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# **Jeff Cooper's Commentaries**

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

## **Volume Six, 1998**

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 1

January, 1998

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## 1998

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Having survived the holidays in reasonably good shape, we now embark upon what promises to be a thunderous new year. The shooting community – if there is any such thing – seems to have fragmented like the Balkans. In this era of specialization no one seems to consider any topic "in the round," so to speak. We should endeavor to avoid this insofar as we can, for our enemies will seek every opportunity to divide and conquer. I will endeavor to clean up my own act to the best of my ability, but since I have never been a shotgunner nor a target shooter, this will take some effort. I will push the motto "If he shoots, he's on our side."

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In my personal opinion, the great triumph of 1997 was John Gannaway's desert ram. John, as you know, is an authentic shooting master, achieving extraordinary prominence in both using and teaching rifle, pistol and shotgun.

In the opinion of many (including me), the bighorn sheep is the grandest of all trophies. The desert bighorn of the American Southwest is probably the most difficult to secure, and scoring on any respectable ram is a notable achievement. You draw for your ticket annually in Arizona, and John drew unsuccessfully for 36 years before his ticket turned up. Just being drawn for desert sheep is an unlikely luxury, but what does one do then? Well, John went down to the area and scouted the terrain, promising himself that he would pass up the shot unless he saw something really worthwhile. He saw it on the first day. But visibility was not good and the unusually large body size of the beast tended to diminish the apparent size of the horns in the fading light. So John kept up the pursuit for five days, and on the evening of the last day he scored (243/85, range 195 by laser, target angle 110, firing from a field rest, uphill at about 30 deg, in fading light).

Triumph! I do not yet have all the details, but this is a record book ram, indistinguishable at first glance from the world's number one on display at the Cody Museum in Wyoming. Thus do the gods of the chase reward nobility!

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A lot of static was thrown our way when we mentioned that article by Karamojo Bell, which appeared in the *American Rifleman* many years ago pointing out that if he went back to Africa he, Bell, would take with him a 308. It turns out that the 308 had not appeared at the time Bell's article was published. About all I can assume here is that we have an editorial mishap. My best guess is that Bell stipulated 303, and that his copy was "corrected" by somebody in the composition room.

(I remember my dismay on one occasion when I specified the F4 Phantom as "gunless," since it went out to war without a gun. The composing room Johnnie altered my statement to "gutless," which the F4 certainly was not.)

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Our African plans for this year are shaping up, but we have so many aspiring heroes that administration is going to be difficult. Fortunately we have in Barry Miller, of Durban, a truly superb administrator. We simply could not put these adventures together without him, so we are now furiously faxing back and forth in the highest of high hopes.

Unfortunately the Batswana are proving difficult, as may be expected in a cash-hungry third world country. Our party will be severely limited on buffalo and (would you believe it!) crocodile. These people have discovered that there are sportsmen who are willing to pay good money for non-game animals, and they leap at the opportunity. As of now we are limited to two buffalo for the whole party, these to be allotted to two first-timers (against my best judgement). However I suppose it is always dangerous to count on a second time, and this is certainly true of the African scene. We intend to use the mighty 460 G&A Special and will not be undergunned.

At this period I am fully as much a spectator as a participant in the African hunting scene, but Ian McFarlane, our host, is bent on getting me a situtunga (to enhance his reputation rather than mine), so he did not have to twist my arm very hard.

(The ladies will be well represented on this excursion, and as they are all proven rifle chicks there will be no marksmanship problem.)

We will show off the Steyr Scout, utilizing Federal's new hopped-up ammunition, which essentially boosts the 308 to a 30-06. Still as yet there seems to be no opportunity to do a proper hippo. Ian says he has a whole pot full of elephants, but somehow I have never sought to bag that beast.

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We regret to report that the Deluxe Edition of "*Meditations on Hunting*," by José Ortega y Gasset, has been sold out, and that there is no current intention of reprinting it. It is generally assumed that this book constitutes the old testament of hunting, and should be a treasured centerpiece of any sportsman's library. The regular edition (\$60) is still available from Wilderness Adventures in Montana.

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So now we have another hot 7mm, which is something we need about like, say, carbonated buttermilk. As I recall, the 270 Winchester was introduced in about 1925 and has been doing a superb job now for going on three quarters of a century. In the eyes of many, the 270/130 is the perfect deer cartridge, and in the opinions of a good many others of broad experience, the 270/150 comes on very strong as a general-purpose sporting caliber for non-dangerous game. The 7mm Winmag may be considered a sort of enhanced 270, which is okay, except that the 270 does not need enhancement. And now we have the 7mm STW, which is a pure and simple tribute to "the first kid in the blockism." Marketing is a strange and mysterious operation, but since it occupies the full attention of a great many people in commercial enterprises, we ought not to jeer at it overmuch. However, after reading colleague Finn Aagaard's treatment of the 7 STW, I do not find myself in any way interested in acquiring such a piece. I am sure it will do. So will a 270. So will a 30-06. So will a 308. Ho hum!

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Colleague Wayne Van Zwoll brings us an interesting tale of buffalo in *Rifle* magazine. It is well told, but in essence it establishes once more that the 375 is simply not a proper buffalo gun. The 505 Gibbs, on the other hand, is. So, for that matter, are the 460 G&A, the 458 Lott, and the 470 Capstick.

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Our colleague and *family member*, Per Hoydahl, reports that all game is on the increase in Norway, and that bears are becoming something of a problem. Bears are wonderful to have, and they certainly enhance the spirit of the wilderness wherever they can be found, but bears are not cuddly. Per points out that if the trend continues someone, probably a picnicking child, is going to be killed by a bear, and then all sorts of legislative hysteria will ensue. All that is needed, of course, is controlled bear hunting, but that fills the bambiists with horror, and these people can certainly kick up a fuss whether or not they make any sense.

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A South African correspondent for *Magnum* magazine has recently given us a sparkling account of his pursuit of the giant ram (*Ovis ammon poli*) of the roof of the world. In the eyes of many deeply involved hunters, the great ammon ram of Central Asia is the ultimate trophy. It just may be, but there are several points to be considered. One of the reasons that I prize the American bighorn (*Ovis canadensis*) is the unearthly splendor

of the land in which he must be sought. Ammon does not live in such country, but rather in high, windswept, gravel and snow slopes where there is not enough air to breathe and there is almost never enough cover for a proper stalk. He is certainly a magnificent challenge, but from what I read, he is not a challenge one would desire to repeat.

In the first place, our hunter had to commence his enterprise in Moscow, where, as you might suppose, his ammunition was "misplaced." Today's Moscow being what it is, our friend was able to locate a few rounds of 300 Winmag for \$50 each.

Then he was involved in getting to the site for his hunt, which required passage in a rickety twin-prop job flown according to weather conditions by a pilot who had other things on his mind.

Upon reaching the site, our sportsman found that provisioning and accommodations were, to be as polite as possible, third-rate.

Then, of course, there was the hunt – a pure case of "Tell me again, George, how much fun I'm having." The two hunters subsisted on prison camp food washed down with a great deal of tea. Both were afflicted with what is called in the Andes "soroche," sometimes referred to as hypoxia. The first symptom was the continuous splitting headache, for which none of the pills they packed along seemed to be able to do anything.

As to the targets, it seems there were plenty of sheep, both rams and ewes, usually in separate bunches. As with all the mountain sheep, their eyesight is quite unbelievable. On the bare, gentle, open slopes they can spot any sort of possible hazard way out past Fort Mudge. The temperature only got up to -10 (in the heat of the day). Our hunter used an excellent weapon – a Blaser R93 in caliber 300 Winmag. He hunted mainly from a primitive Russian jeep which came equipped with springs but no shocks. They could cover the ground with this, but the only thing which eventually made it possible for them to score was the fact that the rams were not very wild. By pulling off a ridge crossing, our hunter finally got to within some 300 meters – and then missed.

Eventually both hunters secured respectable trophies, but not in what one would call a clean-cut fashion.

Well, I have hunted both bighorns and Dall sheep in my youth and I enjoyed the experience tremendously. Now at the tail end of my 70s, I will not attempt to hunt any sort of mountain sheep, but even were I in my prime I would go for the bighorn and the Stone before the Ammon. If that makes me chicken, I will just have to accept it.

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Five new steel reactive targets have now been delivered to Whittington Shooting Center for use on the *J&J Field Range*. There appears to be a certain amount of foot dragging at that institution, mainly due to a difference of opinion in what exactly constitutes sport shooting. Nonetheless, with the help of God and a tail wind, we should have the field range or "game walk" ready for operation by late summer.

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Comrade Mugabe has now made racist banditry the official policy of the adolescent state of Zimbabwe. He has simply confiscated the productive farms owned and operated by European settlers in order to give the land to the oppressed Bantu majority. This is not, of course, a total surprise, apart from the fact that we might have expected it earlier. In a curious flight of fancy, Mugabe has suggested that England provide compensation to the dispossessed farm community. Well, England, in large measure, gave him the country, so I guess he is justified in feeling that England can jolly well pay off the refugees.

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This internet business is becoming something of a bore – a sort of high-tech kafee klatsch. It would seem that a great many people who have nothing to say insist upon saying it – at the top of their computers. The trouble with this is that a great many people take irresponsible chit chat seriously, and this means that I get a lot of rather annoying correspondence asking me if some point of particular nonsense is actually true. For example,

someone told me that he saw a photograph in a magazine of a Steyr Scout mounting a Harris bipod!!! Is it possible that somebody picked up an SS somewhere and did not know that the bipod is already there? Is it possible that such a person did not realize that the Harris bipod is strictly a jury rig, whereas the integral bipod of the SS was conceived from the ground up? I guess an SS equipped with a Harris bipod must go down as this year's nomination for the *Waffenpösselhaft* award.

In that connection, I have a correspondent who insists that the Steyr Scout should be equipped with a flash hider, pointing out that if people can detect your flash, they may shoot back at you. Well, in the first place, if you shoot carefully your target is not going to be able to shoot back at you. Secondly, the whole purpose of the Scout is reduction in bulk. You do not want to hang things up there on the front end.

Sometimes I think we should go back to the pony express.

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We are not generally impressed by innovative handgun designs, but Smith & Wesson has come up now with a fairly compact 5-shot wheel-gun in caliber 44 Special. Toward the beginning of the handgun revolution, in which we bore a hand, we professed that the optimum personal defensive sidearm was a major caliber self-loading pistol. The second choice was a major caliber revolver; the third a minor caliber self-loader, and in last place the minor caliber revolver. This new Smith will fit nicely into certain marketing niches, if we bear in mind that one need not use only factory ammunition in 44 Special. This cartridge can be loaded up, without overstressing it, to very respectable stopping levels. A 240-grain Keith-form lead bullet at about 900f/s is both controllable and decisive. This can be put down as a *Good Thing*.

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Now that hunting season is behind us your televiser comes into its own. Dry practice on the tube is a really excellent way to polish your marksmanship. Certainly we should try to get out to the range at least once a month, but that is impossible for a good many. On the other hand, a weekly tube session with your rifle will do wonders for your field marksmanship. Just remember that you cannot throw the snap away simply because you know it is not going to be recorded on paper. Every squeeze must be as perfect as you can make it. If you know how to shoot to begin with, that TV practice will keep you sharp all year long.

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We find it curious that so many people worry about the price of rifles without ever worrying about the price of shotguns. We also find it curious that a great many shooters seem to think that the purpose of the exercise is the ownership of a great many cheap firearms. Well, to each his own, but I have been chastised by a good many correspondents who think that it would be a good idea to produce a cheap scout rifle. I wonder if such people inform Porsche AG that it would be a good idea to produce a cheap Porsche. My child, the Steyr Scout, is indeed expensive, though somewhat less so than the creation of a high quality custom scout. Riflemen who are really strapped (and truly I feel for them) need look no further than the Enfield No. 4, which is a far better gun than the SKS and which can be had for considerably less money.

Nobody needs a scout rifle. Nobody needs a Ferrari. Nobody needs a box at the opera. And nobody needs an Aerostar. The question is not what you need, but rather what you want – and how much do you want it. In my own view, it is better to own one really good rifle than six or eight approximations. But that is just my view, and people with other opinions are welcome to them.

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Have you ever heard of a "gluteotomy"? Neither had we until the subject came up during a bull session with Tom Siatos, who used to be a major wheel with Petersen Publications until his recent retirement. It seems that the topic had to do with the lethality of the venom of the mamba, which is reputed to be very lethal indeed. In some circles it is held that if you are injected with a full dose of mamba venom, you do not recover. Whether this is absolutely true or not, the fact remains that one should carefully avoid being bitten by a mamba. The question, of course, is what do you do if you cannot avoid it, which is sometimes the case. One of the members of this campfire chat, seeing that there were no ladies present, undertook to demonstrate the means which may be used in certain sorts of mamba envenomation. He stood up, dropped his britches, and

established that a large portion of his right buttock was missing. As it happened, he was struck exactly on the most prominent portion of his behind by a black mamba while making camp. The snake hung on for a bit, definitely establishing the location of the bite. To the narrator's (temporary) astonishment, he was belted full in the jaw by his tracker with sufficient force to knock him cold. The tracker proceeded to roll him over on his face, produce his panga and slice off some two and a half pounds of gluteus maximus. This dramatic essay in first aid treatment may well have saved the man's life; at least he thinks it did. At the time he told the story he was a bit lopsided, but he was alive and in good health.

(Now I can expect a handful of African friends to tell me that they were there when that happened. That is the norm with African stories.)

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We stirred up much interest awhile back when we mentioned a sleeve-type mount base to be used on standard rifle barrels which permits proper placement of the telescope forward of the magazine well. I have not used this device myself, but I have looked at it and it looks good. It is the brainchild of Ashley Emerson, and it should be on display shortly at the SHOT Show in Vegas. Address:

Ashley Outdoors, Inc., 2401 Ludelle Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76105.

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*Family member* Mark Terry tells us that his nephew was decisively shot up last October with a 32 auto. Range was very short and one of the hits was in the head, but he was conscious and pretty chipper when the paramedics arrived. At the hospital it was discovered that he had one of those little 32 pills inside his skull, and so, rather than mess with an operation, they left it there. As Mark says, that miniature bullet probably won't even set off metal detectors at airports.

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*Time* magazine has now set up a discussion about what man or men should be designated "Person of the 20th Century." Barrett Tillman nominates the Wright Brothers, who got the human race off the ground. Another suggestion is Jacques Cousteau, who gave us the sea. Another might be Winston Churchill, who led Western Europe to world victory. This subject is certainly worth exploring.

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Further nasty news from the nasty United Nations Organization:

One Eric Kibuka, who delights in the title of "Director of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders," has gone on record to the effect that "The international community (sic) has decided that firearms regulation is at the core of democracy and good government." The connection between firearms regulation and democracy is about as obvious as the connection between traffic regulation and quail hunting, but that is not likely to trouble a UN official. As we have all noticed, the cry of the modern left seems to be "To hell with the facts. It's the gut reaction that matters."

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Gunsite stalwart and *family member* Barrett Tillman has come up with a new term for "us good guys." He suggests *Ravenvolk*, but I must call a slight tilt. I do not like compound words deriving from two different languages. The word for raven in German is raben and volk is a German word. In English this would read *Ravenfolk*. Since the Gunsite raven is neither German nor entirely Scandinavian, I prefer the English construction. Henceforth let us regard ourselves as *Ravenfolk*.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 2

February, 1998

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## Mid-Winter

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Sorry about the delay. I have been crippled up with a broken back for some time, and this has interfered with my preferred activities. Progress is slow but steady.

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I am sure you have all heard of the notion that elephants will sometimes eat marula fruit and become drunk when the material ferments in their stomachs. I have always doubted this story, but now I hear of an account from Sweden in which a similar phenomenon, involving apples, was observed in regard to the Scandinavian elch, which is the same animal (*Alces alces*) as the American moose. Strange, but possibly true.

