or seems to stretch, don't buy it.

Leather is sold by thickness with 1 oz. equal to 1/64". Usually 10-12 oz. is the thickest available; this is from 10/64" to 12/64" thick and is the best for holsters. Six to seven oz. is usually the best weight for bullet loops and safety straps. Saddle skirting is also available, but makes very heavy holsters.

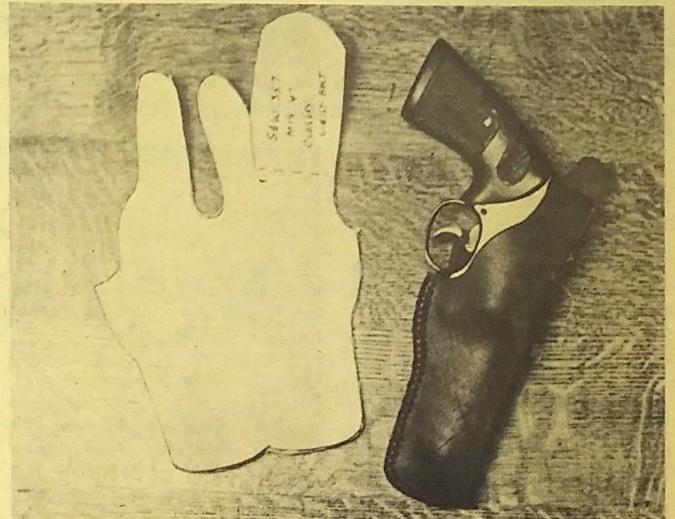
The ten basic steps in making a basic no flippers holster are as follows:

(1) Using heavyweight paper, make a pattern to fit your gun — allow at least 1" at the bottom and along the edges where it will be sewed together. Don't forget the belt loop also.

(2) Trace the pattern on the leather, be careful and do it right or you could be right-handed and wind up with a left-handed holster. Try your pattern folded around your gun and mark the outside "up", check the angle on your belt at the same time. When tracing on the leather, the side marked "up" should be facing you and placed on the part of the leather you want to form the outside of your holster. If you reverse the leather you can make a rough-out style holster.

(3) Before sewing, use the edge beveler to bevel all edges **except** those you will be sewing together.

(4) Use the stitching groover to make a channel for the thread to lie in before sewing. Then use the stitching wheel to space the hole's evenly. I use a 1/16" or 3/32" drill bit and drill my holes before sewing. Be careful



Thumbsnap pattern and completed holster.



Simple, thumbsnap safety holster is easy to make yourself and still a good serviceable rig.

of the angle when drilling.

(5) Install the safety strap **before** folding the belt loop over and sewing it. At the same time install the male end of the safety snap on the holster proper. Fold the paper pattern around your gun to locate where this should be so as not to scratch the gun. You should also countersink this on the inside of the holster using the skiving tool.

(6) Before sewing the holster together, a welt about 1/2" wide should be cemented the entire length of the holster on the inside, back part of the holster; I also like another welt about 3" long in the trigger guard area.

(7) Wet the center area of the holster where it folds around the gun, fold the holster over and cement the two edges together. Use the stitching groover, and wheel again, then drill the holes before sewing. To sew use two needles, one at each end of the waxed thread and enter each hole from both sides. You will need about 16 times the length of the holster in thread. Start at the trigger guard area and when you reach the toe backstitch about 4 holes and cut the thread off flush.

(8) Use sandpaper or a sanding wheel to smooth up the edge of the holster and then burnish it by rubbing vigorously with a round piece of hardwood.

(9) Before applying any finish, it is time to perform the most important step. Wet the holster under the faucet inside and out, shake off excess water, and shove the intended gun into the holster. Make sure it fits the way you want it too, and then using your fingers, mold the holster around the gun. Remove the gun, dry it off and oil it, and put the holster aside to dry for 24 hours. Do not set the safety snap on the strap until the holster is dry.

(10) The final step is to apply edge dressing and then decide if you want to oil or dye your holster. I prefer a neats-foot oil finish, applying it with a small brush and then hand rubbing until I have the desired color. This softens the leather somewhat. If you are making a plainclothes type holster which will be worn with dress clothes or a suit, it would be best to use natural wax instead of oil.

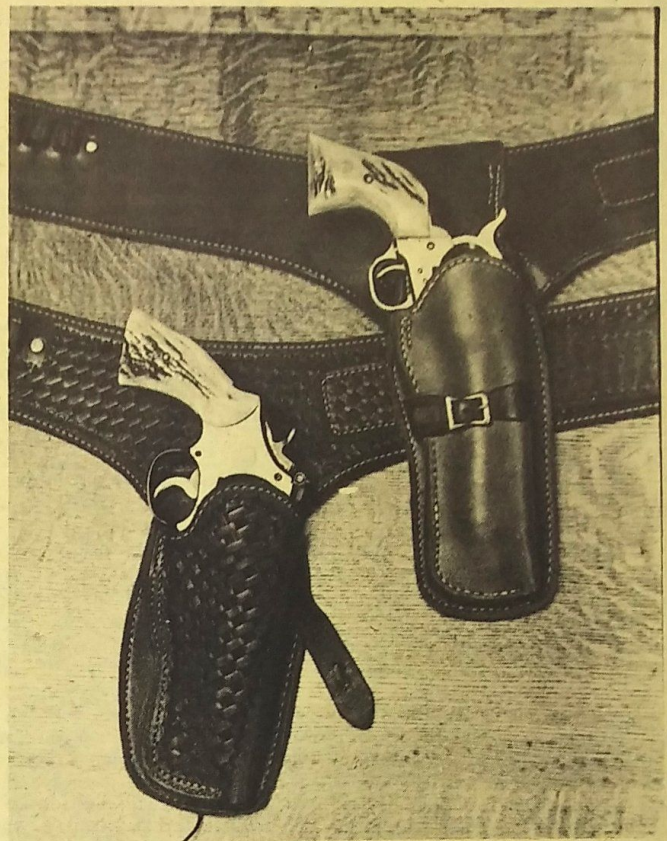
I have made hundreds of holsters, following the above methods and I would be happy to correspond with any HHI members who would like help with making or designing holsters. I

also have many patterns that I would also be happy to share with members. I am willing to do anything reasonable I can do to help you enjoy handgunning even more.

Tandy has some literature to help you learn how to make holsters, including making the patterns, lining, setting snaps, and sewing or lacing. However, their holster designs are all pretty bad, none of them fitting the intended guns very well. There is really only one way to make holsters, and that is to make holsters.

As you begin to make your own you will have your own ideas and probably come up with some very good ones. Quite a few years ago, a police officer and I worked up a new design, and made it up for his duty holster. Later, someone else came up with the same basic facts in holster design. Low riding buscadero type western rigs are beautiful and fun, but extremely impractical. You can't walk very far with them and they are impossible to wear in a vehicle. Probably the best all around design for the outdoorsman is the high ride style holster, that has been called at various times the tom threepersons, the FBI, or the Keith style. You can adjust this style to ride high or drop somewhat. With a safety strap, (never venture into the field without a safety strap if you value your firearm. The strap is not for safety but to keep you from losing or damaging that expensive sixgun) and a good cartridge belt of 2 1/2" width, you have a heavy duty outfit that with care will last a lifetime and then some. If I'm going to carry a rifle also, I like to have a straight drop holster with a belt loop just loose enough to be able to slide the holster around to the off side. The old Mexican style with enclosed trigger guard works great for this purpose.

A person of average height (I'm 5'11") can carry a 6 1/2" Smith in a high riding holster and still sit down in a vehicle. However, I run into problems with longer barrels. For field use above 6 1/2" barrels, I usually use a shoulder holster. I think the best available is the holster developed by the late Al Goerg. I use this for a 10" Ruger and it is a very comfortable, lightweight spring type rig. I also recently purchased a Roy's custom shoulder holster for a 7 1/2" Super Blackhawk. It is a pouch type and seems very comfortable, but I haven't given it a field test yet. I was



Just a little fancier . . .

a little disappointed to find the safety strap only works properly if you have the square back trigger guard. I do know the 10" flap-top comes out of the spring type much faster than the 7 1/2" comes out of the pouch type. This is probably of little consequence in most situations. Both of these excellent designs employ cartridge carriers on the off side. I have also made my own shoulder holsters and they are more difficult to make than waist style, but good results can be obtained. My newest challenge is to make a satisfactory holster for my Christmas present, a Super 14 .30-30. This will really take some thought and experimenting. That's a lot of gun to pack without a sling!

If you decide to make holsters of the waist type, you will need a belt also. Any large handgun above the weight of a Colt Lightweight Commander is too heavy to be worn on a pants belt. If you attempt to wear heavy iron on pants belt, you should have a 2" lined belt to support the weight. I have found the most comfortable belt to be 2 1/2" wide with 12-15 loops on the off side. Cartridge loops all around are a nuisance and feel like a girdle if they are .44 or .45 caliber. Most manufacturers sew loops to the belt. I prefer to loop mine through the belt. I use a 3/4" strip of 6-702. Leather tapered on the end. I lay out the slots on the belt, drill them top and bottom and then cut them with a 3/4" chisel. I then run the leather strip through, sewing the trailing end to the belt and proceed to make the loops. I wet the leather strip first, and as I make each loop, I pull it tight around each cartridge and let it dry overnight. If the loops ever stretch, you can remove the old loops and repeat the process with a new strip of leather.