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It would appear that ex-President Bush will go down in history as "the man who lost the war." We had Saddam Hussein on his heels, and everything in position to chase him down and end his reign, so Mr. Bush let him go. Now we are contemplating doing the same thing again. Certainly we can punish this man (together with a lot of innocent people) with the forces we have ready to strike in the Gulf region, and that will accomplish nothing. Saddam is a fanatic, and cannot be expected to back down in this confrontation. We can smash his buildings and equipment at considerable length, but even if we could destroy his military potential entirely there would be nothing to prevent him building it up again as soon as we left. The only way to end this situation is by physical occupation of the ground. Whether we can do that or not is not clear, but whether we can or not, we won't. No matter how hard we slap his wrist, or even punch his face, we are not going to change his mind.

I guess we should regard this whole matter as a "live firing exercise." The technical and logistical skill necessary to mount an operation of this size on the other side of the world is mind boggling. We may take pleasure in that if nothing else.

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Recent television releases from the White House deliver the message that it is all right to lie as long as one is not under oath. The Chief Executive made this very clear in an interview last week. "It doesn't matter what I said, I wasn't under oath." That is an interesting message to transmit to our youth. Teaching our young people to speak the truth is never easy, but it can be done. Dismissing the matter as essentially irrelevant is yet another example of the general decay of our culture.

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We have been refreshed and delighted at recent photographs of colleague Finn Aagaard in his rifle shooting exercises. There is at least one "gun writer" around who knows how to handle a rifle.

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The big item at this time of year is always the SHOT Show, held this time in Las Vegas again. There is also the Safari Club show at Reno, but I do not normally attend that one, regardless of the many friends I often meet there, because I am philosophically opposed to "tape measure hunting." In my view, big game hunting ought not to be a competitive activity. One does not hunt for the edification of other hunters, but rather for a semi-mystical experience, which is extremely personal. Whether my elk has a greater spread or more points than yours has nothing to do with my skill as a hunter, but is almost entirely a matter of chance. My own record bull elk, taken way back then, was simply happened upon, and I shot him because he was there, not because I thought he was going to break any records. There are exceptions to this thesis, of course, but I think

it holds true in the main. One should not look at life through the window of his own soul, but I have hunted all my life for the experience of hunting, neither primarily for meat (though I enjoy venison), nor primarily for trophies (though I have some very nice ones). I hunt because I must, and I cannot explain that to anyone who does not already understand it.

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I cannot say much about the SHOT Show because I was unable to get around except on an electric scooter, besides which I was heavily involved with the Steyr Mannlicher display put on by Gun South. The feature here was the brand new Steyr Scout, which I have been talking about now for some time. I regard the piece as not just a temporary success, but as a revolutionary leap forward. Because of its radical nature, it cannot well be slid into any existing slot since it does, as it is designed to do, almost everything a rifle may be called upon to do.

I have gone on at length about the virtues of the concept and the attraction of the resulting piece, but more interesting to me, at this point, are the negatives. Just what is wrong with the SS? Aside from its rather curious appearance, its conspicuous drawback is that it accomplishes what it set out to do – everything. There are a lot of shooters, and still more marketers, who are distressed by this idea. This type of shooter wants a piece for every purpose, and the marketer, naturally, wants to sell as many different kinds of pieces as he can. The notion of a piece that does everything is vaguely distressing to such people, and I can understand that. However, it does not change my vast satisfaction with the entire enterprise as it has turned out. If you want to shoot deer, or mountain sheep, or jack rabbits, or kangaroos, or kudu, or wildebeeste, or enemy agents, you simply cannot make a better choice than the brand new SS. (I was amused to learn from one English contact that the term "SS" still has repellent connotations to a lot of Englishmen who have not yet got over their fear of the Nazis. The notorious Schuetzstaffel has not been with us now for several lifetimes, yet its mention prickles the scalp of a lot of Englishmen. Coincidentally, the organization that protects the President of the United States may also be referred to as the SS (for secret service).)

But let us put these superficial considerations aside. The Steyr Scout is now with us, and you can order your own copy for delivery in May. Its unique features must be enjoyed to be appreciated in full, but they are there, and the first time you press that superb trigger you will be sold. (That actually happened. Our old friend and *family member* Chuck Miller mentioned that he was resisting placing his order up until he tried the trigger, and that settled his hash.)

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The profusion of new pistols makes a detailed survey of the market too large a job for a newsletter. We may note, however, that the Europeans retain their preoccupation with the 9mm Parabellum cartridge. This is due primarily to the fact that the Europeans as a group are not interested in stopping power. As one Frenchman once told me, if in Europe you shoot a criminal, he sits down on the curb and bursts into tears. In America he will shoot back and kill you if he can. Different attitude.

There is also a worldwide preoccupation with fully automatic, handheld fire. The "spray-and-pray" concept may be held in contempt by sophisticated shooters throughout the world, but there are not many of those. Most people in the press and law enforcement seem to feel that a whole lot of shots, hit or miss, is preferable to one well-placed hit. We cognoscenti know better than that, but we are in the minority.

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The Barret single-shot 50 BMG is now selling well in the United States, and the Germans have come up with their own version of the same sort of piece. The item is very attractive to the eye, but I have not had the chance to shoot it. I have reason to believe that it will shoot very well. Its price is high and it is forbidden in the United States as a "destructive device" by the *BATmen*. I cannot regard this as any more than the usual annoyance I feel with government regulation, but I really cannot see a purpose for this rifle. It is doubtless great fun to shoot at medium-and long-range, if you can afford the ammunition, but the only really appropriate target I can conceive for it is the 55 gallon oil drum, suitably decorated. (Of course, you can hit that drum just as well with a 30-caliber rifle such as an M1 – but to bring up that point would be to spoil the

fun.)

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We are constantly depressed when we hear of people who think they know about gunhandling, but do not. Just recently in Africa we heard of an incident in which the hunter had placed his wife in the rear of the hunting car with a round in the chamber and her finger on the trigger. When the car jolted, she fired the piece, and by the grace of God she did not kill anyone. Some talk was made at the time about the condition of the safety on the rifle. Let me say, for the thousandth time, that you never put your absolute faith in any safety device on the weapon. In the foregoing incident, whether the safety was on or not was irrelevant. The finger was on the trigger, which is the violation of the *Golden Rule*. Nobody died, but that was just luck.

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The everlasting problem for the shooter remains gunhandling. Of the three elements of shooting skill – marksmanship, gunhandling, and mind-set – it is gunhandling which gives us the most trouble. The way people handled their weapons at the SHOT Show was enough to make one's blood run cold, and many of these people are presumably "experts" in the firearms field. It would seem that while a great many shooters understand the four basic rules of safe gunhandling, they seem to think that the rules only apply on the range when under supervision. I have tried for decades to impress upon people the fact that the four rules are immutable and ever present. They apply at all times and in all circumstances. Somebody asked me what they were the other day (somewhat to my dismay), so for the purposes of those who came in late let me put them forth again now.

#### *RULE 1*

##### **ALL GUNS ARE ALWAYS LOADED**

The only exception to this occurs when one has a weapon in his hands and he has personally unloaded it for checking. As soon as he puts it down, *Rule 1* applies again.

#### *RULE 2*

##### **NEVER LET THE MUZZLE COVER ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO DESTROY**

You may not wish to destroy it, but you must be clear in your mind that you are quite ready to if you let that muzzle cover the target. To allow a firearm to point at another human being is a deadly threat, and should always be treated as such.

#### *RULE 3*

##### **KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER TIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON THE TARGET**

This we call the *Golden Rule* because its violation is responsible for about 80 percent of the firearms disasters we read about.

#### *RULE 4*

##### **BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET**

You never shoot at anything until you have positively identified it. You never fire at a shadow, or a sound, or a suspected presence. You shoot only when you know absolutely what you are shooting at and what is beyond it.

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At SHOT we stopped by the booth maintained by Ceska Zbrojovka (CZ–USA) to ask about progress of our suggestions of last summer. At the company's request, we made two suggestions. One was for an idealized service pistol made to my specs, and the other involved an idealized heavy rifle. I do not see much of a market for either product, but the company is very anxious to enter the Western scene, and feels that a couple of prestige items might help in that direction. At the booth I was told by the company representative that both projects were still under consideration, though, because of a bad economic year in 1997, progress was not rapid. The upshot is that we may look forward to the appearance of those weapons in due course, but not right at this minute.

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1997 was the year of the "Great Exculpation" from the White House, to wit: "I didn't do it, and I'll never do it again." That is too marvelous a statement to go unrecognized, so we asked our Latinest granddaughter how to render that idea into the classical language for universal appreciation. Herewith the result.

Id non secit et numquam id faciam iterum.

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In regard to all this foolishness about global warming, we notice the following:

"The irony of the information age is that it has given new respectability to uninformed opinion."

John Lawton, 1995

I suppose we cannot properly blame these developments on Bill Gates, but the temptation is there.

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We all heard of that new Louisiana law which authorizes automobile drivers to defend themselves against robbery with deadly force, but I did not know that that rule, despite opposition, passed at a rate of 133 to 1.

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A correspondent recently wrote to us regarding his Glock 45. He rather likes the piece, but insists that it shoots low and to the left in a sort of strung out oval. This is hardly unexpected. A conspicuous characteristic of the Glock pistol is a crummy trigger pull. Such trigger action encourages erratic let-offs. This does not matter at over-the-table ranges usually encountered in pistol fights, but it does show up on the target when the range is extended. The Glock is a good pistol, if not too much is asked from it, but it is hardly a piece for a sophisticated marksman.

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The excellent line of Blaser firearms has heretofore been marketed in the United States by Autumn Sales, of Fort Worth, Texas. That situation has changed, and one now orders a Blaser through SIG Arms, of Corporate Park, Exeter, New Hampshire. Note that the Blaser R93 is the only other rifle I would put in the class with the Steyr Scout. It is by no means the same and offers its own advantages, but one of these is its radical ignition system which does not involve any sear engagement. Both the SS and the 93 are superior weapons, and, curiously enough, a primary feature of each is almost unbelievably good trigger-action. Note also that you can get the 93 in left-hand form by simply replacing the bolt. At this time we have no positive information about the appearance of a left-handed SS.

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So, Lon Horiuchi is to be brought to trial in a federal court. Whether or not he will be brought to justice remains to be seen. The issue now is beset with legalisms, essentially obscuring the nature of the act itself. In no danger himself, this man shot and killed Vicki Weaver, who was unarmed and holding her child. The legal aspects of this matter – voluntary, involuntary, double-jeopardy, jurisdiction, etc. – are irrelevant. The act was probably criminal, but much worse than that it was indecent. There is no serious penalty for indecency. Perhaps there should be.

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While enjoying all this Olympic hoopla, we might note that the original Olympic games were pointedly and specifically non-national. Winners were highly honored as individuals, but no notice was taken of their place of origin. Those old Greeks were touchy and irascible people, but they held that regionalism was inappropriate to athletic competition.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

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## Winterset

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With all this tooth gnashing about Saddam Hussein, it is odd that no one seems to remember the axiom that it is the man, not his weapons, which causes the trouble. One of the first principles of war is *The Principle of the Objective*. The objective, in this case, it certainly seems to me, is Saddam Hussein himself. We would, indeed, feel better if he were not so preoccupied with nuclear and biological weapons, but as in a defensive pistol, someone has to decide to press the trigger.

It seems to us that Saddam here is holding Israel hostage. He cannot reach us with any of his fancy weapons, but he can reach and devastate Israel. This point alone endears him to the Moslem nations, but nobody seems to want to bring that up.

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Way back when I was a student at Command and Staff School, the class was treated to an all day session by a group of white-coated biology professors who told us all about the limitations and capabilities of "biological warfare." This session was very secret – evidently to the point where no one learned anything from it.

The professors in this case informed us that if biological weapons were to be used, no existing affliction would be involved – not anthrax or bubonic plague or typhus or anything else that anyone had seen before. The agent used would be a synthetic disease created in a laboratory and given a code name, such as "Q27." All members of the attacking population could be immunized against it, but the defenders would have no way of combating it since they would not know what it was.

The professors further pointed out that the symptoms of the disease could be manufactured to order and need not be permanently serious. The affliction would have to last only long enough to allow ground victory by the attacking force. These professors pointed out to the class how humane that was. Well, maybe, but anybody who chooses to use anthrax as a weapon does not understand biological warfare.

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And now how about this new 440 Corbon cartridge? It is supposed to be available in a new pistol by Magnum Research Incorporated, and it is said to start a 260-grain bullet at 1700f/s. This is just the ticket for the power hungry pistolero always troubled with aggressive polar bears in Svalbard. I suspect that anyone who can fire a 308 rifle, one hand, unsupported, at arm's length, will have no trouble managing this new item.

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We ran into a pleasant interlude up in Vermont which emphasized the wisdom and social utility of the Vermont firearms laws. It seems that some foreigner from down below was in a supermarket when he observed one of the customers wearing a pistol openly. He got all flustered and immediately called 911. In due course a cop showed up and located the complainer, who pointed out the "culprit." The cop agreed that the man really was carrying a pistol, and then he asked what the problem was. I suppose the poor fellow rushed off out the door and went back where he came from. Obviously the state of Vermont was too dangerous for him.

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A while back we were discussing the subject of hunting trophies as displayed upon the wall. People acquire trophies for various reasons, but we decided to dismiss size, rarity, danger, or just the collector's instinct and

address the subject of beauty. After some discussion we settled upon six species, each specimen to be not necessarily a record head, but simply a prime example of the breed. Thus the following list – in no order of precedence:

- The Marco Polo sheep
- The Bongo
- The Giant Sable
- The Wapiti
- The Kudu
- The Tiger

Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, as it is said, and we cannot be objective about it. Still, those six would truly make up into a magnificent collection.

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We wish that people would stop referring to any rifle with an intermediate mounted scope on it as a "scout rifle," but we have no control over the whimsies of the unenlightened. It is, however, time to discuss the ideal characteristics of a true scoutscope. I have nothing against the current Leupold instrument now available on the Steyr Scout, but I would change it if I could.

By choice, I would have no moving parts inside the tube. I have long held that variable power is sheer foolishness, but beyond that I would not like to see any movement of the reticle inside the tube. If the reticle is painted on the glass it cannot very well come adrift unless the whole device is smashed. Putting adjustments in the mount raises some irritating engineering problems, if the tube is to be mounted low enough on the rifle to be comfortable. However, the wonders of modern engineering are amazing, and I feel sure that given sufficient incentive a strong mounting system could be created which would adjust for deflection in one mount and elevation in the other. As to the idealized reticle, I would favor that transparent triangle that turned up at the tail end of World War I. Possibly it did not work, since I have seen nothing of it in recent times. In theory, however, it possesses great advantages, being simultaneously extremely fast and absolutely precise. It could be offered in any mildly contrasting color such as amber or grey, and it absolutely could not get out of adjustment.

I labored for many years to see the scout rifle finally available over-the-counter. Now I will try to get after that scoutscope concept.

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You have all heard about the Japanese harassment of the biathlon shooters in the Olympics. Here is a perfect example of an organization that has redoubled its efforts after it has lost sight of its goals. The competitors were treated as potential assassins and required to surrender both weapons and ammunition at all times when not actually firing. There was a practice session, but dry firing was forbidden.

These people have a great capacity for being obnoxious. I discovered it many years ago in the Pacific, and I have since not seen any reason to change my mind.

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In an age when senior academicians are preaching that there is no such thing as objective truth, and that history is better understood as a collection of attitudes rather than facts, we discover to our horror that there are educators currently using popular movies as historical source material! As a history student myself, I am well aware that "getting it right" is difficult, and in many cases impossible, but that does not mean we should deliberately falsify things about which we can be reasonably certain. James MacDonald Fraser pointed out in a recent essay that the movie "*Braveheart*" was the worst travesty of history he had seen in recent times. "*Rob Roy*"; and "*Amistad*" were not far behind. The cinematographers maintain, with some justification, that their purpose is to entertain, not to educate. Nonetheless, they should remember that we have several generations of spectators who will not read, and who, therefore, take what they see on the screen as fact. When a producer

maintains that he should never let the facts stand in the way of a good story, he really should examine that story and make sure of his ground. Only too frequently what actually happened, insofar as we can make out, was more glamorous and more exciting than the imagination of the script writer could dream up. Of course, history is not usually "politically correct," but that is all to the good.