Make a template first. For slots for .44 or .45 caliber you will need 1/2" between slots for the cartridge and 1/4" between slots where the leather strip

goes behind the belt. Pull it tight! For .357 the distance between slots can be reduced to 3/8".

If you wish to decorate your holster, basket stamping is very simple. Tandy's again has different size stamps plus directions for their use. If you want to get into actual carving leather, they have books and kits plus people who will help you. Practice on a lot of scraps before attempting to carve a holster unless you want to waste a nice piece of leather.

Warning! Leather working can become so fascinating that you spend most of your time working on holsters with little time left for shooting. I will be happy to correspond with anyone who wants to get started. My mailing address is Sixgun Scabbards, 6410 Pomona Rd., Boise Idaho 83704. Good Shooting!

Ed. Note: Let's hear about it if you want more "Leatherworking" information from John.

HILLBILLY HANDGUNNER

By Ken Hunnell
No. 85

Here in my part of the Ozarks, handgunning' is just now catchin' on.

It wasn't too long ago I could count the handgun hunters in my area on one hand and they were all squirrel hunters and coon dog chasers.

That's the way it was when I started handgun hunting. I started guiding float trips on the White River when I was 15 and got me a Ruger .22 then too. I was outdoors every day and shot that little gun a lot. Even got to where I hit what I shot at. I collected a lot of game, from rats to raccoon and turtles to turkeys. It was a good time.

When I turned 18 I joined the NRA, got a .357 Mag. and started handloading. I always had that .357

Continued On Page 10

with me on the river. I also made some pretty fancy shots with it to impress a lot of my Yankee customers (them that wasn't afraid of a pistol). The .357 Mag also took a lot of game, but I couldn't afford to shoot it quite as much.

When deer season came that fall I was ready to collect my buck with my .357.

I was pretty darn good with my six-gun and had decided to use Norma factory ammo on my buck cause I wasn't convinced my loads were as good as factory stuff.

That November I got a nice spike buck with it. I was so proud I bragged to everybody that would listen and they had to believe me cause a game warden witnessed the shot. The warden didn't say much cause at that time there weren't any laws on handguns for deer. I could tell he was impressed at that 85 yard shot out of the tree stand I was in.

The .357 did the job, but that deer ran farther than I thought he should've being shot through both lungs. He went nearly 200 yards before dying. He acted like a deer that had been shot well with a broad head, but didn't leave quite as good a blood trail.

I spent three more seasons on the river and three more deer seasons netted six more deer. I decided to try a .44 Mag. I was tired of trailing down my deer by following blood sign. I wanted quicker kills and the .44 delivered them. That fall I shot a nice eight point at about 40 yards — a broadside lung shot. When hit with my load; 22 grains 2400 and a Speer 240 H.P. (I was convinced by now my handloads were as good as factory stuff) the buck lunged forward, fell got up — jumped one time and fell dead. I was very pleased with the performance of the .44 on that deer and on everyone I've shot since.

It's been several years and several deer since I killed that eight point with that .44 and I've never had to look farther than 40 yards from where the deer was hit with a .44 on any of them. Most never made anywhere near 40 yards.

The .44 just kills well. It's no mystery, it's a cartridge up to the task at hand. Deer just react totally different when hit with a .44 than when hit with a .357. I'll not use anything less as long as I have a .44.

Well, it's been 15 seasons on the White River now since I started handgun huntin'. I'm still guiding Yankees, I've caught three world record trout, one record still stands. I'm an NRA Life Member now; have my own gun shop and reload more than ever. Most of my huntin' buddies are now handgun hunters.

I've gone back to my little .22 on the river and shoot it a lot. I shoot my .357 more than ever — it's my all around handgun for fun. But when it comes to deer, hogs and silhouette shooting, I pick up my .44 Mag.

I'm pretty set in my ways now and it was hard for me to order one of J. D.'s .375JDJs over here last year. So far all I've done with it is shoot across the river from my porch and bust dead Sycamore trees in half. Works quicker than a "Homelite!"

Don't know if I'll take it huntin' yet though, it ain't a sixgun. Seems a little unnatural to me. But it's growin' on me. Just can't decide if I want my deer in two pieces when I head home.

One more thing. I've never had a .44 slug stay in a deer or hog so I can't tell you or show you what they looked like after doing their job. All I know is they did their job and did it well. Quick kills and a bigger hole going out than the one going in.

SQUIRREL

By Brian Bielema, No. 182

In my home state of Illinois the use of a handgun for taking big game is prohibited. However, for those Illinoisans who think that there is no good handgun hunting to be had in our state, I would like to relate my experiences in hunting small game. I find taking squirrels with a handgun to be a great challenge and a very rewarding hunting experience.

September 1 is the opening day of squirrel season in my part of Illinois and regardless of the warm temperatures and buzzing mosquitoes I hit the woods with great enthusiasm. The leaves are still green and the ground foliage is lush but the bushytails are there. A good lightweight camo outfit, lots of mosquito repellent and your favorite handgun are all that's needed, plus a large amount of patience and perseverance. This year the mosquitoes were unbelievable and only the most religious hunters were out. Therefore, I generally had the woods to myself. To aid in my comfort I devised a hat to ward off the pesky bugs. Just take your favorite hunting cap or hat and sew on a large flap of camo cloth around the back to cover the ears and back of the neck. This flap hangs down onto the shoulders and back and is relatively cool while offering protection from the biting insects. Dope up your face and hands and you have a good combination for a several hour bout with the enemy.

After you have gotten yourself set up for the early fall woods in the above manner, put together another simple but valuable hunting aid. As squirrel hunting requires a combination of stillhunting and standhunting, a comfortable seat comes in handy. Get an old army surplus knapsack or something similarly rugged and place a large foam filled pillow inside it. This is a lightweight totable seat which I have used for several years in all kinds of weather. It is a very comfortable seat even if placed directly on snow-covered ground. Be sure the pillow is large enough to supply enough loft to give you a good insulating effect when you are sitting on it. I carry such a seat for 90% of all hunting that I do from squirrel hunting to deer hunting with the bow.

Before you decide on which handgun to take, give some thought to hearing protection. Sure it is one more thing to carry, but after I blasted my eardrums out several years ago with 26 rapid shots with a hot .357, I take them with me. In most cases you'll have time to put on the earphones before the shot and you'll appreciate this years later when your auditory nerves are still functioning properly.

Although most squirrel hunters find the .22 rimfire adequate for the task, it does not offer the challenge that your big bore handgun does. I hunt mainly with my S & W Model 57 .41 Magnum. Yes, you heard me right. As long as you don't use hot expanding loads you will find that there is little excess meat damage. A hot .22 long rifle or .22 Mag hollow point will destroy more meat if hit in the wrong spot. Once again, you can use your .38, .357, .41 or .44 with little concern about excess damage to the meat. I use a SWC shaped bullet which punches a .41 caliber hole through the squirrel and will offer a clean kill in most cases. Squirrels can be extremely hard to kill

as demonstrated by one that I hit three times with a .41 using round nose slugs before it went down. The wadcutter or semi wadcutter is the best configuration as the energy is imparted very well to the animal and tissue damage is minimal outside the wound canal.

My pet load is the Speer 220 grain SWC JSP bullet over 9 grains of Unique. This is a good accurate load in my 4" Model 57. I get long case life and my gun is just as tight as the day I bought it after thousands of these rounds. Hot loads are definitely not necessary for most game and you will loosen up your Smith and Wesson even in the big N frames.

For leather gear I prefer a hip draw holster on the gun hand side. I have had most major types of rigs over the 20 odd years of handgun hunting I have done and I have systematically eliminated many designs. I do not find the shoulder holster to be a comfortable rig and only can recommend the hip draw holster. The big magnums in barrel configurations up to and including the 6½" are comfortably carried on the hip regardless of what you may have read. Cartridges can be carried in loops, drop pouches or in your pocket depending on conditions and your individual preference. I carry a handgun as part of my job and therefore use the drop pouch and speedloaders as they give me valuable practice in loading. For the officers out there, take heed. Using your duty rig for hunting will put you in good stead when that combat situation arises on the job.

As Lucky McDaniel says, don't look at your holster when drawing or replacing the revolver and you will become much more adept should a quick draw situation arise.

For several days prior to opening day I recommend that you spend some time dry firing and getting back to the range as there is no more demanding shooting than trying to score on a target the size of a squirrel and you should know your handgun thoroughly. I have Pachmayr Presentation grips on all my revolvers and find them to be the best under all hunting conditions. Try a set if you never have. They're not pretty, but you're after good results not good looks.

September 1, 1979 found me in the woods at 6:00 A.M. The dense foliage provided me with cover as I moved slowly through a grove of oaks and walnuts. Activity started late and about 7:30 I spotted a fat fox squirrel perched on a limb about 10 feet up in a small tree twelve yards away. There were no convenient rests available so I went 2 hand offhand in my customary modified Weaver stance. The light was poor but good enough to plant that square front sight in that white-outlined notch. I concentrated on that front sight and slowly pulled back on the trigger. At the sound of the shot I saw the squirrel drop like it was struck by lightning. It was hit through the back was killed instantly. I collected it and moved on combining walking and sitting. At 8:15 I saw one thirty feet up in a large oak tree lying flat on a limb. This time I found a suitable rest across a small branch of a tree about 20 yards from the squirrel. Once again, concentrated, easy on the trigger and boom. The squirrel plummeted to earth with a resounding thud. This was an exceptionally good day as I had two 1 shot kills. Believe me there is a lot of empty space around a squirrel and any day when you can go 2 for 2 is a



Brian's M-57 .41 mag and some eatin' meat.

day to remember.