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At long last I have discovered that most shooters are not interested in firearms as tools, but rather as toys. Such people do not acquire their weapons because of what they will do, but rather to gratify the "Christmas morning joy" that we largely left behind in our childhood.

For many decades I have striven to design firearms that were primarily useful, but now I discover that only a few people care about that. Well, so be it. Let each one enjoy himself according to his tastes.

---

I guess we should not be picky about terminology. People have a right to call things anything they wish, but it does become annoying when they use a term which is demonstrably wrong just because they like to. Take "shrapnel" for instance. The shrapnel shell was the invention of a British artilleryman of the 19th century and it differs totally in concept from the high explosive shell which became standard in World War II. A shrapnel shell may be likened to a flying shotgun cartridge containing a large number of round steel balls. It does not detonate like a high explosive shell, but it ruptures on signal and sprays the ground in front of it with these round balls. It was quite useful against troops in the open, but not against anybody behind cover.

Many hundreds of thousands of men, including not a few of my own personal friends, have been cut up by the flying shards of a high explosive shell, but nobody has been hit by "shrapnel" since World War I – as far as I can discover.

Another ongoing annoyance is the continual reference to the African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) as the "Cape buffalo." Our old friend and distinguished quarry has no need to wear a cape in the warm climate of Africa. The term derives from the fact that during colonial days anything south of the Congo Basin was preceded by the adjective "cape" by the colonials, since the bottom end of Africa was known as the "Cape Colony," referring to the Cape of Good Hope. So we have a Cape Hunting Dog, Cape Wines, Cape Smoke, Cape Coloreds, and perniciously enough, Cape Buffalo. Let us drop this foolishness. A bison is a bison, and a buffalo is a buffalo, and the one is by no means a variety of the other.

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We see now that the Russians are pushing for police pistols of very small caliber and very high velocity, presumably to defeat the body armor they assume will be worn by their criminals. There are a couple of things wrong with this approach, but I am quite content to let these people pursue their own strange gods.

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We were somewhat confused in a previous issue by a correspondent who insisted that Karamojo Bell died before the appearance of the 308 cartridge, which he wrote that he would take with him on his next African trip at such time as it occurred. The timing is wrong here. Bell, who did not die in time for this problem to occur, opined that the 308, with a properly hard bullet, would be his choice over the 30–06 because of the shortness of the cartridge. He claimed that he had run across a couple of near disasters which could be attributed to short-stroking a bolt-action rifle. I know a couple of these myself, and I guess the point is worth considering.

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We learn with some pleasure that our *family member* Bill O'Connor now has a valid CCW permit in 21 states. That's our boy!

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In this "non-judgmental age" in which possibly the worst sin seems to be having an opinion about anything, "tolerance" is frequently held up as the supreme virtue. While tolerance is all very well up to a point (we might remember the statement that moderation is an excellent principle as long as you don't overdue it), I remember being somewhat perplexed in my youth when I read Hemingway's best short story "The Short

Happy Life of Francis Macomber." In describing his protagonist, Hemingway pointed out his various good and bad qualities, and finally capped the list by saying that this man was characterized by a notable degree of tolerance, "which seemed to be his nicest characteristic, unless it was his most sinister." Tolerance. Sinister. Yes, I see.

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Our fish and game people now propose to bring the grizzly bear back into Arizona. I am definitely in favor of grizzly bears, but I do not think extending their range into the mobile-home-and-cookout regions is a really good idea. Grizzlies and people do not get along well. One might say that if anybody is fool enough to take liberties with a wild bear, he deserves anything he gets, but that is not the way society is set up now, where nobody is held to be responsible for his own foolishness. If we were to establish a healthy population of grizzly bears in the White Mountains (which they might indeed find most congenial), we would soon have a number of "incidents" to wail about. If we are going to put bears in, we ought to take steps to get people out. This might indeed be a good idea, but it seems unlikely to take place.

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We recently ran across an observation from the *Great Duke* (Wellington, that is) to the effect that his officers were sadly deficient in swordsmanship. All of his officers were required to wear swords as part of their uniform, but Wellington discovered that, in the main, they could not use them with any efficiency. He instituted a program of swordcraft, which did not get very far because circumstances terminated his peninsular campaign, but it does not surprise us too much to learn that we should not assume that a man really knows how to fight just because he is wearing a uniform.

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To paraphrase Bill O'Connor again, "The more you learn, the more you can appreciate." Absolutely! Appreciation of the wonders of life make life worth living, and learning is the road to joy.

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A correspondent recently wrote in to us and offered his idea that the purpose of education is to produce educated citizens. Well, yes, but we have not said anything here. Plato once opined that the object of justice was to see that each man got what he deserved. Both of these statements are reflexive. They simply fall back on themselves.

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We now hear from Africa of a gent who is contemplating a real honest-to-God safari – in the old sense. He is making it in Abyssinia – on foot with bearers. His object is big elephant. He will take one heavy double rifle and use it only for his elephant and for camp meat. He plans three months duration. I do not know if he can put himself a hundred years back in history, but we are delighted to hear that he is going to try.

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We are given to understand that firearms laws in Poland at this time are among the best in the world, in direct contrast to those of England, Australia and Canada. I used to think very highly of The Empire, and I still do, but look what has happened to its fragments!

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"I believe that the shooting sports (unlike such stylishly sanitized designer pursuits as fly fishing for the 90s) serve as the politically incorrect metaphor for that most unpopular of citizens – the Classical Man (as opposed to the Modern Man). As such, when I am asked by one who fears and loathes firearms, why anyone would find fascination in weapons, my answer is, 'For the same reason that makes you afraid of such things'."

Jack Chleva

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On particular examination, we see that most rifles are strictly slow-fire instruments. The idea of a quick initial shot is not given the time of day. I will admit that the quick first shot from the rifle is not normally required, but that does not mean that its study should be ignored. In this connection, the Steyr Scout is no more useful off the bench than a conventional weapon, but it is far superior on the snapshot – without losing anything on

the bench. The snapshot in truth is not often required, but when you need it, you really need it.

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Herewith note the *Foundation of the International Society for the Elimination of Glass and Batteries from Pistol Sights*.

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You doubtless noticed colleague Finn Aagaard's recent work on killing power, which appeared in *Rifle* magazine. His concluding attitude was "Better put 'em in right, Bwana." Fact: No cartridge will suffice for a humane kill if the bullet is improperly placed. Conversely, almost any cartridge with sufficient penetration will suffice if it is properly placed. The lethal zone for the larger cartridge may be somewhat larger than that for the small one, but the difference is not great. Essentially, if you shoot an elk, or a kudu, or a moose, or a big old whitetail squarely through the boiler room, he will run off a short distance and collapse – let us say, 35 paces for a 30-06, 25 paces for a 375, and 15 paces for a 600 Nitro. If, on the other hand, you place your bullet badly – with anything – you are in for a long and dispiriting follow-up.

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We are assembling our forces for our forthcoming birthday bash in Africa. As it stands now, the most popular cartridge is the 308/180. In addition there will be one 30-06/180, and my trusty old Lion Scout. We will be packing at least two Steyr Scouts. Everyone who signed up is a very good shot, and most are experienced hunters. I foresee no difficulties in the shooting department.

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A thought for this month:

Never sneeze with a broken back.

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 4

April, 1998

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## Equinox

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Charlton Heston, in his recent outstanding address to the Conservative Political Action Conference, pointed out dramatically that "Now we are engaged in a great civil war" – the line from The Gettysburg Address. Quite so. Only a little blood has been shed, yet, but this war is definitely underway "testing whether this nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated may long endure." That question is open. There are plenty of people in the United States who are strongly and positively opposed to the idea of political liberty, and – as with the shenanigans in the White House – they are not ashamed of this. We must all continue to preach if only to the choir. Our liberty is at stake, and it will remain so indefinitely. If you have not taken some sort of action this month in defense of the Bill of Rights, make sure you do not let another month get by without your help.

Now that the Brits have succeeded in disarming themselves (so that only the bad guys may have guns), they have additionally gone a step further in their continuous attack against fox hunting. The argument rages on in the public press, and appears to have nothing to do with either humanitarianism or conservation, but rather with the "class war" which continues unabated as we head into the 21st century. A reasonably large and quite noisy segment of the British populace makes a business of hating anything that reminds them of their aristocratic past. They feel that anybody who rides to hounds after the fox is either a "toff" or a descendant of one, and they seem to hate toffs as much as they esteem vulgarity. Perhaps the next piece of foolishness we may see from that side of the water is a ban on fox hounds. I am not aware of a proper Greek-derived term for the "Tyranny of the Busybody," but this seems to be a definitive characteristic of the urban socialist.

Which puts me in mind of the old aphorism to the effect that "If you're not a socialist at 20, you have no heart. If you're still a socialist at 30, you have no head." To that I would like to add the following: "If you do not reach the age of 60 without becoming a card carrying curmudgeon, you have just not been paying attention."

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I must assume that all *family members* are assiduously programming their hunting adventures for the fall of this year. Things get booked up if you are not careful.

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In the last issue of the *Safari Club magazine*, we ran across the exploits of what must be considered the world's greatest marksman. This gentleman brought off a one-shot kill on a running Marco Polo sheep at 550 yards. It would be discourteous to doubt his word, and he does not claim that this feat was an accident, so we must assume that here we have the all time greatest rifle shot. His estimated calculations of both lead and drop were brought off in his head, unlike those for the 120 smooth-bore in the M1A1 tank, which are computerized. This established that man's brain remains categorically superior to any machine. Far be it from us to doubt this story, we can only stand aghast! (He didn't say the shot was from offhand, but that would have made even a better story.)

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I assume you have all familiarized yourselves with the characteristics of the Heckler and Koch "Special Operations" pistol, currently designated the Mark 23. This enormous instrument was created by the men of the United States Special Operations Command by very advanced reasoning processes. Briefly put, it is a 45-caliber "Plus P" and comes fitted for a suppressor which is almost as long as the pistol. It is, as you might suppose, "double-action" (trigger-cocking), and includes a two-sided safety switch. Its magazine holds 12

rounds.

This curious instrument is certainly noteworthy. Try as I may I cannot come up with a scenario in which it would be really helpful to carry such a piece. However, there it is, and we wish it a long and happy life.

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This "global warming" foolishness continues apace. If the matter is of interest, you might consider the following information provided to us by *family member*, Dr. Art Robinson:

"The climate record shows that current temperatures are a little below the mean for the past three thousand years, and that temperatures during those three millennia have often been higher – sometimes by more than 2° centigrade. No climate catastrophe is recorded in the history of those periods."

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Let us not forget that 1998 marks the centennial of the great Mauser bolt-action military rifle. The action type, which has served as a model for both sporting and military manually-operated firearms for these last hundred years, was originally furnished in caliber 7x57, but the "G98" took the "7.9 cm" military cartridge. For most of this century, a bolt-action rifle by any name was likely to be a version of the G98. Truly an epoch-making artifact!

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When driving in our current urban battle zones, remember that when a car stops suddenly in front of you and two people get out simultaneously, you go to *Condition Orange*. This is particularly true if you have rear-ended the car in front of you slightly with your bumper. This is a pre-planned car-jacking technique. Bear it in mind!

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We continue to fuss around joyfully with the Steyr Scout. It is amusing to hear the unenlightened maintain that "A barrel that short won't shoot that well." Difficult as it is to find a place to shoot a rifle recreationally, a good many sportsmen feel that improvised opinion is more valuable than practical experiment.

People still nag about the price, which is surprising when one considers that American-made custom rifles are being advertised in the eight-to twelve-thousand dollar range (without sights). If you want an Italian shotgun, the figures go right off the dial. But the problem here, as I see it, is that there are a great many shooters who feel that the true enthusiast should own a great many guns, and that it is better to have a whole warehouse full of cheap versions than one or two quality items. The whole idea of the Scout is to produce an instrument that will do almost all things equally well. Personally I like the way the SS turned out, but that is just one viewpoint.

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The nasty United Nations Organization continues on its obnoxious way without let or hindrance. We learn, for example, from what is now Namibia, that the party line down there is that since the UN is strictly opposed to the idea of firearms in the hands of private citizens, the Namibians will fall obediently into line with their new constitution. There are a lot of things wrong with the social and political scene in the United States, but despite the UN, this country remains "the last best hope of Earth."

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It appears that since the Nips were unable to defeat us in the field, they are going to try to do so at the conference table. We may lose this one, as long as we maintain the current sleaze camp in Washington.

It's just another reason why we must change the administration.

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Speaking personally, it is my opinion that "*Another Country*" is my best work. You may still get your copy from Blacksmith Corporation

PO Box 1752, Chino Valley, Arizona 86323, (520) 636-4456.

It is curious to see how the defeat of the offensive state law I-676 in Washington, was received by our adversaries. In England it was immediately announced that the NRA spent "millions" campaigning against this bill, whose purpose was essentially child safety. If we were to give this matter the time of day, we could point out that, a) the NRA does not have millions to throw away, b) millions do not win elections by 60% margins, c) children are not an issue in this matter, which is basically covered by the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution. The Brits do not have any system of checks and balances in their government. They apparently feels that the sober common sense of the members of parliament is sufficient to avoid legislative hysteria. Imagine that!

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A number of nervous types have pounded on Charlton Heston in response to his statement that the AK47 is inappropriate for civilian use. Leaping into the breach, as it were, I now insist that Mr. Heston maintained that the Kalashnikov is a foreign arm and an American citizen is appropriately armed with the American weapon of choice, which is now the M16. Disrespectfully putting words into Mr. Heston's mouth, I insist that what is inappropriate for the American citizen is the country of origin of the combat carbine, rather than its design.

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In my opinion, being killed in a motor race or by a buffalo is a more elegant demise than a ski accident.

How say you?

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We discover that the Batswana have gone all silly on the subject of paperwork since we were in their country last. Now they insist upon all the information on one's passport before they even see the passport. Also they are totally bemused with serial numbers. Apparently they are simply trying to discourage both tourists and hunters.

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How about these people who are producing "anti-terrorist" bullets! As I understand it, a terrorist is a man. Almost any full-caliber, center-fire cartridge fires a bullet which is quite appropriate for human targets. I guess, however, that marketing is a matter of jargon, and if you say you are doing something "against terrorism," your product will be more marketable – regardless of the mechanics involved. If I read the ads correctly, these anti-terrorist bullets are simply quickly frangible, avoiding over-penetration and ricochets. I used such bullets on deer and mountain sheep long ago in my early hunting days. The fad today is in the opposite direction – toward bullets which will not break up upon impact. Both frangible and non-frangible bullets have their uses, and "terrorism" has little to do with the case.

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"There are only two things we should fight for. One is the defense of our homes, and the other is the Bill of Rights."

Major General Smedley Butler, US Marine Corps 1930

I would add another reason – practice. Anyone who has ever been deeply involved in warfare knows that the only way to learn to fight is to fight. This may not be a popular view with the grass eaters, but I defy them to disprove it.

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As you know, San Gabriel Possenti has recently been canonized as the patron of marksmen and youth. *Family member* Count Randaccio Lodi tells us that he went up to the monastery where San Gabriel is said to have been a member, and found that the current management of that institution would rather not talk about it. The story has it that the young man (he did not make it to his 25th birthday) successfully repelled boarders, not by shooting his assailants, but by demonstrating his marksmanship on a scampering lizard. This is a good story, and we hope it is true. It is, however, distressing to learn that superior moral performance may not be acceptable to the wimp contingent.

Two new market offerings that I find attractive are the Kimber Classic duty pistol, and the Taurus Compact 38 wheel gun. I am no champion of 38 wheel-guns, but there is a place for them in the field.

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Did you see where some Nip punk recently attempted to attack a police officer in order to hijack the officer's service pistol? Upon his arrest he claimed that he just wanted to know what it was like to shoot a firearm. Now what on earth should we make of a social organization in which that sort of thing turns up!

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*Family member* Pat Rogers tells us of a case in New York wherein a police officer correctly, justifiably, and expertly laid out a goblin on the street with his shotgun. The action had been building up for a few minutes, and there were several other police officers in the vicinity. Three of them were *copchicks*, who had to be taken off the line to recover their composure after having witnessed so ghastly an event. One of these girls obtained a medical discharge, and is now on a pension from the taxpayers because of what she saw in the line of duty for which she volunteered. ("You may not believe it, but listen you well.")

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The comrades at Norinco in China are now offering for sale an authentic clone of the wonderful Colt Woodsman 22 plinking pistol – of fond memory. People of my generation grew up on the Woodsman, in both its 6" and 4" versions, but as I see it, plinking in itself was much more a respectable pastime in those dear, dead days gone by. Whenever you went out for a picnic, you took along a plinker, and the Woodsman was perhaps the best plinker of all time. "Plinking" is not target shooting, but casual recreational shooting in the field at improvised targets of opportunity, such as pine cones, worn out golf balls, or overripe fruit. It is an attractive, inexpensive, and socially excellent method of developing the father-son bond. The very idea of this sort of thing would horrify the wimp establishment, both here and abroad. All the more reason to cultivate the practice. So Good on the Comrades! – I guess.

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I have always striven for the production of firearms which were ready to go "out-of-the-box." A couple of correspondents have now told me that I am on the wrong track here, in that repeated visits to the local gunsmith constitute an attractive social interplay with which to while away those happy hours.

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I suppose we do not need any more comments upon the state of the United States public education, but I cannot resist pointing out a recent cartoon appearing in the *Chicago Tribune* and reprinted in *Conservative Chronicle* magazine. It depicts a senior public servant (who shall be nameless) stomping down the corridors of the White House referring to a person portrayed on the wall as "Amateur." The portrait at issue is unmistakably that of President Andrew Jackson. The portrait is labeled "Stonewall Jackson." If the whole series of journalists involved in this atrocity cannot differentiate between Andy Jackson and Stonewall Jackson, it may indeed be too late!

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Did you all note that while American students placed last in international high-school-level competition, they excelled in one area, and that was "self-esteem." They all thought they did better on the tests than they actually did. Apparently we have achieved something after all!

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Do you happen to know what a "OICW" is? That stands for Objective Individual Combat Weapon. It is supposed to be the ideal personal smallarm for the individual soldier of the future. And it is a pretty wild looking instrument. It combines a 20mm grenade launcher with a 223. Its sighting system lobbs the 20mm projectile to an effective range of a 1000 meters, at which it is presumed to be able to obtain fragmentation hits from the bursting projectile on man-sized targets. It weighs a bit over 12lbs, and costs about twenty thousand dollars a throw. Now how have we ever managed to get along without that!

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We hope to have a "leopard light" attachment ready for the SS on the African trip. We have the "Sure Fire" light, but we do not as yet have the attachment to fit the light to the rail on the underside of the fore-end. This

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arrangement should be sensational in Africa, where leopards are usually taken after dark over a bait.

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According to the annual report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service for 1996, we discover that there were a total of 22 "authorized" incidents involving firearms. A total of 139 rounds was fired by the INS officers, by means of which a total of four (4) hits was obtained.

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The solution to this problem, according to the border patrol, is to increase the level of sensitivity on the part of the patrolman. It appears that if you are less likely to shoot, you are even less likely to miss. That is an approach to service marksmanship that had not occurred to me.

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"To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

Theodore Roosevelt

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And now *BATman* McGaw proclaims that home schooling turns the home into a school, and therefore makes that home off-limits to personally owned firearms. I always thought that the *BATmen* were of a different species, and this discovery confirms my suspicion.

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A recent report from Africa informs us that a Bantu hunter of our acquaintance was recently set upon after dark by an armed robber. Our friend cut him down neatly and went on about his business. Naturally, I am not going to furnish any details about the nationality or locality of our friend. In cases like this, the less the authorities know, the better. Years ago in our Balsas expedition we were forcefully informed by our permit issuing authorities in Mexico City that if we had occasion to knock off a bandit, we were by no means to report the matter. Just get the body out of sight in the bushes and get on with your business.

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Question for the *family*: Which is the better weapon for urban law enforcement, the combat carbine or the combat shotgun?

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(Let us not consider a machine pistol here, since it is simply a less efficient form of the combat carbine.) The *family member* submitting the best answer to this question may receive a free ticket to the next bull fight in Nogales.

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"The two pillars of 'political correctness' are, a) willful ignorance, and b) a steadfast refusal to face the truth."

George MacDonald Fraser

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 5

May, 1998

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## The Rite of Spring

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We all cruised back to Quantico to see grandson Tyler commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. It was a very fine occasion, as we expected. Out of 308, there were 223 men who survived Officer Candidate School, the largest group since Viet Nam.

The new lieutenant had his bars pinned on by his father and grandfather, and now looks forward to an interesting time in basic school. We were delighted again in observing that there are indeed a few good men left in the country. You would not get that impression by watching television, but a visit to Quantico is enough to convince even the skeptical.

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In view of all the excitement about that sad business in Jonesboro, we should note that fatalities from firearms mishaps are at an all time low today. More people die each year from medical misadventures than from accidental shooting. (Source: National Safety Council.)

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Following our visit to Quantico, we ran off a pistol class at Whittington. I could not do the job full justice, since I am not yet on full duty status, but with the expert help of Colonel Bob Young, Rich Wyatt, Pastor Tom Russell, and Eric S.H. Ching, the program went pretty much as planned.

The new "Sporting Rifle Walk," laid out over to the north of the IPSC range at Whittington, has been scraped out and leveled off, but the roadways have not been surfaced as yet. The new reactive targets contributed by the *family* are on station, but not yet set up. We hope to have this operation ready by the September rifle class.

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Regardless of what you may have been told at the SHOT Show, it is indeed possible to put a respectable trigger on that fly-weight Smith 22. It is not an absolute that one should never take anything seriously he is told by a counterman in a gun store, but one should always be careful about the statements made by salesmen of any sort of product. Whenever you find a salesman who is interested in your problem rather than sales, you have found a rare jewel.

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As I rather suspected, the vote as to which is the better police weapon, the shotgun or the carbine, runs just about even. Naturally a great deal depends upon what sort of police one is talking about. A good many people wearing badges are simply not interested in shooting of any sort, and really have no business being armed.

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Last year we had high hopes from Czechya about the possible productions of a new idealized service pistol, along with a fancy heavy rifle for those who need such a thing. That line has gone dead, and I do not advise anyone to wait around for anything new and startling from Ceska Zbrojovka.

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The problem with the construction and marketing of new handguns is the fact that we have good handguns now, and have had for most of the 20th century. The 1911 Colt, for example, is just about right today. It may not be perfect, but it takes only a little work to make it all that anyone can want for serious work. The 230-grain JTC bullet is a more satisfactory missile than the regulation hardball, but the difference is not great. About the only major thing wrong with the 1911 is that it is too big for small hands. Oddly enough, new and

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highly promoted substitutes do not seem to have given that matter much thought.

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We have been advised to make a point of what follows, so we dutifully comply:

At the Quantico commissioning ceremonies I was astonished to note that the "drum major," or whoever it is who struts out in front of a military band controlling both its movements and its music, was, in this instance, a female. I was profoundly shocked. In my cultural development the man out there in front of the band was by tradition the mightiest warrior in the clan, who by choice stood six feet five, measured about four feet across the shoulders, and had more combat ribbons than anybody in the regiment. So, here we had a girl doing his job! Well, she was quite splendid. I have observed and participated in a good deal of military ceremonial worldwide and I have never seen that duty performed better, if as well. The more I saw her do her stuff, the more I swallowed my preconceptions. ("And they were very great.") So much for the gender gap! I do hope that girl never gets killed in action, but if she does, she will have contributed more with her grande baton than she ever could have with her puny little M16.

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I see that I am not as hard-nosed and moss-backed as I had been told.

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Now our 1998 trekfest is mounting up for departure. We have far too many people aboard, but I could not find it in my heart to turn anybody down. One cannot step into the same river twice, and I cannot be sure that this excursion will be as delightful as those that have gone before, but we have the highest hopes. Among other things, we will be demonstrating the Steyr Scout, in three examples. Among its many other outstanding and radical features, the SS may be mounted with a "leopard light" on that rail underneath the fore-end. I do not plan to do a leopard myself, but having a coaxial flashlight available on your hunting rifle after dark in the African bush has many advantages. I have a feeling that this feature should be most impressive to the Africans.

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Speaking of which, if I had not already known how disgusting was the historical grasp of the Chief Executive, I would have been further disgusted by his trip around the Dark Continent. I guess nothing that fellow may do can surprise us. As it is now commonly accepted, it is not Clinton's depravity which insults the nation, it is rather the fact that the people do not seem to care.

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So, of course, they get the government they deserve.

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To turn to the pleasant side, we recently received a marvelous letter from a friend who had just taken his 14-year-old daughter out on her first deer hunt. She had trained for the experience and she did everything right. It was Sunday, but the pair did not make church that day. When it was obvious that there was not time to get back for service, young Jesse told her father that "if God had wanted us in church he would not have blessed us with the deer." Out of the mouths of babes!

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In a previous issue I spoke of Butch O'Hare's heroic defense of the carrier Lexington against the formation of nine Japanese Betty's. A correspondent who served on the Lexington at that time wrote in to explain to me that Commander O'Hare preferred to use four rather than six 50-caliber BMGs because of the ammunition supply. He could carry only 200 rounds for each of six guns, but he could carry 400 rounds for each of four guns. Damage to the target was roughly the same, assuming sound marksmanship, but more rounds per gun allowed more time on target and more passes per engagement. Here again we notice that marksmanship is a massively important factor even in modern times and using modern weapons.

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The word from Ireland now suggests that "the peace process" will continue – to the last man.

Joe Sledge, who is one of the heroes attempting the forthcoming trekfest, has requested politely to be allowed to hunt in shorts in the Okavango Delta. This, of course, is against Gunsite policy (Orange Gunsite policy), as we have often pointed out. Joe, however, has been dreaming about his African adventure for most of his life, and he has read everything on the subject, most of which insists that the proper attire for an African hunter must bare the legs. So it's okay with me. The bugs, rocks and thorns won't mind, and Joe can police himself up on his own time.

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We note that "The New South Africa" has now abolished universal military training. This is not a surprise. UMT (as demonstrated in such countries as Switzerland) is the bedrock of political liberty. But the new South Africa is not really interested in political liberty.

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For the future of Puerto Rico our cry is "Independence, Si! Statehood, No!" The Puerto Ricans are not "American" and they do not share in our culture. They do not speak English. They did not establish the Constitution. They did not participate in the Westward Movement. And they never heard of Bunker Hill. By all means let them go their own way, as with the Philippines, and join the other independent Caribbean Islands. Doubtlessly they are good people, but they are not "us."

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Please do not hang junk on a scout rifle. Among the principle attributes of the scout is compactness. What is wanted is less, not more. Already we hear of people talking of recoil reducers and flash hiders and target sights. Wrong direction!

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In reading around, we discover you probably should not consider organizing a hunt in Namibia. These people are now proudly proclaiming their allegiance to the United Nations Organization, thus throwing more and more restrictions on hunting and firearms. I enjoyed a good hunt in Namibia when it was a protectorate of South Africa. At that time it worked under South African rules, which were very good. Today there are better places to go for your kudu, gemsbuck and hartebeeste.

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*Family member* and Orange Gunsite instructor Ty Miller of Alaska must now be considered Chief of the Fireplug Club. He has taken 18 moose with his 660/350. It is indeed sad that the nifty Remington 350 Short Magnum cartridge never caught on. Today it is a hand-loading proposition, but if you have one, hang onto it. There are other medium cartridges which are as good, but none is better.

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Not long ago a "new Marine" jeered at the picture of me on the cover of Lindy's book because I was not wearing my hat squared. The new Marines are very big on square hats, but as an old Marine, I am not. I have always considered the Marine Corps to be a dashing organization, and a square hat is not dashing. My first boss at basic school was Colonel Clifton Cates, one of the heroes of Belleau Wood, and he was not one to square his hat. Later I met Chesty Puller and Herman Hanneken. No square hats. In my view, if the Marines insist upon squaring hats, let them wear helmets. A helmet will look pretty good even if it is square. Meanwhile, I am not going to apologize.

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Jack Furr, who was an Orange Gunsite Rangemaster, reports that one of his Mexican students last year had a most successful engagement south of the border. When set upon by two goblins, he precisely acquired the kneeling position, as taught here, and put two rounds in two targets each. One was dead on the scene, the other was dead on arrival. Though he was using only a 9mm pistol, his technique was exactly as put to him by Jack, and he came out in complete charge of the situation. This is elegant vindication of the technique.

On that subject of repelling boarders, we discovered recently that Ty Cobb, the legendary baseball player and notorious curmudgeon, was once hit upon by what today would be called a mugger in a dark alley. Cobb relieved his assailant of his pistol and beat him up with it so badly that his face could not be identified in the morgue. Street punks should be careful to pick on the right people – or the wrong people, depending upon your viewpoint.

"So the Clintons went down to the vet to have the dog neutered. Please compose your own jokes."

The *National Review*

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In running the class at Whittington, we could not avoid comparing the conduct, posture and carriage of our students with the young men we had just seen graduated at Quantico. It seems that people who watch too much television lurch, rather than walk, and slouch rather than stride. I guess the Marines start out with the right people and take it from there, but whether they can do anything much with the louts I see hanging around city streets in baggy shorts, loose t-shirts, clod hoppers and reversed baseball caps might prove a challenge even for them.

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I have assured all prospective members of the trekfest that they will not have to hold hands with Nelson Mandela.

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Before leaving the British scene, we can point up the case of a career goblin with a rap sheet covering 55 felony arrests who was bitten by a police dog while resisting arrest. He complained, and believe it or not, he was paid off, since he now claims that he is psychologically terrified of dogs, a factor which may interfere with his career. Hard as it is to believe, I got this tale out of a British magazine, *The Week*. I hope it is not true. (Perhaps we should blame this sort of thing on El Niño, like everything else.)

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In looking for a proper term for the tyranny of the busybody, one of our pernicious current social problems, I consulted with our associate Greek scholar, Jan Libourel, who is an editor for Petersen Publications. Jan took his advanced degree at Oxford and should know about such things. It turns out that the Greek term for a busybody is *polypragmaton*. If you tag "ocracy" onto the end you get a big one – *polypragmonocracy*. It is used to denote a social condition in which people charge madly around tending to other people's business. This is rife in the US today, but it is even worse in England, where the Brits, who have no Bill of Rights, are continuously passing garbage regulations infringing upon the behavior of the private citizen. As I understand it, you even have to have a national permit to acquire a pet. The human race got along for centuries without this concentration on regulation of all phases of life. There are some cases of this in classical Athens, and of course, we have the example of the Puritans in New England, but generally speaking, respectable behavior was a private matter, not reasonably actionable by law. Certainly throughout the world we have far too many people, and "percentage-wise" that means we have too many lawyers. When you have too many people and too many lawyers you have *polypragmonocracy*. (Thanks, Jan.)

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Anybody yet know who killed Vince Foster?

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Have you noticed that women who spout off about things they do not understand usually hyphenate their last names? In my opinion, a hyphenated last name is evidence of violation of Rule 5, which is "Thou shalt not take thyself too seriously." As the Countess puts it, "Life is funny, and life is tragic. If you don't see the joke you are not getting full value."

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There will now be a hiatus in the distribution of this publication while we charge off to the *Land of Golden Joys*, to re-enforce our morale. We will get back to you in early June – God willing!