If you are careful to limit your shots to your capabilities and make every effort to close the gap between you and your quarry, then you will become moderately successful. We all have bad days so forget about those even if you blow several seemingly point blank shots. The key is to stick to it and if you bag only one squirrel per outing you will still feel a greater feeling of hunting satisfaction than if you took your limit with a rifle or shotgun.



How's this for a plate? Belongs to Rich Dayton No. 131.

More .357 vs. Whitetail

By Ed Thoma
No. 487

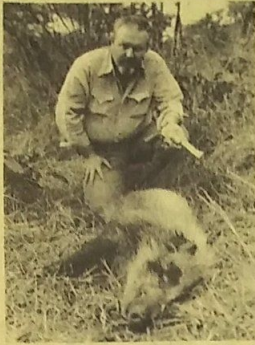
The .357 takes less time to become expert in its use than the .44 which results in better shot placement. But, if one has a .41 or .44 mag. and can use it well, by all means use it. The .44 mag. has twice the energy but 40% more recoil than the .357 mag. A good hit with a .357 mag. is better than a gut shot or miss with a .41 or .44 mag. Let's face it guys, not every one can be good with a .44 mag. and those that are should realize that others who aren't and use a .357 well, are your equals in marksmanship which is the bottom line in handgun hunting. Personally, I use both and care for them as much as I do my wife. Maybe more according to her, but I'll have to admit she's better to be with on a cold night than a hunk of steel. And speaking of my wife, she uses a .357 because she is too small for a rifle (5 ft. 115 lbs.) and the .44 mag. is about as big as she is. For her to hunt, it's .357 or bust. (For me it's both — pun intended).

Now I am going to say one last thing in defense of the .357 mag. There are many would-be handgun hunters in this world and if we knock the .357 and hold up the .44 mag. as the only way to do it, and a lot of these would-be handgun hunters can't cut it with the .44 mag., our sport is not going to grow very fast at all which can hurt us. Plus, we hurt the poor fellows who will never know the pleasure and pride of handgun hunting that they could have had by using a .357 mag. So what if they got to be a little better woodsman to get the best placement shot for their caliber gun? That's the challenge of handgun hunting! I rest my case.

P.S. Let's have opinions on the best bullet to use with the .357 and .44 mags. I dare ya all to speak up.

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“MAG-NA-PORT . . . DOES IT HELP?”

By Wayne Randall
No. 320

Mag-na-porting a handgun requires cutting two ports in the barrel of a handgun approximately ¼" from the muzzle.

In 1973, Larry Kelly took his knowledge of electric discharge machining procedures and turned it into a money-making business. To date, tens of thousands of firearms have been ported.

Being skeptical of the process at first, I didn't believe it could make much of a difference in recoil. It wasn't until 1976 that I got around to having a Colt Python Mag-na-ported.

The improvement wasn't noticeable at first. When shooting single action, the muzzle jump was reduced, but not enough to justify the cost. It wasn't until I started fast double action combat shooting that the benefits of Mag-na-porting became apparent. The Python seemed to hang in one spot until I had fired the whole cylinder full of magnum loads. Between the Mag-na-porting and the smooth action of the Python, it made for a very slick handling outfit. I was wrong! Mag-na-porting is well worth the money.

I recently decided to have my S & W M29 ported. The muzzle blast and recoil are not easy to overcome in a .44 magnum. After much practice, using only the M29 with full loads, I became more or less accustomed to the .44

magnum. I was shooting good groups, but I had the feeling they could be better.

I shipped the gun to Larry Kelly and eagerly awaited its return. In about 10 days, the M29 was back in my hands. I was impressed by the fast service!

December in Minnesota is not the best time to test a handgun. It was 20 degrees with a stiff crosswind blowing. After taping up some targets, I backed off 25 yards and fired several groups of five shots each. The first group was two inches center to center. Not bad, considering the weather. The next few groups stayed at one and three-fourths inches or less with one group going one inch center to center. I tried several cylinders of fast double action shooting. Recoil was heavy, but I believe controllable with practice.

Mag-na-porting itself will not improve the accuracy of your handgun. What it will do is improve your ability to shoot your handgun more accurately. Tests have shown that muzzle velocity is not affected by Mag-na-porting. I am very pleased with both of my Mag-na-ported handguns.

If you feel Mag-na-porting can help make you a better pistol shot, contact Larry Kelly at Mag-na-port Arms Inc., 30016 South River Road, Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48045. It's well worth it.

.45 Win Mag Is There An Excuse For It?

Staff

Well, not right now anyway. The .45 Winchester Magnum is a true Magnum though. The .45 A.C.P. case was stretched from about .898" to about 1.198" and strengthened to hold 40,000 plus C.U.P. Technically, by definition and performance that makes it a Magnum. Initially when I saw the Wildey gas operated semi-auto that was supposed to eat up tons of .45 W.M. ammo that has now been produced, I was impressed. It's big, odd in appearance and good in balance. The prototypes I saw were very well made. They usually are a far cry from production guns. Many prototypes are really works of art totally impossible to duplicate in production.

The Wildey is obviously a hunting, silhouette or screw around gun. It's too big and heavy for much else of a practical nature. WW must have totally considered it a silhouette gun because it's loaded with the same old 230 grain .45 A.C.P. full jacket RN bullet. Simultaneously, the 9mm Win Mag was announced — sort of a super .38 Super. Dies may be obtained from RCBS. I have a Pachmayr Signature .38 Super that will just about duplicate the 9mm Mag ballistically — but not at normal .38 Super pressures. Anyhow, the 9mm looks like a dog to me at this point.

Since WW made TONS of the .45 Mag ammo and none of the Wildeys are around to use it up, T/C came to the rescue, by making barrels in 10 and 14 inch lengths chambered for it. My bet is that T/C is trying to help WW move some ammo and develop a good reputation and accuracy and power for the cartridge until the Wildey gets into production. I can't think of any

other reason to make them because the .45 Mag sure as hell won't do any more than a .44 Magnum in the T/Cs. Of course, the T/C is so easy to adapt to new cartridges tooling costs are extremely low and handgunners can be depended on to buy an 'X' amount of anything new so T/C is likely to make a few bucks on the .45 Mag. I expect all the numbers pertaining to the .45 Mag in the WW ledgers are written in red ink.

The Speer No. 10 loading manual lists quite a few not very impressive loads for the .45 WW. My barrels and components showed velocities 100 F.P.S. faster than what Speer obtained with the same loads. There is obviously nothing wrong with Speers equipment and mine seems to work OK so chalk it up to different barrels, components, temperature and humidity. It isn't at all unusual for this to occur.

I sighted both T/C barrels in with factory ammo and found it quite accurate. As usual, the 10" blasted, barked and recoiled harder than the 14". Frankly, I was disappointed in the lack of recoil. Thought the ballistics must be exaggerated. Pulling a round, I found the bullet was "glued" to the case. That increases both uniformity and accuracy. The powder charge was 14.0 grains of a flake powder resembling Unique. Speer doesn't show any Unique loads and I was out of it so no comparison was made. Using a small amount of powder to obtain 'X' velocity results in reduced recoil from a heavier powder charge under the same bullet to achieve the same velocity.

Two of these loads were outstanding. The 230 gr. Hornady Flat Point FMJ over 31.5-WW 680 is probably

about as flat shooting a load as you'll find. It did not appear hot at all in the Contender. 29-680-260 Speer also shot very well. Both are very accurate in both barrels and obviously the 260 grain load would be a dandy for hunting.

The Oehler 33 showed —

	10"	14"
WW-230	1495	1596
31.5-680-230H	1609	1719
25.2-H110-185H	1491	1708
26.0-2400-185H	1564	1726
29.0-680-260S	1512	1614

No doubt about it — the .45 W.M. will equal .44 Magnum velocities with the same bullet weights. For all practical purposes, I couldn't tell that I wasn't shooting a .44 Mag.

Comparison with the .44 Mag . . . Well, there isn't enough velocity difference between the two with the same weight bullet to make any difference. The .44 has a smaller diameter, better sectional density and will retain its velocity a little better. The larger diameter .451 bullets will slow quicker than .429s but already have a diameter edge to punch a bigger shorter hole assuming similar bullet construction. I'd call it a tie from a practical viewpoint. If and when the Wildey ever becomes available I expect this cartridge to take off. Assuming the Wildey will work and is accurate — from the design I certainly wouldn't expect anything else; it will equal or exceed .44 Mag wheelgun ballistics with much, much more shooter comfort. You can't believe the difference without the cylinder-barrel gap disturbance. As for the Wildey — don't hold your breath.

But — I just spoke with Wildey Moore (HHI No 11) who is the Wildey and he assured me the Sixgunner would have a 10" Wildey PRODUCTION gun by May 15th for test. (Could have used a prototype over a year ago.) There have been what I consider major modifications from the prototypes tested by various magazines. How 'bout a three lug bolt for starters? Damn, I didn't pin him down to 1980, but at least that was the inference!