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 6

June 1998

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## Out of Africa

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You are correct in assuming that there will be a lot of Africa in this issue because that is where we have been for the last month. It was a marvelous month. Our African adventures have always been marvelous, though each has been different from the one before. It is true that we visited mainly places that we had seen before, but places change and circumstances differ, and it remains true that *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*. On this operation we had too many people. It was clear from the beginning that this might be a drawback, but we did not want to deny anyone the opportunity – while the opportunity still exists. The hunting world in South Africa remains pretty much the same, but certain aspect of the culture down there have taken a definite change for the worse following the revolution. Take, for example, the crime scene. The criminal violence is pretty nasty, but it tends to take place in categories. Street crime in the big towns is mainly a car–against–car, black–against–black proposition, and it can be avoided if one stays out of the wrong places and does not move around in congested areas after dark. On the other hand, raids on isolated rural dwellings are mainly black–on–white, and they are difficult to combat in a culture which has been used to staying in *Condition White* at all times. As you know, it is possible to be legally armed in South Africa and to fight back, unlike the situation in Britain where it is considered politically incorrect to resist violence. In most of the cases which have come to my attention, the farm house raids could be defeated by people who are prepared to fight back. It is, however, a truth that most people find it difficult to remain in a properly guarded mindset all the livelong day. The result of this is that most of the wonders of South Africa can be visited by the tourist or hunter without risk, provided, as always and everywhere, that the individual is armed, awake and aware.

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One of our reasons for this adventure was the introduction of the new Steyr Scout rifle to the African scene. We had four such pieces along, and, as you might expect, they performed very well. Why shouldn't the? They were designed to perform very well. The issue of caliber does arise in certain circles because some people feel that the 308 cartridge is inadequate for medium-sized quadrupeds. This attitude is a myth – obviously so when we reflect that more moose have been taken with the 30–30 cartridge than any other, and that the 308 is decisively superior in power to the 30–30. The answer, as we all know, lies in proper bullet placement. If you use a proper non-frangible bullet, and put it where you should, the 308 does just fine for elk, moose, kudu, wildebeeste, and zebra. (Well, actually, nothing does a perfect job on zebra every time. On my first encounter with this beast, my partner struck his target twice through the boiler room with a 458 soft point, and it just ran off, though not very far.) On this hunt we had one rather messy occasion with a wildebeeste, which took eight shots before cashing in. This does not surprise. I know of another case where that same animal, the blue wildebeeste, took eight solid hits from a 300 Weatherby before losing its footing. Both the wildebeeste and the zebra are remarkably tough animals, and the issue is not whether once in a while one has trouble putting them down, but rather the ease with which they do go down when they are hit properly. On this trip we used the 165-grain Trophy-bonded Bear Claw bullet in the four Scouts. We lost no animals wounded, and we have no quarrel with the 308 cartridge as used in the Steyr Scout.

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The weapon itself caused the impression we expected. The standard first responses are: *a*) it's funny looking, *b*) it's too light, *c*) it can't be accurate, and *d*) it's too expensive. (This last item has some merit for those who are "economically disadvantaged," but this is a case in which you get what you pay for.

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One of our comrades in this adventure was Colonel Clint Ancker, US Army, who treated us to his account of the big tank battle with the Republican Guards in the Gulf War. It is difficult to visualize what a major armed engagement must be like conducted with modern equipment in the dark. Regardless of modern radio communication and the latest type of night-vision equipment, the result when battle joins is total chaos. At one point Colonel Ancker told us that his vehicle was totally surrounded in all directions by blasting major caliber guns, burning vehicles, and unidentifiable dashings about in the dark. It was fascinating to learn that modern technology has not obscured the value of the foot soldier, no matter how he is delivered to the scene of action. In one rather desperate incident, a sergeant major of the old school fought brilliantly in the light of burning vehicles with assault carbine, hand grenade, and finally with his 1911 model 45 pistol. There were quite a number of the Model 92 Parabellum sidearms around, but those who understood combat invariably packed their 45s.

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To get back to the hunt, we had ten shooters aboard and we took 41 animals. They were not all one-shot kills, but they were all quick kills. Having farmed out the SS rifles in all directions to other people, I used my venerable Lion Scout, and though I could not do much hunting due to my semi-crippled condition, I did lay out a herd boss zebra stallion with that 350/360 in a most satisfactory way. The 250-grain Swift bullet crashed through the shoulder bones on both sides of the beast and was caught by the skin on the far side. The zebra did not move out of his tracks, and now in due course I can expect a particularly fine rug for the *Sconce*.

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Rich Wyatt used the heavy Gunsite Loaner on his buffalo and dropped it in its tracks with one shot. The 500-grain Hornady soft-point struck the mighty spine just where it joins the body and effectively scrambled it. As of this date, the 416 seems to be the popular cartridge in Africa for buffalo, but I see no reason for using a light-heavy when a true heavy is available. (Why use a 41 Magnum revolver when you can get a 44?)

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I was impressed by the number of "skin stops" that we observed. This phenomenon takes place when the bullet penetrates the animal completely, but it is caught by the elastic hide on the far side and thus retained for examination. I first encountered this long decades ago on a Yukon moose, and I thought it was quite remarkable. I have discovered since that time that the "skin stop" is quite normal when using bullets of proper design.

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We visited with our great good friend Danie van Graan, to whom I presented one of Jim West's "Co-pilot" carbines some years ago. This piece is the chopped and channeled version of the Model 95 Marlin 45-70, and was designed by Jim as a bear stopper for use in Alaska. It may do even better as a lion stopper in Africa. We noted that Danie has fitted a "John Wayne" finger lever to his weapon. He claims it makes this easier to operate the action, since the fingers have a running start before they crash into the lower strap of the lever. We note that the Marlin Company has taken Jim West's example and is now producing a sort of an approximation of the "Co-pilot," but without all of its good features. The 45-70 cartridge, properly loaded, is a truly fine short-range stopper, probably superior to the ubiquitous 375 in "close encounters of the horrendous kind." Among other things, you can get it in a lighter, quicker, more compact instrument.

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Our grandson Tyler is now slugging his way through Marine Corps Basic School at Quantico. As we understand it, he was unable to conceal the fact that he knew a good deal more about pistolcraft than his instructors. They encourage the isosceles firing stance, but when Ty showed off the Weaver stance, a number of the new lieutenants requested that he show them how to do that – which he did. This may not be the most diplomatic way to undergo one's pistol instruction, but Marines are not supposed to be diplomats.

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While abroad we learned that "Little Brute," the current Commandant of the Marine Corps, has now decreed small arms qualification twice a year, rather than annually. While I do not know how much killing may be done in years to come by infantry officers using M16s, I can only regard this development as a plus.

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Perhaps you have noticed a new book by Jon Krakauer called "*Into the Wild*," in which he recounts the dismal demise of a young man of the alienated generation who decided he would wander off into the wilderness and live off the land by his own wit and ingenuity. The trouble was that, as with most of the alienated generation, his wit and ingenuity were insufficient, and he starved to death on the northern approaches of Mount McKinley during the summer. It is quite possible for a serious woodsman to survive on his own in the wilderness. The great Charles Sheldon did just that many years ago when he took off alone into the wilderness of Denali to spend the winter discovering what the mountain sheep did in the cold weather. He came out in the spring with the information that he had sought – but he knew what he was doing. Hippies as a rule do not know what they are doing, and, as in this case, they often fall victim to what may be characterized as arrogant incompetence.

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I suppose it comes as no surprise to discover that while all airline passengers seem to be scruffier today than yesterday, the Americans are scruffier than the Europeans. People seem to have no embarrassment about entering an airplane in clothes better suited for yard work than for civilized travel.

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In Africa we learned that the Abyssinian safari we mentioned previously in this publication came to an unsatisfactory conclusion, ruined mainly by the weather. The adventurer, however, has not given up and intends to try again next year. I understand that he does know what he is doing, and we wish him well.

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We were saddened to discover that South African Airlines, which we used to think was second only to SwissAir, has come down several clicks in service and comfort following the revolution. A form of affirmative action seems to have equipped the cabins with too many people who are simply not up to the task. The job of airline stewardess ("flight attendant") demands an eminent degree of intelligence and sophistication. It is not a task for just anyone, and people who have spent a lot of time flying commercially over the past decades have discovered that times have a way of changing.

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When we were down there in the *Golden Land*, a leopard incident occurred with a non–hunter. It appears this gent was out for a walk with his two dogs when they spooked the cat. The interesting thing about this is that the leopard had the wit to realize that the dogs were only the instruments of the man. He disbursed the dogs quickly and went right for their owner. Smart cat, no?

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I am forever astonished by people who think that you can come hunting, at great trouble and expense, without troubling to learn how to hunt. Over the years I have run into hunters who know nothing about firearms, about shooting technique, or about the game they have set out to kill. It would not occur to me to enter a hydroplane race without learning first how to operate a hydroplane, but some of these people, who have the time and the money to undertake the great adventure of African big game hunting, do not seem to realize that they should know how to operate their firearms. There is a suspicion around that all such matters will be taken care of by the professional hunter. Sometimes he is capable of doing this, but by no means always. This depressing phenomenon is not new. I ran across it the first time just before World War II when I encountered two wealthy hunters in the Canadian Rockies whose beautiful customized Springfields had never been fired until they were fired for blood.

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Our British cousins seem truly to have lost their viscera on the fields of Flanders in World War I. They enjoyed a conspicuous carryover in World War II, and there was a brief flash of inspiration in the Falklands, but as of today, they seem to have developed a psychopathic horror of violence, apparently unaware that violence comes with the package. The Colonial English of the 19th century were a splendid race and their exploits will ring forever in the minds of those few who continue to read history. As we enter the 21st century, however, it is possible that our ancestral traditions are a lost cause.

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I was recently asked by a correspondent who has wide experience in hunting North America, Africa and Australia, how I would compare the Blaser R93 with the Steyr Scout. This is a most interesting question. Both

pieces are finely made and quite expensive (in the \$3,000 range). Each is superbly accurate and equipped with an outstanding trigger-action. They weigh about the same. In contrasting them, we may point out that the Blaser may be had in a great variety of calibers, but that the Steyr Scout offers the integral disappearing bipod. The Blaser is a bit long, both in barrel and stock, and is awkward to load. Its safety, while very positive, is cumbersome to use. The Steyr, with its detachable box magazine, offers instantaneous reloading, plus the advantage of a spare magazine in the butt. The Blaser offers ornamental wood, which, while attractive, is vulnerable, whereas the Scout features an almost indestructible composition stock, which is also adjustable in length. The Blaser offers no auxiliary sight system, while the Scout has one. The straight-pull action of the Blaser affords an almost instantaneous second shot. The Blaser is readily convertible for the left-handed shooter, while the Steyr is not. The Blaser employs a conventional telescope sight system, which is too close to the eye for most people. The Steyr uses the scoutscope by choice, though it may be fitted with almost any telescope and mount system desired on its extended receiver. The scoutscope is perfect for snap shooting – without giving anything away in slow fire. The Blaser has a 3-round magazine capacity, whereas the Scout has either 5- or 10-round capacity, plus the advantage of the spare magazine, in place. Both weapons are excellent examples of the new wave in rifle design. Perhaps you cannot afford one now, but save your pennies for a brighter day. If some kind soul offers to give you one, don't turn it down.

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We note with interest the demise of the last surviving holder of the Ordre Pour le mérite – the Blue Max, at the ripe old age of 103. This gentleman was Hans Jönger, and evidently he just loved to fight. He quit school at 17 to join the Foreign Legion. His father extricated him from that, but just as soon as he could he signed up for the Prussian army as a private. It appears that he was a constitutional, card-carrying warrior, and he was wounded twelve times in action. "A hard man is good to find."

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Cartridge options for the Steyr Scout are in the wind. It has always been intended to produce the weapon in caliber 7-08 for jurisdictions where 30 caliber weapons are forbidden. The Norsemen at the Nuremberg gun show emphasized that they wish to deal with the weapon available in 6.5x57 for use in Scandinavia. This does not make a lot of sense to me, but perhaps they have warehouses full of ammunition and nothing to shoot it in. The prospect of a heavier caliber in the Steyr Scout is being considered. Whether this is a good idea or not remains to be seen. Two elements of the Scout concept are light weight and instantly available ammunition. If a "375 JCS" version is a good idea, it will certainly be a bit overweight and mated to an oddball cartridge. This may not matter, but let us not forget that the Scout is a general-purpose weapon intended to be fully fitted (shudder!) for the anti-personnel mode. I have always found it difficult to take these tender types seriously, but many people do – especially marketers.

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A reader of *National Review* recently took the magazine to task for a cover picture of Pat Buchanan, showing the command "Load and Lock!," maintaining that the proper command should be "Lock and Load!" A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. With the Springfield '03 one could not load with the safety locked, so we loaded first and then locked. With the M1 Garand we locked the safety first, and then loaded. These young people of 70 years or less are sometimes uppity.

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So now we learn of the "Belgian Needle Gun" from Herstal. It handles a 22 caliber, 31-grain, needle pointed, hardmetal bullet at 2,150, which is supposed to penetrate any sort of body armor. (What it does after penetration is unclear.) It is a light, fairly compact, mainly plastic pistol with a 20-round magazine. Very hi-tech. Thing is, the bad guys very rarely wear body armor, and if they do you can always shoot for the head.

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After careful consideration, Daughter Lindy has concluded that there are more hand-held cellular telephones in South Africa than in the rest of the world combined. We didn't see any baboons packing them, but we can expect this any time.

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So now it appears that Horiuchi will walk free. The opinion of the judge was that he was "only following instructions." Several German generals were condemned to death at the Nuremberg Trials for advancing just

that argument. Lon Horiuchi was either seriously incompetent in the handling of his weapon, in which case the FBI is to blame for putting him on that job; or he was callously indifferent to the deliberate taking of human life, in which case he is guilty of negligent homicide. This is, of course, assuming that what has appeared in the press is reasonably in accordance with the facts. (It may be that a great deal of material was presented at the trial which is not clear to the general public.) So here we have, in reasonably close succession, O.J. Simpson and Lon Horiuchi, reflections of a justice system which is catastrophically askew. It must be admitted in fairness that Simpson's act was committed with malice, whereas there is no evidence that Horiuchi entertained any particular hatred for Vicki Weaver. But both men walk free. The ancient Greeks had an answer to that. Its name was *nemesis*.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 7

July, 1998

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## Solstice

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Suddenly it is mid-year. My how the time do fly! The summer solstice is the official beginning of summer, which has never been our favorite season – since leaving school. In school, of course, things were different. Mr. Nourse, our esteemed boys' vice principal at John Boroughs Junior High School, once wrote as follows:

"Parents look forward to vacations with misgivings. Girls with eagerness. Boys with joy.

Parents look forward to the end of vacations with relief. Girls with regret. Boys with despair."

Yes, Virginia, there is a gender gap.

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We continue to be amused by the odd term "double-action only" as applied to trigger-cocking self-loading pistols. It would seem obvious that nothing can be double and single at the same time, and you can only fire a double-cruncher one way. However, a good many people do not seem to care what they say. Our Uncle Argus, of affectionate memory, once stated upon the appearance of a dreadful looking mutt in the yard, "Fine looking dog – if you don't care what you say." It is pretty hard to maintain communication if people do not care what they say.

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The new Taurus field pistol in caliber 454 Casull seemed attractive to those who like to hunt big game with a handgun. On first examination it seems very interesting. We shall see how it stands the test of time.

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Perhaps you heard of the recent cougar incident up in Colorado only a couple miles from the winter residence of daughter Parry and her family. It seems this foot slogger was set upon, without apparent provocation, by the cat while walking on a forest trail. He threw it off with his Swiss army knife and his thumb, which he drove into the beast's eye. A cougar is not a very big animal, and though very strong, rarely seems to kill when it attacks humans; but, as with the leopard, it usually sets up a painful and expensive stay in the hospital.

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Welcome to the vast right wing conspiracy! That is us, in case you have not noticed a conspiring recently.

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The International Palma Match, as you know, is fired at 1,000 yards. It must be fired with ammunition suitable for the military arm of the nation entering the match, though now the "second-line" 30 caliber military cartridges are accepted. The contestants have discovered that when using 150-grain, 30 caliber bullets there is a tendency for accuracy to fall off as the projectile drops back through the speed of sound. Consequently the trend now is to build great, long barrels for Palma Match rifles in the attempt to boost velocity up to where bullets will still reach the target at supersonic speed. We wait to see whether this really has any affect on international scores.