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PA ORGANIZES

Hello All PA Handgunners:

Name's Bob, and I'm mighty pleased to meet'cha. I'm Handgun Hunters International Charter Member No. 337. I had a letter published in the second issue of the *Sixgunner*, and one subject I mentioned was a handgun season for us PA handgunners. Well, J. D. said to send to him and get a list of PA HHI members and their addresses, so I did, and he sent 'um.

I'm sorry to say I received the list some time ago and I'm just now getting to this, but working a full-time job and operating my own part-time business has been keeping me busier than a buck in rut! I received thirty-six names (plus myself) from J. D., hopefully by now PA is better represented. (Much Better!) I'm going to send a copy for publication in the *Sixgunner*, so hopefully I'll get some response from that as well.

What I hope to do, with the support and help of my fellow PA handgunners, is attempt to stimulate interest in a handgun season for deer in PA. Somewhere along the line someone wanted an archery season, and, more recently, someone wanted blackpowder, fantastic! I'm sure many of our fellow sportsmen thoroughly enjoy these various sports. But, I'm a handgunner, what about me? What about you? And thirty five others on my list? And the rest of the handgun enthusiasts who have spent a lot of money to buy the best arm to suit their need, practiced to get proficient in their mode of firepower, and possibly, as I did, joined and supported the fight against anti-gun legislation through membership in the NRA and support of the ILA? There is only one way I know of to attain this goal, stand up and be heard!

At this time I don't know what all would be involved or who should be contacted initially to get the ball rolling, but I can tell you this, if I can stimulate interest, and get your support, I'll find out. And I'll contact 'em. And I'll tell 'em what we'd like to see added to the PA hunting season. And if they don't answer, I'll hound 'em, and by the time I'm done we'll either have our handgun season, or I'll ask J. D. to publish why.

I earnestly request your reply to this, your suggestions, and your questions. I don't know what the hell I'm getting into, but I've never shunned a challenge that I believe in, and once involved, I ain't one to back off until shown wrong or illegal. What do you say, Pennsylvanians, would we like a handgun season?

Please reply and enclose a stamped self addressed envelope. That will insure you are kept posted and that many stamps do cost! Thank you, and through J. D., you, and myself, let's keep in touch, communicate, and unite.

To better handgunning through unity.
Robert Williams
No. 337

Now's your chance to organize an effective campaign in PA. It won't be easy and it'll take time and work. But — It Can Be Done!
JDJ

BACK ISSUES

Can't keep sending them free. First class mail in an envelope. Two bucks each while they last.

Another View Point

Dear Bob,

I'm always glad to hear from another handgun hunter and found your letter of February 1 very interesting. But a special season for handgun hunters? Please, spare us that! At present, our sport is what archery hunting was at one time — a highly specialized activity of great challenge, engaged in almost exclusively by masters of the weapon who literally live and breathe shooting, by sportsmen so confident of their ability that they match their short-range, hypersensitive equipment against the best that scoped magnum shoulder arms technology can offer.

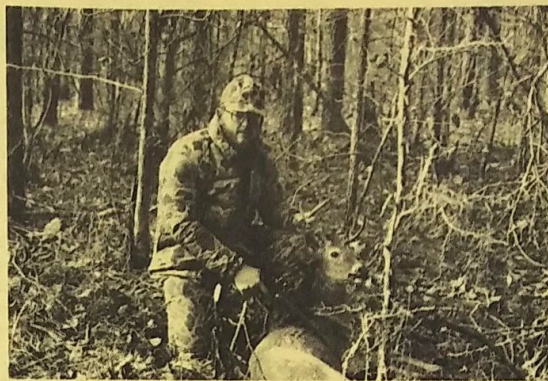
Enter a special season, however, and all this quickly changes, as it did for the archers. Out of the woodwork come the "box a year" devotees, the "fired five at his flag with muh" thuty-thuty to slow 'im down" butchers, the "better buy me a pistol tonight cause the season starts tomorrow morning" crowd. Why? Because suddenly the handgun is transformed from a self-imposed handicap into simply another opportunity to get a deer, however slim. One need only haunt his local archery tackle dealer a week before bow season to realize just how many of these "pull n' pray" artists have infiltrated the ranks of legitimate bow hunters; we most definitely do not need a parallel situation in the sport of handgun hunting.

Let the pistol remain a **handicap** to the hunter, for, in doing so, it weeds the undesirables from our ranks. Let the long-arm, with its greater promise of success, continue to lure away those more interested in meat than sport, in victory than challenge. Let us continue to be exactly what we are: little noticed specialists, doing our own thing in a highly skillful way, largely untroubled by unnecessary regulation and let alone by the bureaucrats of the Game Commission. Our sport is one that cannot, and should not, be popularized by means of a special season: if we insist upon doing so, we will have only ourselves to blame when the hordes of incompetents entering our ranks give us all a tarnished image.

No, my friend, let the neophytes blast away at animal targets on their local pistol ranges (or IHMSA courses, if they wish) but let's keep them away from things that bleed and feel pain. Game animals can indeed be taken humanely with handguns, but not by people who can barely qualify on a PPC course. And there's nothing like a special season to bring just those people a'running.

Best wishes in all your other endeavors;

Bob Shimek
Police Firearm
Instructor, HHI No. 524



GOOD DAYS AND BAD

By Bill Buckman
No. 24

The "*Sixgunner*" was kind enough to publish, in their December '79 issue, one of my articles regarding some handgun hunting experiences during '77 and '78 hunting seasons.

Another year has passed and the '79 adventures, although forever lodged in my memory, are now history to me.

In the following paragraphs I will try to share some of this history with you. I will try to relate to you the good experiences and throw in a disappointing experience to make the stories as realistic as they actually were.

After a very successful season with IHMSA I found myself back on my firing range in October doing extensive practices with my hunting handguns. By the third weekend in November I felt ready for my trip back to the whitetail infested Oakridge Hunting Lodge in the northeast part of Red River County, Texas. The first full weekend of deer season I spent in and around the area where I had such good success in the '77 and '78 seasons. Very little success was realized though, on this weekend of the early season, but the few deer I observed were in good body condition.

Pete, a new member in our camp, had spotted a nice buck near my stand sometime after I had gone in the second day.

The next few days I spent in this area in anticipation of seeing him again. I had gone into the "Big Woods" area several times hunting with my "29." I had had numerous sightings in the past in this area with deer at a good handgun range of 30 - 40 yards. As I crept around in my "camos" it seemed I was getting within good shooting range of does for a handgun; but so far no bucks. It would be a cold, windy Thanksgiving morn before the big excitement came.

I had braved the elements of the cold from pre-dawn until 9 a.m. The heavy thicket kept some of the wind off but truly it was a morning that only the most avid hunter would endure. Cold, shivering, and thinking of a warm camp heater, I was immediately warmed by the sight of a small doe stepping out into the "jeep road" to my right some 100 yards away. I eased up my Zeiss 8-20 B glasses and "looked her over." As I watched her hurrying along I heard the crack of rifle fire some distance away. It had to be my friend, Neil, as it came from his hunting area. Hearing his shot reminded me of the last season's experience when Neil downed a buck just before I shot mine. Keeping this in mind and figuring there just could be a big buck trail-

ing the small doe, I reached down and gripped my "Super 14-44 MAG" mounted with a 2x Leupold scope. Suddenly, as if by magic, I see the doe has, in fact, been replaced by a nice big whitetail buck. He doesn't pause at all. He is seemingly in some pretty big hurry. With instant motion I bring the big "44" up, hunting a shoulder for the duplex recticle. The scope showed the right hind quarter of the moving buck sticking out behind a pine and bushes where a shoulder would be. The hammer falls as the crosshairs stop where the faintly appearing shoulder should be. After the explosion of the "44" I see "no buck." Was it too hurried a shot? Had I fired foolishly? Climbing from the stand, having these questions fill my mind and armed with a backup piece (the 29 — 6½) I paced the some 100-120 steps and there he was behind the brush. A nice six point. The small size of the doe must have surely fooled me. What I had thought was a shoulder of the buck was his neck. The 240 gr. Sierra JHC at near 1700 FPS (24 gr. H 110) had definitely "popped" the old boy's neck but since he seemed to have some life left I fired a second round into the neck from the "29" severing the jugular and bleeding him out.

Neil has arrived now with a buck fever tale regarding his shot and telling of his miss of a real big buck. He at least could help me get some nice photos with the 35 SLR camera I had with me and help enjoy some great pictures and delicious eating with me.

The next week I'm on my way to South Texas near Bracketville. I started out hunting with my rifle and my "29" for some good "horns."

The first several outings in South Texas I saw only a few "fair" racks but mostly very poor deer. My first sighting of a decent deer rack came on Saturday morning at a distance extremely far away. This sighting caused me to pass up a fairly nice buck that afternoon and by Sunday I was questioning my decision.

On Monday morning, glassing over the mountain side with my 8 x 20's I spotted a good buck some 1000 yards up in the bottom of the canyon. The compact Zeiss's revealed a very good rack on the buck as he nibbled at cedar berries in a secluded cedar break. This had to be an invitation to a stalk. With the wind in my face I started after him. Some 600 yards later finds me almost creeping past the buck in the cedars. There he is, behind a Spanish Sword Yucca staring at me. I see his head and

Continued On Page 13

Good Days *Continued From Page 12*

horns so I bring the cross hairs into the yucca just below his head and nervously pull the trigger. Off he goes up the mountain side as they so commonly do in this country, and I'm frantically hunting an opening in the cedars. I find an opening just in time to see him pause for that final plunge over the ridge. I quickly throw up my rifle and fire. The buck humps up and runs very hard. It takes me about three trips up and down the mountain, remapping the shot, before finding the so obvious blood trail left by the buck for some 60 yards up the mountainside.

The 180 SBT (39 gr. 33) from the Remington 700-308 hit the eight point buck squarely in the heart at a distance of around 130 yards. I was pleased with the stalk and with the hit but curious about the earlier miss at a shorter distance. To satisfy my curiosity I went back and traced the bullet's flight through the yucca and past where the buck had stood. I decided the bullet went as delivered, but the body of the buck must have been turned back to the right causing me to fire under his neck.

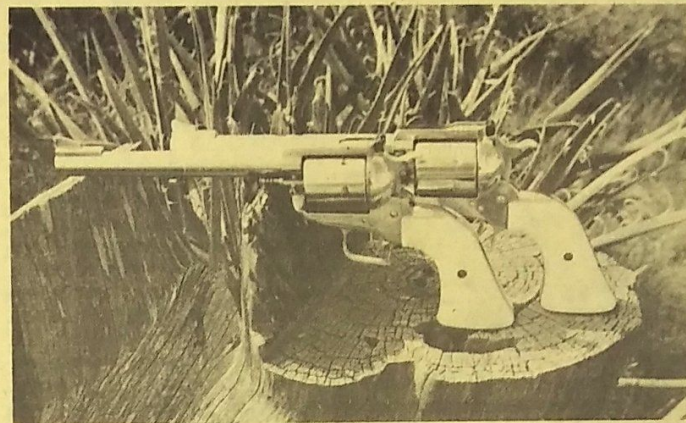
While dressing the buck I let the knife slip and put a seven stitch gash on the web of my "shootin' hand." After a nearby hospital emergency room visit I find my bandaged hand could prove detrimental to my handgun sport. Nevertheless, Tuesday morning finds me giving it a try as I intend to put my antler tag on some fat doe. Due to the dry conditions of the past few months, finding that Fat Doe could pose a problem. The handgun I chose to hunt with is a Custom 30 Herrett Contender equipped with a 4X Leupold. I hunt the area where I downed an antlerless BUCK in 1978. Suddenly I spot a nice doe and spike but the extremely sore hand prevents a good shot. I decided to wait a day giving the hand a chance to heal a little. On Wednesday morning I am looking at three small, poor bucks at 10-12 steps but no decent doe to bring down. Around 9:30 a.m. I was on my way back to camp when I spotted some turkey a good 200 yards away. Believe me, at unknown distance, with a case of the "nervys" and a bandaged hand it's even harder to hit the live ones than steel silhouettes. My status is now, no doe, no turkey, and its Friday morn and two hours till we pack up to go home. I decided to get in one more hour of hunting to finish it off. Now fellow handgun hunters, here comes the disappointment of the trip that I referred to at the start of this article. We "handgunners" can't be perfect shots all the time. I hate to tell the following but I must be honest and this does happen occasionally and for the first time in nearly ten years I was the victim. I am positioned on the ledge of a small dry ravine. I am extremely well camouflaged and hunting like crazy during this last hour of my trip. Some 100-110 yards away I spot two small deer followed by a fairly healthy doe. I put the "hairs" across her shoulder and fire. To my complete dismay she only turns around and walks the other way with of course "instruments on go" but still there nevertheless. I had been doing some long range shooting with the 30 H a couple of weeks earlier and I knew I was shooting high but not that high. Guess I just got a bad shot off. My task now is to breach the Contender, reload and close without spooking the doe. A very difficult task but done with only one large problem. I knew the breech wasn't locked up as

tight as it should have been for perfect accuracy but I couldn't risk a hard, loud snap. On the second shot I go for a little lower spot on the shoulder, a bad mistake with a loosely closed breech. The doe merely walks off holding her left front leg up. As she hops off I try for a hurried shot from the Smith to no avail. I waited for at least 20 minutes before checking for blood trail just in case the 110 RN Sierra (24-4227) did more than the signs had indicated. Upon investigating I find a slight blood trail with the drops becoming several steps apart and then getting farther and farther apart. After trailing nearly a mile and jumping her up twice I lost the blood trail in the thick cedar and holly brush. Disappointed, I abandon the trailing. I always feel bad about losing game whether it be squirrel, quail, dove or deer. I was especially dispondent over this one though as we handgun hunters are looked down upon by some hunters as poor shots who wound a lot of game.

I had two comforting thoughts however. A fellow hunting companion, an ex-guide at Ft. Hood Army base for over ten years and an exceptional white-tail hunter, had lost a buck the evening before proving it happens to the finest and the possible fact that the doe might heal what could have been a low leg hit and will only be slightly lame for a short period of time. This I hope anyway.

Well anyway, I hope this experience doesn't happen to you but it could and a person should be ready to accept it when it does. Al, an avid whitetail hunter friend, told me that a fellow who hasn't lost a deer either hasn't hunted very long or else has been real lucky. I too think this is true. I'm already making plans for some interesting handgun hunting in early 1980. I hope to be able to tell you of taking a Corsican ram on a private lease in West Texas with Richard King of Arlington and one of his XP Conversions, mine is a 7-308 Cal. I also may have the opportunity to hunt wild hogs of the 350 pounds plus size in the bottom lands of Sulphur River not too many miles from my home in Bogata, Texas. I will go with my friend Donnie Smith a local cowboy of the wild west sort and a fine hog hunter. (he ropes them and recently brought in a 400 pound plus with beautiful memories.) Maybe I'll get lucky.

Until we share memories again
...happy handgunning



NO CURE FOR A HANDGUNNER!

By Charles R. Able
No. 556

Back in 1958 when a dollar was a dollar, I brought a .45 ACP back from California. At the time \$87.50 would get you a Ruger .44 Mag and Bearcats could be had for \$39.00. Many good hunting handguns could be had for less than \$100.00.

I hadn't shot my .45 until Dad and I went out to the range. It was a good looking gun having a good dark blue finish and stag grips. The \$20.00 I gave for the gun also got me a good holster and two boxes of shells. The man that I got the gun from had bought fifty 1911-A1s old Army issue and was reworking them and selling them for a small profit.

After shooting the .45 I was very disappointed that I could not hit anything with it. The fact that the gun would not shoot straight and that I didn't know how to shoot it made for some very wild shooting. I was shooting at a wash tub at about 20 feet and the tub had about 3,666 holes in it. When I got finished shooting at it, it still had 3,666 holes. I didn't hit it once. My dad shot it some and did OK with it though. He grew up in the mountains and had carried a handgun a large part of his life and was well aware of what a good handgun would do. He told me that I should trade off the .45 for a gun more suitable for what I needed.

He said that this gun was made for killing men at very close range and unless I was going to take up man killing, I would be better off with a good revolver. A couple days later found us down at the gun shop looking for a better gun for me. They had a .22 that I liked. Dad told me if I was going to shoot a gun to get one that would be big enough to do some good. I liked the Ruger .44 but I didn't like \$5.40 for a box of shells as \$5.40 was a lot of money in those days and 50 shells don't last long. Dad told me if I hand loaded it would not cost all that much to shoot. I put up the .45 and Dad put a little to boot and I had my first .44 Mag. Both of us wanted to shoot the new gun. We bought a box of factory shells and went back to the range to try it out. On the first shot the gun came back in recoil and took a hunk off my thumb that I had held along side the gun instead of down where it was supposed to be. But after a little shooting I sure did like the .44. In the next couple months I got all of the loading equipment and was working up a load for my .44 with Dad's help. He told me that until I got good I should shoot light loads so I could handle it better.

For the next two years I loaded it with 15 grains of 2400 using cast bullets. At first I couldn't shoot it very good, but I slowly learned to shoot it using this mild load. This load was too mild for hunting but I wasn't hunting with it anyway — I was trying to learn to shoot it and hit what I was aiming at.

Well, with Dad's help, reading all I could on shooting handgun and a lot of practice I learned to shoot the .44.


After I learned to shoot the gun fairly well I worked up to 20 grains of 2400 and a 250 cast bullet (Lyman 429421) and that is what I still use today. That load will handle anything that I hunt with the .44 from deer on down. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since I got the first .44 but one thing I have learned is if you load it down just a bit it will last a lot longer. I have had a lot of .44s in the last 20 years. Most of them were S & Ws and Rugers. Most of my gun money was hard to come by and I got a lot of my guns from pawn shops. Most of these guns had the fine accuracy shot out of them when I got them. A good gun, not unlike other tools, does it's best when it is new or in new condition. If you take a .44 Mag or any other gun and feed it a steady diet of hot reloads it will surely loosen the parts and shorten it's life. I guess most of us have had our share of guns that wouldn't shoot straight. It's hard enough to hit doing your part right without the gun doing its part right.

When a man misses or hits he likes to think that it was him, not the gun. The man is sure a lot better than a lot of the guns. Beware of those hock shop guns as you can get burned on them. Sometimes its hard to tell if a gun is in good working order or not just by looking at it. Here sometime back there was a S & W .41 Mag that was bought and sold three times before I lost track of it. Probably had something wrong with it.

Most of us working people do not have the time to grab our gun and head for the open as often as we would like to. Often as not when we do get out it will be to hunt varmints and not big game. For the last 15 to 20 years most of my hunting with a handgun has been 95% rabbit and varmint size animals and 5% big game. Once you start hunting with a handgun there is something about it that there is no cure for short of going blind.