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We continue to be annoyed by commentators who insist that a certain type of firearm – a 1911 auto, for example – is designed only "to kill people." If we overlook the capacity of the defensive handgun to intimidate an attacker, that idea may be true, but we could respond by saying that a scalpel is only designed "to cut people." But we can hardly expect the logical approach from our entrenched hopphobes. I cannot

believe that all these people are essentially stupid. What they are, I propose, is simply envious. The man who cannot cope automatically envies the man who can.

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As previously reported, the 308/165 performed with complete satisfaction in Africa last May. The preferred combination, however, remains the 30-06/220, in the African consensus.

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We notice that the *BATmen* have officially announced that they would prefer to be called *ATmen*. That is to say, they call themselves the "Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms" rather than the "Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms." (Apparently the Feds are going to keep the B in FBI.) It is immodest to give one's self too much importance, but if I have caused the *BATmen* to change their name because of my writings, I will be highly satisfied. I guess I am on the ninja hit list, but perhaps that is just boasting.

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To no one's surprise the proliferation of concealed carry laws in this country has resulted in a noticeable reduction in crime. The new laws do create a problem for the street punk, since he can no longer tell who is armed and who is not.

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Note that *family member* Curt Rich has just released a new and very important work called "*Drive to Survive*." Curt, in addition to being a fully experienced combat infantry officer, is also a firearms enthusiast, but above that, he has driving credentials as long as your arm. He knows whereof he speaks. I have read the draft from beginning to end, and I counsel all the faithful to purchase not one, but two, copies of this book – one to read and to loan. Here is a "how-to" book which may really make a difference, if we can get enough people to read it.

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In a previous issue we opened a discussion as to the purpose of education. This has developed quite a response, but has not produced a philosophically authoritative consensus. The main hurdle seems to be the confusion of education with trade schooling.

Most people seem to think that trade schools are a good thing, especially those who feel that the purpose of education is to get a job of some sort. But many large organizations, for example the Marine Corps, feel that they are better off running their own trade schools than depending upon diplomas from institutes over which they have little control.

In any case, I do not believe that one can successfully argue that the purpose of education is access to gainful employment. To the extent that this may be true, it is a secondary goal.

To my mind, the purpose of education is to produce a cultivated individual. That, of course, is dodging the issue, since we must define what we mean by "cultivated." This definition, however, gives us a place to start, and that is something we can not ignore if we wish to arrive at a meaningful conclusion.

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The German Mateba automatic revolver in caliber 357 seems to be going great guns. I am going to make an effort to get a chance to shoot one of those, if only to find out what its appeal is.

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It appears that the cardinal sin in the view of the wimp culture is that of being "judgmental." The only way to avoid being judgmental is to have no principles. We were given our brains in order to make judgments, and that includes value judgments. Values, by definition, are valuable, so by all means let us be judgmental! Jump into the argument and win!

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In a recent issue of *Safari Times* Terry Blauwkamp analyzed a questionnaire put to hunters in both North America and Africa to develop a body of doctrine which might be useful to aspirants, whether hunters or outfitters. The results were most interesting.

More than 40 African PH's responded to the questionnaire, and they pretty well corroborated what we have come to accept as proper African doctrine. By 28 to five the opinion was that hunters bring telescope sights that are too big. By 14 to one they voted against quick detachable mounts. Variable scopes were scorned – they were always set wrong at the wrong time. Reloaded ammunition was found reliable by a score of 34 to four. Factory ammunition was successful by a score of 31 to five. However, the majority questioned said that reloaders tend to be better shots than those who do not reload. Premium bullets were highly regarded – by a score of 29 to nine. The general opinion was that American hunters are "velocity crazy," always opting for the higher velocity and the lighter bullet in any given load, which is the reverse of what most of the African hunters recommend. And here is the item which indicates what the professional hunters base their observation on. The average number of shots taken to down an animal was 6.6.

The major point upon which I disagree with the majority of those questioned was the suitability of the 375 for buffalo. They liked it, I don't. Properly placed, a 375 will do for buffalo, but a bigger gun provides a certain edge, and if you are going to carry a bigger gun, I think you should make it a big one. (The matter of recoil control enters here, but I am not going to make much of that. Recoil effect upon the shooter is about 85 percent mental. Proper training, understanding and practice will handle it. There are those who say that some people are physiologically over-sensitive to recoil. If this is true, I suggest that the individuals involved should not hunt buffalo.)

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"If you don't mind being where you are, you are not lost."

Bruce Truter

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Those interested in criminology should reflect that back in the early 18th century there was a considerable piracy problem throughout the world, but concentrated heavily in the Caribbean and the Southeastern United States coast. It was solved in a rather obvious way. All governments concerned agreed that piracy on the high seas was a capital offense and should be punished by death. All pirates captured were hanged on the spot, regardless of extenuating circumstances. Piracy stopped.

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I only fired once on our recent hunt in Africa, but I had the chance to observe more field shooting on the part of other people than ever before. I learned many things. Ranges in the delta were longer on this occasion than previously, running up to just short of 300 paces. This did not reduce our score because everybody involved had been proven to be a good shot before coming along.

We found it a good practice to call one's shot on game, even more than on paper targets. Every time that striker goes forward the shooter should tell himself exactly where that shot went, immediately after working the bolt. We took much pleasure in "catch and release" hunting. This amounts to "snapping in" on game targets with an empty chamber. I particularly prize one such that I took on a particularly fine lion. I do not have his skin, but I have nearly equivalent satisfaction.

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One of the high points of this last hunt was a fire raid on an adjoining camp by an adventurous leopard. The cat broke into the kitchen when all hands were asleep, and located a rack of biltong hanging to cure above the butchering table. When he leaped up on the table it went over, breaking loose the pipeline on the gas-powered refrigerator. The pipe was brushed against something hot and caught fire. Much annoyed, the leopard rushed off into the dark, leaving the kitchen tent to burn almost to the ground. That is a new one in our experience.

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Our host up in the delta does business with all sorts of clients, and told us a tale of an interesting Chicago-type confrontation. Some of these hunters are disreputable types, and this one client proved no exception. He paid his obligations by check, and then when he was safely back in Chicago he stopped payment, his excuse being that the hunt did not turn out to be exactly what he wanted. Now this is definitely a

version of defrauding an innkeeper, but it is pretty hard for a hardworking PH from Southern Africa to bring suit against some rich kid in Chicago.

The matter turned out rather well, however. The following year Ian took out a group of "self-made Chicago businessmen" who had connections at home. When he told them the tale they looked serious and told him not to worry, the matter would be taken care of. As soon as they got back to base, they took steps. Immediately a new check was forthcoming, and this one was honored. There is much to be said for the way the brotherhood does business.

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I suggest you get your order in for your Steyr Scout before the crazies on the other side discover how efficient it is. The people who are terrified at the ownership of "automatic weapons" will have great cause for alarm if they ever find out about the Scout.

And when you get it, I recommend that you strip off the extensions on the butt. You want a Scout to be as compact as possible, and a short stock is a definite asset on the snap shot.

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(Contrary to what you might suppose, I do not receive one penny from either Steyr Mannlicher or Gun South Incorporated. I know that may be hard to believe on the part of the money-minded, but it is nonetheless the fact.)

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How many of you know what a *fossa* is? Neither did we. It turns out that the ferocious fossa (*ferox* is his specific name) is a sort of outsized mustelid that serves to keep down the population of lemurs on Madagascar. He is not a true weasel, however, since he has claws that retract like those of a cat, but he weighs about 50lbs and is conspicuously agile in the trees. As with his distant cousins the wolverine and the ratel, he shows no fear of man, but as of yet he has not killed anybody except lemurs. It amazes me never before to have heard of this fascinating beast.

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At the recent general meeting of the NRA in Philadelphia, we had occasion to talk briefly with *family member* John Milius, of cinematic fame. His situation in Hollywood, while eminently successful, is pretty dreary. He represents the tradition of American heroism, which the show people in general are trying to eradicate. For example, he told us that his "*Roughriders*" (the best movie we had seen in a long time) was not mentioned for any sort of recognition by the Hollywood establishment. The *New York Times* reviewer, moreover, complained that the *Roughriders* movie made us proud of our historic heritage, rather than ashamed, as we ought to have been. That's the word, "ashamed"! John is definitely swimming against the tide, and more power to him!

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"The desire to order other people around and make them conform to one own's vision takes many forms."

Thomas Sowell

Which emphasizes the great difference between those of us who are activist gun owners and other "extremists" who devote themselves to causes. Unlike the zealots who agitate for other causes, from tobacco bans to bunny hugging, we shooters have no wish to push other people around. Our major desire is that they leave us alone. It is odd that nobody has mentioned that difference before.

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Many of you are aware of the classic adventure tale "*Jock of the Bushveldt*" (if not, you should be). This work, written by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, has enjoyed intermittent periods of popularity ever since I was a school boy. Now it is being printed again, but note that it has become a victim of what may be called "fictional revisionism." Fitzpatrick, who knew very well of what he spoke, portrays the racial situation during the Low Veldt gold rush at the end of the last century just as it was, and, of course, it was not "politically correct." So a

couple of editors, with disgusting and immodest arrogance, have sought to "purify" this classic tale so as not to injure anyone's tender feelings. Thus it is that if you undertake to acquire a copy of "Jock," be sure you get it in unexpurgated form. In its new edited version, it suggests telling the story of Tarzan without the apes.

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"When the fog of battle closes in, victory is won by sergeants rather than generals."

### The Guru

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Anyone for "three weapon golf"? In this game you do your driving with a 60mm mortar, utilizing a smoke bomb. You make your approach with a hunting bow, using a 6 inch balloon as your target. You do your putting with a 1-second draw from the leather using the major-caliber pistol of your choice. Impossible, you say? I bet Bill Gates could arrange it if he cared to.

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It is widely assumed that feral domestic animals are more dangerous to their human associates than their wild brethren. (Okay, I am sorry about the passive voice, which my esteemed superior, General Cushman, told me never to use; so I will say, "I have always assumed this to be the case.") Just last year up in Zimbabwe the game rancher Allan Fisher was very nearly killed by a "pet" kudu that he had raised from infancy into a fully mature 50-inch bull. He was in the process of distributing food for his animals one morning when he was struck violently from behind and smashed to the ground. Kudu, unlike sable and roan, do not use their horns efficiently, and this one savaged Marsh with head and hooves, as well as with the points of his horns. Marsh got hold of the horns and the kudu dragged him here and there until losing him in a clump of trees. His shoulder had been crushed down into his thorax, collapsing a lung and driving his heart out of place. His condition was life-threatening for two days, and he may never regain the full use of his right arm.

This was a pet kudu, heretofore gentle and unaggressive. What went wrong? Your guess is as good as anyone's.

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"Statistically, fighting back is safer than giving in."

### Curt Rich

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This trigger-lock business is just about as ridiculous as any political issue can get. As we have pointed out before, if you want to render your handgun inoperative all you need to do is take it apart. With a solid frame revolver you need only snap a cheap padlock through its top strap. Why should you buy a trigger-lock? Well, obviously the answer is so that people who make, distribute and sell trigger-locks can prosper. This transparent marketing ploy is so obtuse that I would think even a politician could see through it.

If you have a mean little kid in your household, you are simply going to have to explain life to him. Trying to frustrate him by gadgetry is a futile pastime. A mischievous little kid can out-fathom any sort of restrictive device – while you wait.

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Despite what you may have read or heard, Charlton Heston's presidency is not going to change the NRA. Our principles are sound. Our philosophy is unassailable, and we are not out of any so-called "mainstream." It is the media which stand outside the mainstream in their ivory towers in the megalopolis. We in the NRA hope that Charlton Heston's extraordinary oratory and personal charisma may move these louts in the media into the mainstream.

As with most vital issues, the irreconcilables stand at either end and are not going to be moved by political pressure. It is the undecided in the middle who need to be convinced, and I think Mr. Heston is an ideal choice to do just that.

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I note with distaste that there are some people who have been graduated from Grey Gunsite who call themselves Gunsite graduates. Technically they are, but no one should ever confuse them with the *family* of Orange Gunsite graduates.

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There may be more to Philadelphia than meets the eye, but W.C. Fields could not find it, and neither could I when I was stationed there as a fresh-caught second lieutenant back in the dim, dead days before World War II. What Philadelphia does offer is Independence Hall, which every patriot should visit, and the Old Original Bookbinders restaurant, which is one of America's outstanding landmarks of gastronomy. As an officer in basic school, I was entitled to liberty (conditions permitting) from close of inspection on Saturday til Monday morning. It was my custom to make a beeline for the Bookbinders, where I would enjoy a bowl of snapper soup and one medium lobster, after which I would take the train for New York.

We were careful to drop in on the occasion of the NRA general meeting just past, and we can say with satisfaction that the restaurant is just the same as it was – except for the prices. I could afford to dine at the Bookbinders on a second lieutenant's pay in 1941, but no second lieutenant can eat there now unless someone else is buying him dinner – so much has inflation diminished our lifestyle in half a century.

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The more I see in the field and on the range, and the more I read in the magazines and see on the tube, the more I realize that nobody has been to school. Violations of correct technique are the rule, rather than the exception. It is a good thing that we have a couple of good texts on the market to show people the way, but considering how few people read, the future does not look bright.

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We all mourn the passing of Barry Goldwater, who enjoyed the title of "Mr. Conservative" for many years. He was an honest-to-God man, and he will be remembered for many years for a number of things, but his most powerful pronouncement, of course, was as follows:

"Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

The faint of heart will do well to study that pronouncement.

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 8

20 July, 1998

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## The Rains Came

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And they came right on the dot! Traditionally the summer rains are to commence on the 5th of July so as not to spoil the 4th of July parade. So that is exactly what happened. Congratulations on excellent timing on everybody's part!

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We were one and all dismayed at the murder of Marion Carl, one of the great aviators and a true hero. There is no need to recount his list of honors and achievements, but from our standpoint it is especially sad to note that General Carl, while unarmed, was shot dead by a goblin who broke into his house late at night and threatened his wife. General Carl attacked the intruder with his bare hands – and lost. As I understand it, he had a shotgun ready in the bedroom, but no gun is of any use if you cannot put your hand on it. This means, unfortunately, that you must wear your pistol, or at least have it ready to hand when anything unusual intrudes upon your home.

General Carl's murderer kicked in the door. Your door or doors should be very difficult to kick in. General Carl responded without his weapon. General Carl was a great man, and may God bless him, but, sad to say, he was an easy mark.

As Barrett Tillman put it, Valhalla is now nearly full.

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Excerpt from *The Prairie Traveler* (the best-selling classic handbook for America's Pioneers) by Randolph B. Marcy, Captain, US Army, 1859.

"Every man who goes into the Indian country should be armed with a rifle and revolver, and he should never, either in camp or out of it, lose sight of them. When not on the march, they should be placed in such a position that they can be seized at an instant's warning; and when moving about outside the camp, the revolver should invariably be worn in the belt, as the person does not know at what moment he may have use for it."

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The proliferation of "pocket 45s" has us somewhat bewildered. A pocket 45 is a good idea, but naturally it must be well-made and easy to use. We asked Jan Libourel, our colleague at Petersen's Handguns, for his recommendation and came to the conclusion that a straight forward Colt Commander still has much to recommend it, especially in the version with the shortened butt. All sorts of service nines are being offered, especially in Europe, but they are still nines. Using a 9mm pistol for self-defense is much like using a 375 on buffalo. Most of the time it will do – most of the time.

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We have looked into this matter of coating rifle bullets with molybdenum disulfide, and we conclude that while it has certain proven advantages, such as a cleaner bore and a slight improvement in coefficient of friction, these advantages are minor. I will take it, if offered, with pleasure, but I will not go out of my way to seek it.

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It is never safe to say that one has seen everything. Now, for example, we have seen somebody tack a

butt-cuff on a Steyr Scout!

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Police in Britain using a radar gun noted a reading of more than 300mph, just before their equipment fried. Seconds later a low-flying Harrier jet hurtled past. The police complained to the Royal Air Force about the damage to their equipment, but the police were told to consider themselves lucky. The Harrier's target-seeker had locked onto the radar and triggered an automatic retaliatory air-to-surface attack. Fortunately for the police, the Harrier was not armed with missiles."