Taking good care of your equipment is all part of the game. Most of the time on returning from a hunt the first thing

Continued On Page 14



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MAKING THE CONTENDER MORE VERSATILE

By Tom Shippy
No. 28



M-29 with hard cast did a fine job without excessive pelt damage.

No Cure *Continued From Page 13*

I do is to clean my gun and put it away for the next time. When I get back from a hunt I have things that I need to do immediately so I put my gun on the loading table in the den so I don't forget to clean it. My den and loading room can be locked until I get around to cleaning and putting things away.

A good .44 Ruger will cost over \$200.00 now days and the S & W is going for a lot more than that.

By loading down just a bit and keeping your gun in good working order it will last a lot longer and give you good service. Don't get me wrong, I would not tell you how to load for your gun any more than I would tell you what kind of car to drive — what I am saying is, this is what works for me.

One thing that has worked out well for me is a place to keep my handguns. I used to worry about my guns being stolen and tried hiding them in all sorts of places hoping a thief wouldn't find them.

Some time ago I bought an old safe for \$40.00 and got it fixed for \$18.00. Fifty-eight dollars got me a good place to keep my handguns and other important things. It's 40" x 30" and weighs about 400 pounds. I feel a lot better about leaving the house with guns and other valuables locked in the safe.

This hunter does his best work with the Single Action as it fits my hand better than the other ones. 'Course cutting my teeth on one may have had something to do with it. Whatever a man chooses to hunt with, it's a good idea to stay with a good name brand gun. I have been accused of being over gunned for the game that I was hunting since I use the .44 Mag on almost all my shooting. One man asked me "Why in the world would you use a big .44 Magnum on those little rabbits?" I told him that I use the .44 on them because it is what I wanted to use on them and if you shoot a rabbit in the head that it doesn't make much difference what gun you use. He is a good friend and the other day he told me he got a Ruger .44 Magnum and wanted to go rabbit hunting!

I have always liked the big Magnum handgun; .44, .41 and .357. Having tried most of the big bore, I always come back to the .44 Mag.

The .357 is one of the most popular sixguns. After having had three .357s, I can see where this gun would be good on small game but do not feel that it would be too good on the bigger game. The .41s and .45s seem to be a bit more what the doctor ordered. I think the .41 is a bit better for game than the .45 but for just fun shooting I still love the

.45 Long Colt. I have tried it on game with the hotter loads and it did not do all that bad. The .41, being somewhat of a half-way house between the .357 and the .44, I can see where a lot of people would like it. I have killed some game with .41s but find myself leaving it home and taking my .44s most of the time.

I have always felt that a man should not shoot at game beyond where he is sure he can place his shots in a good vital area. This range varies from man to man and shot to shot for the same man. The only time I shoot one handed is fun shooting once in a while. Most of the time I use both hands and a rest if I can find one.

Handgun grips can be very important. The Single Action grip is one of the best, but is not as full as I like them to be. Being a custom knife maker and having some ivory on hand for my knives, the grips that I like the best were some that I made myself out of ivory. Ivory looks good and stands up well to recoil. A grip doesn't have to be ivory or stag to be good. Fit is the most important thing. I've made most of my grips out of ivory and stag because I had it on hand and it is what I like to use, but ivory and good stag are getting hard to come by.



Some of Charles' custom knives.

When it's all said and done this is just one man's story of what worked for him.

Editors Note:

Charles sent an album of impressive hunting photos of which I've only used a few. Anyone seriously interested in ivory grips — or custom knives can reach Mr. Able at — 209 N. First St., Carlsbad, NM 88220.

I'm a fan of the Thompson Center Contender and have been for years. My interests have spread out in all directions over the years as far as pistols are concerned. While I enjoy revolvers and the various bolt action custom handguns, I always seem to drift back to the Contender more frequently than any of the others. The inherent accuracy and the versatility of the gun are the main reasons for this fondness. I recently came across another product or series of products that make the T/C even more versatile.

An affable individual by the name of Harry Owen makes some devices for the Thompson/Center pistol that add greatly to its capabilities. I counted 20 different types of adapters that he has available for the Contender that can be used in a multitude of standard chamberings. For example, if you're an individual that likes to shoot prairie dogs with a .221 barrel, you can also shoot .22 Long Rifles in the same barrel by simply inserting the correct adapter first. The adapter looks like a steel copy of a .221 Fireball cartridge from the outside, and the inside is chambered for the .22 Long Rifle cartridge. After the adapter is inserted, a .22 cartridge is placed in the adapter and the action closed. After firing the pistol is opened and the T/C extractor lifts the adapter out slightly where it can be removed. In essence then, you now have two barrels in one. If you want more power in a subcaliber cartridge simply insert the .221 adapter that is chambered for the .22 WMR. Now you have the use of three cartridges with the weight of one barrel plus two adapters. The two adapters can be carried in your pocket taking up no more space than two .221 Fireball cartridges. I'm sure it would be difficult to carry two extra Contender barrels in the same manner when you're out in the field.

Many times varmint hunters, especially those after prairie dogs, rock chucks and the like are using cartridges loaded with bullets designed to disintegrate on contact. If you wish to take a cottontail or squirrel for the pot you're taking a chance on ruining a lot of meat. It's a simple matter without the inconvenience of carrying an extra barrel to use an adapter for one of the subcaliber rimfire cartridges and avoid wasting a lot of good eating.

I have some friends who like to hunt arrowheads in the Red Desert south of Lander. They like to travel light but like to include a pistol for a little plinking but mainly for peace of mind. A T/C chambered for one of the center-

fire .22 cartridges; .218 Bee, .22 Hornet, .221 Fireball, .222 Remington and as of 1980 the .223 Remington, can be made a lot more versatile by carrying an adapter for either of the .22 rimfire cartridges. Fifty rounds of .22 LR take up a lot less space and weigh considerably less than 50 centerfire cartridges. No one expects to get lost, but it would be comforting to have an extra 50 rounds of ammunition in your pockets. These adapters would be ideal for backpackers or motorcyclists in the hills for an outing. Snowmobiling is big all winter around Lander and it's not unusual to hear of someone getting lost or injured on an outing.

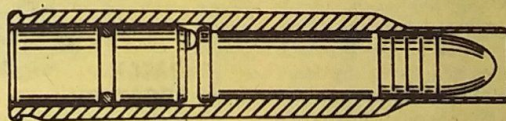
Husbands are always trying to interest their wives in their shooting activities. It's a heck of a lot easier to have your wife on your side when pursuing your shooting activities than to be constantly battling one another. Teaching the ladies to shoot is easier without all the unnecessary muzzle blast and recoil of full power loads. Many develop a flinch and become afraid of shooting when started out on centerfire cartridges. Training young shooters is still another natural for the versatile adapters. Using an adapter avoids the negative aspects of recoil and muzzle blast and highlights the positive aspect of using the same gun during training.

If you're packing your T/C .357 Herrett, .35 Remington, .30-30 or .30 Herrett after big game, carrying an adapter with a few subcaliber rounds adds little weight yet allows one to take a blue grouse (plentiful in my area) without "overkill." The first two cartridges allow the use of 9mm rounds with adapters while the .32 ACP can be fired in the .30 caliber with the correct adapter. Velocity would improve to a certain extent in a 10" to 14" barrel compared to the short barrels these cartridges are normally fired in.

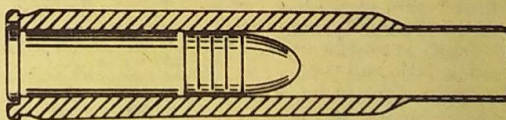
Some people I'm sure will also use these adapters for shooting indoors where less muzzle blast is appreciated. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

Harry makes an adapter for the .22 Hornet that'll fire .22 LR's that causes a little confusion. This adapter will work in the T/C but not in Hornet rifles because of the Contender's unique firing pin setup. The Contender has two firing pins, a centerfire pin and a rimfire pin. The firing of the .22 LR cartridge in the .22 Hornet adapter requires the rimfire pin of the T/C. To switch from centerfire to rimfire in other cartridge adapters for guns other

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.22 LR/.222 Remington Adapter



.22 LR/.222 Remington Adapter
Special Thompson Contender Version

than the Contender, Harry makes a standard centerfire to rimfire firing device that follows the rimfire case into the adapter. The .22 Hornet case simply doesn't have enough room for the case head of the .22 if it's seated far enough forward to leave room for the switchover device. Incidentally, all these adapters are made to maximum dimensions according to SAAMI.

I counted 20 different adapters available for the Thompson/Center Contender. The following cartridges have adapters available for both .22 LR and .22 WMR: .221 Fireball, .222 Remington, .223 Remington, .22 Jet and the .218 Bee. There's a .22 Hornet adapter to enable one to fire .22 Long Rifles. The .25 ACP can be fired in either the .256 Winchester Magnum or the .25-35 with the appropriate adapters. The .32 ACP can be used in either the .30 Herrett or the .30-30. The .30 carbine with an adapter can also be fired in the .30-30.

There's a 9mm adapter available for those who have a .35 Remington barrel. The .357 Herrett seems to lead in versatility as adapters are available in order to fire .357 Mags, 9mm, or .380's. Thus with the regular .357 Herrett cartridges you have four guns in one. Most of the others allow two sub-caliber choices plus the regular chambering.

I had time to test a few of his adapters before I submitted this article and plan to do more testing soon. I tried .22 LR and .22 WMR adapters in a 10" .222 Remington barrel and was especially pleased with the results with the magnum rimfire. At 25 meters I shot a few groups that measured 1/2" center to center using a 2.5 Bushnell Phantom scope.

This was better accuracy with the adapter than I've been able to consistently squeeze out of the standard .222 Remington chambering. Upon opening the Contender the adapter was pushed out far enough to allow one to easily remove it. The magnum rimfire case fell out of the adapter without any sticking. The .22 LR, however, required a small rod to remove it from the adapter. Looking at the literature supplied with the adapters, it indicated that if you have similar problems, a drop of oil on the subcaliber cartridge before firing will usually ease extrac-

tion. I would think that once the inside of the adapter received a slight film of oil that you wouldn't be bothered, at least not for several shots. Incidentally, point of impact of the .22 magnums was approximately 2" below the impact of the .222 loads. Coming up a couple of clicks with the scope would put both at the same point and wouldn't be too difficult to remember.

The other subcaliber load I tried was the .32 auto in a .30-30 10" barrel. The first couple of groups were scattered but for some reason then they began tightening up with the best running around 1 1/2" at 25 meters. This was with open sights so a scope would shrink those groups considerably. What was really amazing was the complete lack of recoil and muzzle blast compared to the .222 Rem. The .222 has more muzzle jump by a considerable margin and one has only to stand off to the side of the muzzle to appreciate how much blast there is. The .32 auto rounds in the heavy barrel were considerably quieter and as I said earlier would be ideal for starting a beginning shooter. They really turned the 10" .30-30 barrel (which has objectionable recoil for some) into a real fun gun. These adapters open a new area in which to experiment and if you're like me, how can you resist?

Harry Owen is one of those lucky individuals whose work is his hobby so consequently he's always looking for new ideas, products and ways to improve his products. He now has 52 different kinds of adapters available including many that will work in your favorite big game hunting rifles. Another item that's sure to be of interest is a device he labels as barrel insert that allows you to shoot cartridges of a different diameter in the same barrel. Examples would be inserts that enable you to shoot .22 LR's or .22 Hornets in a .44 magnum barrel or even in your favorite shotgun. Some inserts are available to allow you to shoot .45-70s in your shotgun. All of these items may be ordered directly from Harry Owen at Sport Specialties, P. O. Box 5337, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745. No FFL is required and the adapters are \$14.95 each while the barrel inserts cost \$35.00. Write and ask for some information and I'm sure you will be just as amazed as I was at the variety of items offered.

JAVELINA

By Philip C. Briggs
No. 9

Editor's Note: In our first issue, Phil detailed a memorable handgun javelina hunt. He's taken the time to lay out some how to — where to advice for those of you that would like to try your hand at the gray ghost of the desert.

Javelina are probably the easiest of the big game animals for the handgun hunter to take. They aren't particularly wary, and although their sense of smell is keen, they have poor hearing and eyesight. The hard part is finding a herd; once you do, a little patience, and a careful stalk, will put meat in the pot.

Popularly known by their Mexican name, the javelina belongs to the peccary family. The Arizona version is the collared peccary, so named because of the white band which extends across

the side behind the neck and in front of the shoulder.

They are small animals. Adults average about 30 pounds field dressed weight, and stand 20 to 22 inches high at the shoulder. Their breeding season is year-long, although most of the piglets arrive from mid-summer to fall.

Javelina are found in southern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and southern Texas. Here in Arizona, they're found on higher elevation deserts — the palo verde — saguaro cactus foothills. They'll range above this into the chaparral and oak-grassland. That puts them in most of southern Arizona beneath the Mogollon Rim, and east of Phoenix.

Javelina are gregarious, running in herds of 10 to 12. Some herds are twice that big, some are smaller — but unless they've just been scattered, you'll never find them alone. They don't migrate seasonally, but stay life-long on a home range of two to three square miles.

Now there's a lot of country that's suitable and not that many pigs. So there's often a lot of space between the herds. You'll have to spend time in

likely country looking for sign. Tracks in the wash bottoms, and near water holes; activity in feeding areas.

Prickly pear cactus are a staple. They eat the pads, but the big bites you see are from cows. Pigs are short, and they have small mouths. Look for shredded pads, lots of trampling. They peel pin cushion cactus like you'd peel a banana, and root for bulbs and tubers. The wild onion that comes up in the spring around here seems to be a special favorite.

Once you've found a herd's home range, you're ready to start hunting. Besides your pistol, you'll need good binoculars, and maybe a day pack.

Some hunters start out at first light, heading for the high ground where they spend the day glassing feeding areas and travel routes. I'm a little lazier than that, getting up at a gentlemanly hour with the pigs, and working out into the best looking country with a lunch in my pack. While I'm down low, I glass above me, and when high, I glass below. The typical southern Arizona hunter uses a walking staff — a Moses stick — cut from a yucca stalk. Cut long enough, you can use the staff as a mono-pod to steady the binocs while glassing standing up.

Look the feeding areas over carefully during the midmorning and afternoon feeding periods. During the lunch hour they'll be taking a siesta under a palo verde tree or hackberry bush — you might as well too! The herd will be together feeding, and sleeping. Considering that a herd can nap under one palo verde, and that there's a lot of palo verdes in two to three square miles, you can see that finding them is no easy task. It takes diligent, methodical glassing, and searching. Walk 50 to 100 yards, and scan the countryside. Over and over again.

Don't start running around when you finally find the herd. Sit down, and watch what they're doing, and where they're going. Count their number, and keep an eye on how well they're staying bunched up.

After you figure out what they're doing, determined the lay of the land, and prevailing wind direction, you'll have to figure out what you are going to do. Remember they can hardly see, and don't hear much better. But watch the wind.

If they're staying put, it's simply a matter of getting the wind on them and walking up on them. No belly down sneaks, you can stand up and walk — quietly — being careful of being seen only for the last of the stalk. But be quiet for that last 100 yards.

If they're moving you've got to case the wind, terrain and cover to determine the best approach. Heading them off at the pass and shooting from ambush is trick, but often tough to do. A flanking maneuver, casting out to approach from the side is next best. Both of these will require judging your ground speed against theirs. Worst comes to worst is an overtaking maneuver — often you'll step on a straggler you lost track of in the brush, or a covey of quail, and blow the whole deal.

Stay cool, no matter what approach you use. Don't take a shot outside of your kill range, or at a poorly presented target. Wait . . . Move in closer or stay put till things work around to your favor. And if you should spook them, hold your fire. Often, they'll settle down, and give you another chance. Even if the herd splits and runs, they won't run far and you

should be able to start over again on a part of the herd.

After you've dropped the hammer, stay with that pig. Pistols aren't all that powerful, so don't expect to bowl them over. Even fatally hit, pigs won't always drop on the spot. One hit less than perfect and that pig is liable to jump and run. Don't pick another target in the ensuing melee, or you'll have perforated pigs all over the place. Be ready for a quick second shot, but don't change targets. As for running shots — well, don't take a shot you can't make. Wait for things to settle down.

Don't go running all over the country with a hot pistol in your hand. Leave it holstered till you drop your pack and staff for the last of the stalk. If you're using a semi-auto, chamber a round, set the safety and leave it cocked and locked until you're ready to fire. Cock revolvers at the last instant. Gunfighter wounds, or premature discharges when you trip in your haste are not trick.

Javelina hunts are held under permit in Arizona during late February and early March. Permit applications, hunt information and non-resident license forms are available the preceeding fall. Write the Arizona Game and Fish Department, 2222 West Greenway Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85023 for information.

Good hunting . . . and good luck!

.357 vs Whitetail

By Bob Shimke
No. 524

Regarding the .357 on Whitetails, my experience has been limited, but positive. My 95 pound "economy model" doe fell to one this year in Warren county, after a sixty five yard shot with the creature quartering toward me. Load was a Sierra 125 JHC over 19.0 grains 2400 and SP Magnum primers. Impact occurred at the base of the neck, left side; exit was between the fourth and fifth ribs, right side; the bronchus and left lung were thoroughly pureed. There was NO REACTION AT ALL at impact, the deer simply running off with the remainder of her herd — indeed, it was impossible to determine in the subsequent shuffle exactly which of four animals I had hit, as all four dashed headlong through the trees downhill. After a flight of almost exactly 100 yards, one creature was observed to pile up; she was very near death as of my approach and was totally immobilized in a large pool of blood, though no damage to the nervous system had occurred. A single coup de grace was administered at the base of the skull. Bullet performance was, to my notion, spectacular: good expansion was apparent, as the exit hole was approximately 1" in diameter and the autopsied left lung was almost unrecognizable as such. I was immensely pleased with Sierra's product and would use no other projectile in this caliber for medium game. The weapon, incidentally, was an 8-3/8" M-27 with Leupold M8-2X on Beuhler mounts.

Generalizing from this and other .357 kills is perhaps unwise, but frankly I have some notions regarding this caliber which may be deemed a bit radical. First is that it really isn't all that bad if loaded hot, fired from a long barrel, AND IF THE 158 GRAIN BULLET WITH WHICH IT IS

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TRADITIONALLY MATED IS DISCARDED FOR ANYTHING SMALLER THAN ELK. Indeed, this overweight pill is a good 90% of the .357's problem, as far as I'm concerned; tough to drive at expandable velocities, it enters as a .36, exits as a .36 and is almost exclusively responsible for this caliber's reputation as an overpenetrative game crippler. Properly loaded, to its pressure limit, with 125, or even 110 grain JHP's, and used only when a clean shot to the vitals is presented, this small bore magnum WILL suffice for whitetails. Admittedly, this leaves the problem of "end-on" shots unanswered; most hunters find themselves incapable of passing up such opportunities — some, however, can, and the majority is still free to use less restrictive calibers.