Ken Pantling

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We have all noted (all, that is, except those people on the other side) that in states where it is now possible to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon, street crime has declined. The connection would seem obvious, but not, of course, to the *Brady Bunch*.

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This matter of terminology continues to perplex. In activities requiring dexterity, endurance, strategy, and skill it has become commonplace to refer to an expert as a "master." If one looks at the record, it becomes clear that a master is a teacher. He should be very good at what he does, but mainly he should be good at teaching what he knows. Consider, for example, the "headmaster" of a school. Thus a practitioner of weaponcraft should properly not be considered a master unless he regularly teaches his craft to others. In England in the Middle Ages masters of weaponry were licensed by the crown, and one of the interesting provisions was that once a master had attained that designation he was forbidden thereafter to compete in his activity.

Today almost anyone who has ever done well in a contest or been to school sees no shame in opening his own school, thus placing himself in the category of master, whether he knows it or not. The country today is awash in two-bit schools of pistolcraft. They will take your money and hand you a ticket, but whether you are any better with your weapon after graduation will depend entirely upon the competence of the master.

(Today I know of two proven and verifiable "shooting masters" – John Gannaway and Louis Awerbuck.)

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Times are tough out West. The peasantry have been reduced to eating sharks, and the aristocracy to drinking water!

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What does it take to be a master of weaponcraft?

First, it requires demonstrated expertise with the chosen weapon. A master need not be a world champion in competition, but he does need to be a dangerous competitor. He must be able to do everything that the weapon is capable of doing, and doing it on demand. He must be able to show his students exactly what is expected of them, while not, at the same time, intimidating them.

Second, the master must understand the theory of the technique of his instrument. He must know the geometry and physiology behind the shooting process. Generations of military and police instructors have got by without this by simply emphasizing "This is the way we do it!" While that may be good enough for government work, it is not the best way to success. I remember from long years ago an encounter with a great master of the saber. We youngsters depended almost entirely upon speed, but this gentleman showed us that speed was unimportant without timing. To demonstrate he would choose a pupil and then say exactly how and where he would hit him – and then do it. When your master can do that to you, you tend to believe what he says.

Third, the master must have a genuine desire to impart. Here is where the master differs from the mere expert. He must desire excellence in his students more than excellence in himself, and seek at all times to produce

that. We have all known some very good shots who have failed as teachers because of a lack of this essential desire.

Fourth, the master demonstrates "command presence," which is a combination of articulation, vocal tone, posture, and attitude. The master must be able to command without rank.

Obviously, true masters of weaponcraft are not common. During the time I ran the school at Gunsite, I sought continually for people who displayed the necessary qualifications, but I did not find a lot of people who made the grade. That is doubtless one reason why really good marksmanship is so rare. Very few practitioners are truly qualified to teach it.

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The classic Luger pistol, which introduced the now world-standard 9mm Parabellum cartridge, was given the year designation of 08, since it was adopted by the German army in 1908. Now, as we come onto its centennial, we see advertised in Germany the "Sport Luger 2008." It seems to be set up with all sorts of bells and whistles, including (for heaven's sake) a muzzle brake. It should certainly have a strong appeal for the "first kid on the block" pistolero.

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Generally speaking, the rifle is a slow-fire instrument. Hardly anyone gives serious thought to the problem of getting into action quickly, although speed of the first shot is by no means an inconsiderable attribute of the expert marksman. This means that rifle stocks, in general, are too long. A rifle with a short stock can be handled easily by a man with long arms, but a long stock is a problem for a man with short arms. One of the first things we do when we open a rifle class is to saw an inch or two of wood off the butt. This often hurts the feelings of the pride-of-ownership-people, but when they get to snap shooting the pain is lessened.

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The electronic disaster of Y2K approaches. You still have 17 months in which to throw away your computer.

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In reading a new essay on Sergeant Alvin York, the hero of World War I, we discover that his most trying experience during the war was his trip home. He embarked at Bordeaux and headed out across the storm-tossed Atlantic. He was dreadfully seasick for five days. This is an awful thing to contemplate. I know a certain amount about hardship, and enough about pain, but I think that of all man's afflictions nausea may be the worst. Even for a couple of hours it is terrible, but for five days it would seem entirely too much.

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Which brings us to considering another hero, Horatio Nelson, who spent almost his entire life at sea and who was invariably seasick whenever his ship got outside the breakwater. In his case, however, the affliction never lasted more than 12 hours. Still, for a man to devote his life to sea fighting with the ogre of seasickness sitting in his lap takes a particular sort of courage.

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As you may know, the gaboon viper is a big, strong, beautifully marked, and long-toothed snake inhabiting the low country of east Africa. In a recent anecdote we learn of a client who asked his PH about first-aid kits. Among other things he asked if there was any first-aid equipment for the bite of the gaboon viper. The PH responded that if he got solidly socked by a gaboon viper there would be no need for first aid.

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The Mauser people in Germany have brought out a brand new model which manifests no imagination at all. It may be advanced that the Mauser 98 is so good that it needs no modification. It is good all right, especially considering that it is exactly 100 years old, but it is not that good.

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English note:

A split infinitive is not a crime, but it should not be used by accident, only to emphasize meaning where such emphasis is needed.

We are now informed, by a good authority from Texas, that you may not now enter the Alamo carrying your pistol, even if you have all the necessary permits. "If'n that don' beat all!" Here we have a memorial temple dedicated to American fighting men, into which American fighting men may not bring weapons. I know historical anecdotes are no longer taught in schools, but I did not think that things were that bad yet in Texas!

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As you know, the British have no written constitution, and no Bill of Rights. Whatever the current majority in Parliament says is what goes, and the current leftist government in England makes no bones about its class hatred.

An English correspondent has told us the only man who entered Parliament with the right idea was Guy Fawkes. You will remember that he was the guy who tried to blow the whole place up.

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On John Gannaway's triumphant desert sheep hunt last fall, he targeted his beast at something over 300 yards, and John does not exaggerate. The specialty journalist would have taken that shot, and later have expanded it to about 400. John, on the other hand, who is a master hunter, wormed his way up to 75. This can be done even with a mountain sheep by the right man.

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We note that by mutual agreement the same man may be at the same time a citizen of both the United States and Mexico. This policy is called "dual citizenship." This would seem to be politically and philosophically unsound. A citizen must be prepared to risk his life for his country. Which country? If it comes to blows – and it might – on which side will the "Mexican-American" fight?

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It seems the feds now are requiring an accuracy test for federally-purchased handguns which calls for a 2-inch group (or is it 2.5) at 25 yards. Just what this has to do with the subject is obscure. The service pistol intended for close combat is going to be used at indoor distances by people who cannot shoot for sour apples. Imposing an accuracy test on such arms suggests the proverbial definition of a fanatic as "one who redoubles his efforts after he has lost sight of his goals."

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And this bench group obsession seems to have run away with a great number of rifleman who apparently think that a small group diameter fired from a bench at a fixed range, usually 100 yards, is the ultimate test of rifle quality.

Well now, small groups are fine, and we all like them, but bench groups are essentially irrelevant. If you wish to evaluate a rifle's quality, I suggest the *MFR* standard. *MFR* stands for *Maximum Field Radius*, and it is established thus:

The rifle is fired in two-shot pairs, standing-to-sitting, at 100 yards. Time is 10 seconds from standing looped to sitting (or kneeling) position, unsupported. The ten shots thus achieved will form a group, but its diameter is not its true measure – rather group radius, from group center to the worst shot of the ten, is the index of the combination. The lower the figure the better.

You cannot do a good *MFR* index without an accurate rifle, but this index tests more than that. An *MFR* of 3 inches is good. One of 2 inches is excellent. Bench group diameter does not count.

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"If you look like a rabbit, and act like a rabbit, you will be treated like a rabbit – prey for all predators."

Stony Loft

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Have you heard about the Communitarians? Neither had we, but they exist. They are organized, and they constitute something of a pain in the posterior. Their guru is one Amitaj Etzioni, and his in-house propagandist is Abd el Malik. These people have decided what is wrong with the United States, and one of the things they find wrong is the popular possession of personal firearms. Their idea of the way to go is Japan. (Japan?) I do not know where these people originated (Turkey? Yemen?), but their presumption in teaching political philosophy to Americans is insufferable. They are so far off the track I cannot consider them to be a menace, if it were not for the fact that they appear to have several followers in that menagerie at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue – not pointing. Turks have always been something of a problem, but let us see that these do not get over the wall.

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The more expert gardeners in our neighborhood are already enjoying their off-the-vine tomatoes. The Arabs maintain that a beautiful woman is evidence of the existence of God – and one might also opine that a fresh garden tomato, like an ear of corn fresh off the stalk, is also evidence of God's benison. We have a short growing season here in the high country of Arizona, but possibly we enjoy it all the more because of that.

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Continuing in our hopeless struggle for precise semantics we ask somebody to tell us just what exactly is a "terrorist." My own notion is that a terrorist is one who is ready to kill a third party, who is not involved in the discussion, in order to coerce a first party by appealing to his humanity. That, apparently, is not the generally accepted definition.

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One of the most tiresome shibboleths floating around is the notion of "a constitutional separation of church and state." Anyone can read the Constitution, but in this age of television I suppose very few people read anything. If one reads the Constitution he will discover that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or interfering with the free exercise thereof." That states very clearly that the federal government cannot pass a bill saying that the Catholic church, for example, is the established religion of the United States. That is what it says. It says nothing about any separation, which idea was the creation of Thomas Jefferson. Whether Mr. Jefferson is right or not is irrelevant. There is no constitutional separation of church and state. Read it!

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I wish people would quit putting the leopard in the category of "*the Big Five*." Up until recently that was more properly "*the Big Four*." Certainly the leopard is fast and scratchy, but he is not big.

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These newfangled pop range finders are very humbling. It was decided long ago in the American sporting world that every hunter is morally bound to exaggerate the range at which he took his animal. This has resulted in the idea that if you cannot deck your animal way out past Fort Mudge, you are a no-count. I have had students in rifle classes come up to me upon occasion troubled by the fact that they did not seem to be shooting as well as they ought to. As a matter of fact, they were usually shooting very well, it was just that they had been reading too many gun writers. The range finder might do something to correct this, but I doubt it. A man can lie about his range finder reading as easily as he can about the length of his pace.

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A new passion in the firearms industry seems to be the construction of so-called "sniper rifles." Just what these are for is not easy to say, for successful sniping is far more a matter of marksmanship than of equipment, but these items are apparently easy to sell to various sorts of government agencies, and if they will sell, the industrialists will make them. A new entry into the field is a version of the elegant R93 from Blaser – but this time made up in black livery and all sorts of bells and whistles, including (for heaven's sake) a Harris bipod. I suppose every rifle aficionado feels he must have a specially made, long-range "bull" gun – not because he needs it, but because he wants it, and after all, wanting it is the main reason for the purchase of personal arms.

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We have all sorts of candidates for the *Waffenpösselhaft* award for '98, but one which stands out is the exploit of the chief of police of Madison, Wisconsin, who opted to store his service pistol in the oven – with foreseeable results. There being no appropriate penalty for "terminal stupidity" in his department, the chief put

himself under fire for "violation of department policy."

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In reading continually into US history I discover to my surprise that personal firearms amongst the pioneers were not nearly as common as I had thought. For example, the majority of recruits volunteering for Stonewall Jackson's command in the Civil War showed up not only without shoes, but also without guns. Evidently the only gun within reach had to stay at home with pa and ma. In some cases, Jackson put unarmed men in his second and third waves, instructing them to pick up weapons dropped by casualties in the first rank.

We think of the American pioneer as invariably in possession of his ax and his rifle. That was obviously the way it should have been, but sometimes was not.

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I have had such a response to my query about the purpose of education that we might even be advised to hold a true seminary on the point, preferably in Scottsdale while the summer rates are still in force. Scottsdale may be a furnace in August, but as long as you are indoors you do not suffer.

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We hear overmuch about "self-esteem" as a goal in elementary education. The older term "self-respect" seems more to the point. The difference is that self-respect must be earned by conscientious endeavor, but self-esteem seems to be offered simply to any child who is alive and breathing. Teaching a young person that he is excellent simply because he is there is not the route to producing good citizens.

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From *family member* Ken Pantling in England we get the following news item:

"During a bungled surveillance operation a policeman opened fire on two innocent suspects thinking that he had been shot by one of them. He later realized that he had, in fact, shot himself, in the leg."

The Brits may be ahead of us on the way to total insignificance, but not by much.

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Now we have seen a brand new Walther 10mm service pistol in bright green. What will they think of next!

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"The generation that emerged to lead the colonies into independence was one of the most remarkable group of men in history – sensible, broad-minded, courageous, usually well educated, gifted in a variety of ways, mature, and long-sighted, sometimes lit by flashes of genius. It is rare indeed for a nation to have at its summit a group so variously gifted as Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and Adams"

*A History of the American People*, by Paul Johnson

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We note with some amusement that this Viagra business has produced more than one interesting spinoff. It has reduced the black market value of powdered rhino horn, and thus reduced rhino poaching in black Africa. (Note: There is little or no rhino poaching in the south.)

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"Well, Bill [Bill Hickok] was a pretty good shot. But he could not shoot as quick as half a dozen men we all knew in those days, nor as straight either. But Bill was cool, and the men who he went up against were rattled, I guess. Bill beat them to it. He made up his mind to kill the other man before the other man had finished thinking."

Buffalo Bill (Bill Cody) in an interview conducted 10 January 1917 and written up in *Outdoor Life* via W.H. MacFarlane

That pretty well tells us what we need to know about mindset.

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"If one does not fail at times, one has not challenged himself sufficiently."

Ferdinand Porsche

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 9

August, 1998

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## High Summer

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"...an the livin is easy; fish is jumpin and the cotton is high." Yes, indeed. We have just returned from a circuit of a big chunk of the Southwest (Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico) and we report that the summer out this way is indeed bountiful. Corn, tomatoes, fresh fruit, and all manner of good things are all there waiting to be scooped up and enjoyed; besides which, autumn is approaching, and that, of course, is the finest time of the year. Get out and get into that practice with your rifle. The consensus is that 200 rounds (not from the bench rest!) are necessary for a proper level of understanding. Do not overlook the snapshot, the quick second shot, and rapid acquisition of position.

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We stopped by at Whittington and can report that progress on the *Sporting Rifle Trail* is well underway. The range house has been constructed and bids fair to be a snug lounge for our students and participants. It has a concrete floor, and it is constructed solidly of logs with an interior 30x22 feet – cool in the summer, warm in the winter. The field course has been laid out and we have eight steel reactive targets on station. Eventually we intend to have two parallel trails separated by a ridge line, with 12 targets on each trail. A man cannot achieve satisfying revenge by repeating the same course, so we will offer the opportunity to run a similar but different course from the same starting point.

Mike Ballew, the Whittington honcho, informs me that he will be putting in both a bench and a chronograph at the range house for those who wish to sort things out before taking the field. Some of you have already donated targets, and this will be duly noted on the role of honor. Others may wish to donate furnishings such as tables, chairs, wall decorations, rugs, and racks.

It looks like we have a good thing going here. We hope to have it at least initially operable in time for the reunion.

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When we reported on John Gannaway's approach on his desert ram, we were in error. He pulled that off on a pronghorn. The principle, of course, is the same.

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A prospective student in one of next year's rifle classes has written asking us just what sort of rifle he should build for the occasion. Let me emphasize that we do not build the weapon for the course, we adjust the course to the weapon. If you are coming to school bring the rifle you enjoy shooting the most. We stipulate that it should be of 6mm bore-size or larger and be equipped with a shooting sling. Most students bring a glass sight, but this is not necessary. We all understand the advantages of the telescope sight, and we all use it, but if we review our field experiences carefully, we probably find that much of the time we really did not need it. In my own case I once ran upon a situation in which the telescope sight was a positive hindrance. In any event, do not bring a rifle mounting a telescope sight of 6 power or more. This is one situation in which more is not better.