It should also be noted here that one cannot use deer behavior after impact as ANY indication whatsoever of whether, or how severely, that animal has been hit and this is particularly so with the .357. I'm sincerely convinced that more than one pistolero has squeezed the trigger, observed no reaction other than flight on the part of his

quarry, and concluded erroneously that he missed, when in reality his quarry lay dead 200 yards down the trail. In the case of my recent kill, the blood trail didn't start for some 90 yards, and at impact there had occurred NO flinch, NO collapse, NO dropped tail, NO audible sound, NO hair, NO abnormal gait, NO NOTHING! Had I not known for a certainty that my crosshairs had been frozen to the aiming point at the time a perfect surprise break occurred, I would never have suspected I hit that animal; it was only through good fortune and advantageous terrain that I was able to view her collapse in the distance.

So there you have at least one positive vote on the .357, though admittedly with restrictions and reservations. Regarding myself, I'm a 35 year old cop who has hunted exclusively with handguns for ten years and has taken perhaps 100 - 125 head of game over this period, ranging from squirrels (my favorite) to deer. My congratulations on your **Sixgunner** magazine — it gives all us frustrated unpublished would-be gun writers a chance to air our views and provides an interesting forum for exchange of ideas. May our organization thrive.



Take A Hog With Your Hogleg

By Mark Hampton
No. 227

The August sun beat down unmercifully on the jungle-like undergrowth that covered the Tennessee hills. I wiped the sweat from my eyes with the sleeve of my already soaking shirt and tried to dry my hands on my jeans. I peered into the thick brushpile, past the baying hounds, in an attempt to get the bead of the S & W 29 lined up with a vital spot on the vicious wild boar that was taking refuge there. For a split second, I wished for the friendly oaks of my Missouri home and the harmless target that our native whitetails provide. Suddenly the brush erupted as the hog turned . . .

Handgun hunting has been my first love for several years. I entered the sport taking squirrels and rabbits with an old Ruger Single-Six that belonged to my father. The challenge of the decreased ranges and increased skills necessary for success drew me like a magnet. I was soon aware that I must take the handgun afield for big game.

The endless variety of handguns on the market made choosing my first centerfire difficult. I wanted to step up to a gun that I could handle comfortably and yet would have the power to take game up to deer size when called upon to do so. The .357 magnum was a logical choice since I could practice with .38 special loads and use the hot baby magnums for meat shots.

Eventually I decided on the Smith & Wesson Model 27 with an 8-3/8" barrel. Soon the Smith was punching paper with .38 semi-wadcutters and handling like a .22. That sweet little .357 also put several messes of venison in the freezer for me.

Although I hadn't one complaint about the Model 27, I, like so many others, felt the lure of the venerable .44 magnum. Since I had known such satisfaction with the Smith, I stayed with the brand and went to the Model 29 wheelgun, and also opted for the 8-3/8" barrel again.

I left the sights and grips just as they

had come from the factory, since I felt no need to change them. Using sandbags, this particular gun will shoot one-inch groups at 25 yards. That is all I can expect with open sights.

Taking this gun to the field is a pleasure. It rests inside a Bianchi X2100 shoulder rig that remains comfortable from morning until night.

Having taken several varmints and two nice whitetail bucks with this gun, (one of which was a nice 8-pointer by eastern count), I was looking for a hunt with a little more excitement. I wanted to find big game with a different approach, with an element of danger, and one that would fit into a school teacher's budget. The wild boars of Tennessee fit the bill.

After writing several places in Tennessee, I finally decided on Joe Meeks of Telico Junction Hunting Preserve. The return letter from Joe informed me that he provided furnished two-bedroom mobile homes with cooking facilities. He also provided the guides, dogs, transportation on the hunt, and plenty of Tennessee hospitality.

The hunt was booked for the middle of August. Joe warned me that the shots would be taken at close range due to the thick underbrush growing at this time of year. I found out later that this was the epitome of the understatement!

The middle of June found me eight weeks away from my hunt. I began practicing three evenings a week. In practice, I was using 240 grain semi-wadcutters pushed by 13 grains of SR-4756. This is a medium load and the 29 digested them well. Remembering what Joe had told me about the close range shooting, I was trying various positions from 20 to 60 yards. After my last practice session, I loaded my ammo wallet with factory Winchester 240 grain hollow points and felt prepared for the hunt.

I could scarcely enjoy the drive through the beautiful Tennessee hills

because of the anticipation I felt for the upcoming hunt. I arrived at Telico Junction on a hot August afternoon. The tall, slender-faced Joe Meeks met me when I arrived. We introduced ourselves and spent a few moments getting acquainted. He then directed my attention to the trailer that was to be my home for the better part of the next week. I found the accommodations to be clean, cool, and comfortable. After unpacking and settling in, I spent an hour or so practice pointing the 29. Finally, I drifted off to sleep with visions of hogs and hoglegs dancing in my mind.

The next morning finally did arrive, and found me eagerly awaiting my guide. He arrived around 7:00 in a four-wheel-drive pickup with dog boxes in the bed. As he stepped out of the truck, I saw he was wearing a Colt 357 magnum. The gun rode there on his hip as it seemed second nature to him. I introduced myself and he told me to call him Lark. I didn't ask any questions and I sure don't make a habit arguing with a man toting a sixgun. We discussed our game plan over a cup of coffee, told each other a couple of lies, and decided we had better hit the woods.

Our attack that morning was to cover two or three canyons without the use of the dogs. If this didn't produce, we were to let the dogs after them later in the day. As we entered the 1200 acre ranch, I was amazed at all of the underbrush. The Tennessee terminology for this jungle is laurel. Whatever it is, it can be extremely hard to walk through. We made our way until we finally came to a trail which led us into a large canyon. This canyon was fairly steep but not as brushy as a few places we had been earlier.

As we walked along a freshly used game trail, about 20 yards off to our right, I spotted two large boars. One of the boars was a large male, the guide informed me, the other was a female. The hogs thought they were hidden, as they didn't even wiggle. If I could just get around this little bush that was directly in line with the hogs and the magnum, I could get an excellent head shot. The next step I took the hogs were gone in a flash. I couldn't believe how fast a two hundred pound boar could be. Oh, what the heck, if I had killed him, the hunt would have been over too soon.

After three more hours of climbing up and down the foothills of The Smokies, the guide and I both agreed that it was time for lunch. We made it to the camp and discussed the morning's hunt over a sandwich. It felt very comfortable being off my feet for a while; nevertheless, I was eager to see the dogs perform. After lunch, Lark rounded up the dogs and we headed for the foothills once again.

We turned the dogs loose in a small ravine where they picked up a track immediately and the chase was on.

Lark and I pursued the dogs with as much effort as we could muster, but the boar seemed tireless. I was hoping that our quarry would stop to fight the dogs and give us a chance to catch up, but this critter was determined to escape.

When the hog finally did stop to fight the dogs, he was about 200 yards above us. As we fought our way through the jungle of laurel, I could hear the dogs yelp from the devastating blows that the boar was giving. Feeling sorry for the dogs, we moved closer, as I wondered what I had let myself into this time.

Lark thought it to be a good idea to circle the boar from the uphill side. Through experience, the boar would not spook easily from this angle as opposed to the way we were going. As we circled the dogs, the fight became more intense. Although the boar was still giving his share of the punches, the canines refused to stop.

After we made it around the hillside, I was ready for my final approach. As we eased closer, I eased my 29 from its Bianchi home. Making my way through the brush, I spotted the dogs and the brush pile they had surrounded about ten yards away. I turned to my guide, who was standing behind me at this moment, for suggestions. He said, "If you can't see the boar, then get closer." I took a couple of steps, straining my eyes, hoping to see my target. After a few more steps, I was about two yards from the thicket the dogs wanted to tear into.

Peeking inside the thicket, I spotted the boar, but there was still a problem. The undergrowth was so thick you couldn't make out topnotch from toenails. Leaning forward as far as I could without falling, I tried to get a better look. This is when I asked myself if I was out to kill a wild boar or to have a personal interview with one. The boar turned sideways about then and showed his head. Quickly I leveled the sights just below his ear and touched it off. The 175 pound boar fell immediately.

I enjoyed the exciting hunt down in the mountains of Tennessee. The excitement of the hunt, good dogs, and friendly guides all added up to a great hunt. If you hunt with a handgun, I would urge you to go after a wild boar. Just remember one thing: Do not plan all your practice sessions at 50 and 60 yards. It will behoove you to shoot a few short yardage groups.

For more information on these hunts, look in the back of hunting magazines where there will be a list of places to hunt wild boar. I would urge you to write to several places and follow the letter by a phone call. A phone call will give you an idea of what to expect and how much the outfitter is concerned about your business. The cost of a wild boar hunt will run anywhere in the neighborhood of \$200 to \$400. Good Luck . . . and . . . Good Hunting!

HANDGUN HUNTERS INTERNATIONAL
P.O. Box .357 MAG
Bloomington, OH 43910
Annual membership is \$12.50.

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