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When one thinks about it, it is obvious that the line of sight for iron sights must necessarily be lower than that for the telescope. When the telescope is mounted as low over the bore as possible, which is as it should be, the shadow image of the iron sights may intrude upon the field of vision unless the iron sights are foldable. It is

possible to attack this problem by making the folding iron sights quite high over the bore so that they match the axis of the telescope. This makes them vulnerable to bumps and jars. On the other hand, if the iron sight line is kept low it makes it difficult to achieve when the face is properly mounted on the comb of the rifle. The answer is simply to scooch forward so the cheek bone rides down in front of the comb. This may be uncomfortable for some people, and certainly unusual, but reserve iron sights are just that, reserve, only to be put into use when an elephant has stepped on the telescope. (You always pack a spare telescope when you venture far afield.) A couple of people have complained that one must scooch in this fashion when using the iron sights on the Steyr Scout. So scooch!

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From our man in Britain we now hear of what may be the ultimate turnabout. It appears that these people brought their delicate pet cat to a vet because it had been – get this – bitten by a mouse. I suppose this must be considered a triumph for the tactical mouse.

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We have been considering this matter of the "medium" cartridge, which lies between the 30s and the heavies. One can get by without a medium, since the 30-caliber rifle, well used, will do what needs to be done, but the mediums are fun to shoot and they may in truth surpass the 30s for some particular uses.

By "medium," in this case, I mean a cartridge of 9mm or .38 bore-size propelling a 250-grain bullet at between 2400 and 2600f/s. The top of the mediums, of course, is the venerable 375 Holland and Holland, which has been around since before the wars. The 375 is a nice cartridge and it is more or less standard in Africa. It is, however, a long, cumbersome cartridge, which makes it basically unsuitable for compact rifles. The late lamented 350 Remington Magnum was apparently ahead of its time. Everyone I know who has used that was delighted with it, and especially so since it could be had in that nifty Remington 660 carbine.

The question arises as to what a medium is for. I suppose it is excellent for a man who lives in Alaska, who harvests his winter moose regularly, and must be ready for a close encounter with a big bear. A 30-06 will certainly satisfy such a man, but a handy medium might make him even happier. Overseas, the first reason for a medium is the lion – and the tiger too, if tigers are still huntahle as they are by game rangers in India. The eland, giant of the antelopes, comes to mind. He is not a particularly tough animal, but he is huge, and the extra power of a good medium might prove comforting. And then there are the lesser oxen – the banteng, the takin – and the zebra, twice as tough as he should be.

And then there is that curious regulation found in parts of Africa requiring a weapon of at least .375 inches in bore if anything "dangerous" is to be assaulted. This is a silly rule, of course, since there are plenty of large-bore, low-capacity cartridges which qualify as light, rather than medium rifles. "Dangerous" even includes the leopard, which almost never reaches 200lbs in weight and is taken at short range.

So, while I do not really need a medium rifle, I confess that I am very fond of my Lion Scout.

The trouble is that there does not exist at this time a properly compact medium cartridge, since the effective demise of the 350 Remington Mag. We have discussed this with some cartridge people and have come to feel that the 404 Jeffery case, shortened enough to fit into a 308-length action and necked to 375, might be a good idea. Certainly our selection of cartridges at this time would seem to overflow, but as long as people like to play around with such things, this might be a good project to play around with.

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"Crime and insecurity are both aspects of the crisis of Western society at the close of the millennium. This sense of helplessness, itself fueled by the government's monopolization of the means of force, is then used by the central state to justify suppressing still more personal liberties and the right to self-defense. The state presents this process as natural and logical, as the only solution to the problems that plague us. But it is nothing of the sort. It is simply government doing what government does best: monopolizing power."

Jeremy Black, in *Chronicles*, January 1998

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The Great White Shark is now protected in South Africa, and just this season there have been six shark attacks off the southeast coast. Surfers sitting astride their boards outside the surf line with legs hanging down are pretty attractive targets. Of course, these attacks may not necessarily be attributed to the White Shark, as the Bull Shark is commonly found close inshore. Speculation is nonetheless interesting.

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Here is a really wild one we ran across up in Colorado. It seems some newschick printed a piece about an event in which a police officer was shot "with a loaded gun." The aspects of ridicule deriving from this account are so numerous as to defy listing. Perhaps one of the readers of this paper would like to submit his offering about how terrible it is for a police officer to be shot with a loaded gun. The winner of the contest will be allowed to shoot his next pistol match with an unloaded gun and simply announce his winning score.

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Several people have asked me if I have come up with a proper name for my own version of the Steyr Scout, currently referred to as "Old Number 6." The name I have almost settled on is Galatea. I think I will wait, however, until Steyr Mannlicher, in conjunction with Hirtenberger and Hornady, have actually produced a "heavy scout." A heavy scout will not be a true scout, of course, because it will be overweight and it will take an oddball cartridge in place of the universally available 308. Not a big problem. Some people may want two rifles.

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Guru say: "When shooting from the kneeling position use your knee!"

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*Family member* Hershel Davis is back from Africa with an account of a buff that had been solidly heart shot with a heavy rifle and who did not seem to notice it very much. Karamojo Bell would not have you take this sort of thing seriously, but we hear of it all too often. The consensus among my African friends is that a buffalo can keep his feet and keep attacking for 12 minutes after being shot through the heart. I can only wonder who was holding the stop watch, but the notion is nonetheless commonplace.

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Since the United Nations organization is so fond of passing pointless resolutions, I suggest one banning the provision of high explosives to ragheads. (The State Department answer to this situation, on the other hand, is to turn tail and run. Those goonies want to scare us out, and they are doing a good job. Where is George Patton when we need him!)

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On our recent African excursion we were privileged to chat for a while with the famous Harry Selby, one of the old time professional hunters who is still around to talk about the good old days. Harry was an old buddy of Robert Ruark, but his best known anecdote concerns the time when he was very nearly done in by a zebra, while the locals stood around and laughed up a storm.

Harry maintains that the magazine rifle is absolutely superior to the double, thus putting him on one side of an age old and continuing argument.

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"What you've got to admire about Bill Clinton is his sincerity, especially when he doesn't mean it."

Mike Rosen in *The Denver Post*

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I forget when I first dreamed up the color code, but it was a long time ago. I have been teaching it and preaching it, practically forever, but I never seem to have got it across! The color code is not a means of assessing danger or formulating a tactical solution. It is rather a psychological means of overcoming your

innate reluctance to shoot a man down. Normal people have a natural and healthy mental block against delivering the irrevocable blow. This is good, but in a gunfight it may well get you killed. The color code enables you to change your state of mind by three steps, each of which enables you to overcome your mental block and take lifesaving action.

There, I have said it again, but I have no strong belief that it is going to catch on any more than previously.

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It seems only reasonable for you to use only good ammunition in any firearm from which you expect important results. It is perfectly forgivable to use junk ammunition for play and plinking (provided you clean your piece thoroughly after each session), but do not put junk ammunition in the chamber if results are what you are after. Among other things, military ammunition is often fitted with insensitive primers which invite misfires. A misfire rate of about 1 in 10 is acceptable on the range, but not in the field.

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Western history buffs realize that the opening of the American frontier was a function of firearms technology. As long as the backwoods farmer had only one shot available without reloading, any small group of Indians in a bad mood could fire up their courage to take him on, but when repeating firearms came into common use this situation changed permanently.

The Texas Rangers, fabled in song and story, found that by going knee-to-knee with the Comanches their six shooters were an insurmountable advantage.

Then, of course, the Spencer carbines appeared. They were not very much in the way of ballistics, but they kept on shooting, and the Indian raiding system, which depended upon greatly superior numbers at the point of contact, no longer worked.

Thus it is that before the Civil War the Comanches kept the Texas frontier pretty well closed, but when repeating firearms became commonplace the West was won.

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I am sometimes accused of picking semantic nits, but the precise meaning of words is not a trivial matter. For example, just now we are up to our ears in problems deriving from the "Endangered Species Act" and these problems have their root in the fact that no one really knows how to define the word "species." As with the term "machinegun," the regulators can regulate anything by simply insisting that they know what they are talking about, when actually they do not.

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In considering telescope reticles, bear in mind that the fine wire is for paper. The coarse wire is for the field. Personally I prefer the coarse wire. It does well enough on paper, and it does better on serious targets. The trouble here is that most people shoot mainly at paper and form their conclusions from what is actually an unrealistic set of conditions.

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Our great good friend Danie van Graan is now afield up in the Zambezi Delta with the elegant little "Co-pilot" fabricated by Jim West, of Anchorage, Alaska. This piece, as you may know, is a "chopped and channeled" Marlin 45-70 fitted with a muzzle brake, a John Wayne lever, and ghost-ring sights – also featuring a quick takedown which reduces it to almost pocket size. The 45-70 is an elegant cartridge for heavy game at ranges of under 100 yards. Danie is after lion and buffalo, and his shots will almost certainly be under 50 yards. Jolly good show!

(We note that the Marlin Company followed in Jim West's footsteps in their production of the "Guide Gun." I have not used one but I note that it does not take down and it does not have ghost-ring sights. I suspect that the Marlin people feel that the customer will fit their Guide Gun with glass sights, which is a step backwards in this concept.)

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We can debate at length about a boy's first gun. There are all sorts of opinions about this and many of them have merit, but in my view, the kid's first firearm should be a single-shot 22 fitted with aperture sights and a butt-cuff. If the boy is a respectable citizen, intelligent and well disciplined, he may be turned loose with a single-shot 22 (by himself) with perfect safety, as long as he has memorized The Four Rules. I do not think there is any reason to assume that all children are idiots. That many of them are is more of a reflection upon their parents than upon themselves.

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In re-reading Karamojo Bell, we note again his predilection for the 7x57 cartridge. He did a lot of elephants with the delightful little 1903 6.5 carbine from Mannlicher, but he preferred the 7 when he could get it. He emphasized that what is needed for proper effect with this cartridge was a long, heavy bullet, straight-sided and with an almost hemispherical point and a very heavy jacket, either of cupro nickel or copper-washed steel. Note that the ballistic potential of the 7x57 and the 7-08 are practically identical. Bell, who was fond of light weight handy guns, would be delighted with an SS in 7x57.

Bell's doctrine, which like most such things can be carried to extremes, was "Hit him right and almost anything will put him down. Hit him wrong and nothing will put him down."

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Those of you who are standing in line for your Steyr Scout should remember that those pieces are released in this country with triggers set too heavy. The trigger is adjustable for weight by the owner without recourse to a gunsmith, but only if he knows how. Instructions should be available with the weapon, but somehow they get lost. The over-the-counter trigger comes through in most cases nicely crisp, but too heavy. I suggest a release weight of 40oz for starters.

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A considerable storm is brewing over the location of the national meeting of the NRA for 1999 in Denver. This decision was reached some time ago, but just recently the Denver City Council made permanent an ordinance which enables the arresting officer to confiscate your car if he finds that you have a gun in it. This is called "municipal carjacking," and it would certainly appear unsound for the National Rifle Association to gather in a city in which such a rule is in place. The "authorities" insist that this is only to be the function of "discretionary enforcement" – that is to say that the cop will only swipe your car if you look like a bad guy. This sort of thing is pretty much the rule in Latin America. I do not think we need it here.

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A European customer recently asked me why the United States went back down to 9mm after some 80 years of successful employment of the 45 ACP. This is a good subject for a competitive essay contest. Those of you who supply the most pungent answer to this question may go to the head of the class.

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The ideal mountain rifle at this time may be the Blaser Kipplaufbuchse. It is a beautifully made single-shot, top-break rifle that weighs about as much as a heavy dictionary. Hunters who scramble after the beasties which prefer to live way up there in the crags need not worry about volume of fire. One shot is what you get, so why weigh yourself down? The little gun was chosen "rifle of the year" in Germany. I have handled it, but not shot it. It is so light that it will probably kick in a full-sized cartridge, but in a 6 or a 6.5, it should be most pleasant. It is designed expressly for chamois, but it should do equally well for all sorts of mountain sheep.

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The general-purpose rifle, of course, is the Steyr Scout, but the fact that it will indeed do everything appears to annoy some people. There are those who insist that the joy of rifle shooting consists in the ownership of a whole armory full of different rifles, not just one for every day of the week, but at least for every day of the month. I suppose the SS will disappoint such people, since it will do anything they need to do – with the exception of elephant and buffalo – and do it better than more specialized weapons. I guess this spoils the fun.

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"You need only reflect that one of the best ways to get yourself a reputation as a dangerous citizen these days is to go about repeating the very phrases which our founding fathers used in their struggle for independence."

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C.A. Beard

We recently ran across another example of the unsatisfactory performance of the misbegotten US 30-caliber carbine used in the latter part of World War II and in Korea. In this case the Jap soldier attempted to run clear and was taken under fire by one of the Marines with a 30 carbine. The range was not specified (as is usually the case), but he managed to hit this Nip five times and his friends could see the dust flying from the back of the jacket. The Nip ran on away, to be found dead later.

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I never did like that piece and I still do not.

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When using either the bench rest or the bipod, the butt is tucked into the shoulder with the supporting hand rather than placed forward on the rifle. We thought everybody knew that, but from the pictures in the magazines I guess we were wrong.

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In another recent account we heard of a "gun writer" who attempted to zero a 450-caliber British carbine and expended half his ammunition supply just getting on target. There are ways to get on target with no more than two rounds, but apparently you do not have to know your subject to be a technical writer.

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From a correspondent in South Africa comes yet another case of faulty stopping power, but this time with a handgun. Our friend was dozing in front of the televiser when suddenly he opened one eye to behold an intruder standing in front of him, raised knife in hand. The pistol, a 380 self-loader, was within reach and our friend fired one shot, which took his assailant in the upper chest. No result. The two men then grappled, and while the knife was blocked the pistol was emptied into the torso of the attacker, who finally fell down.

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Moral: If you choose to use a minor-caliber handgun remember that your only quick stop area is that of the eye sockets.

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It has always seemed to me that when a test or trial system is designed it should be valid. That is, it should test what is being attempted in a serious fashion. Thus, with weaponcraft, a good course of pistol fire should emphasize and accentuate the solution of problems which a pistol may be realistically called upon to solve. When I was involved in IPSC I endeavored to do this, but I found that most of the competitors were more interested in trickery than they were in excellence, and they wound up designing courses of fire which were in no way related to actual weaponry. This is okay, I guess, since it turns out that most shooters are not serious practitioners of weaponry, but are likely to be primarily interested in winning games of one sort or another. However, this bothered me then and it bothers me now. If, when you are faced with a competitive course of fire, you can ask the designer what it is for and be answered with no more than a shake of the head, you have established that it does not really matter whether you do well on the course or not.

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It was pointed out to me recently that various people setting up courses of rifle fire seem to feel that rifle courses should simply be pistol courses extended in range. We customarily shoot twice per target with a pistol because once is not certain to stop the fight, but this is clearly not true of rifle fire. One good hit with a rifle takes care of the problem. There is no point in shooting a man in the chest with a rifle and then shooting him again, assuming he is still standing up to permit you to do so. The difficulty here is that courses of fire which demand an instantaneous second shot make a certain sense with a pistol, but not with a rifle, and they reward the self-loading rifle out of proportion to its worth. Now that various parts of the world (England, Australia, South Africa) forbid the use of the self-loading rifle in public hands, this effectively divides rifle shooting into military and civilian categories, which is neither desirable politically nor reasonable technically. If you ever enter a rifle match and the managers tell you that you must hit a certain target twice in a row, you may well ask "Why should I?" and walk away.

As between the single-stage or shotgun trigger, and the two-stage or military trigger, I have always favored the latter, having grown up on it. It does take a little practice to be sure that one does not "go through" with a military trigger, but somehow I think this adds to precise control. The radical single-stage trigger release of the Blaser R93 is a wonderful thing to use and enjoy, but the two-stage trigger on Galatea is equally pleasant. They both break at about 26oz, and that takes some getting used to, but once you have got it, you have really got it.

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Will somebody please tell the Vice President of the United States that carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is not a pollutant, but rather is absolutely necessary to carbon cycle life?

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 9

supplement, 1998

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## Update on the SS Supplement to Comentaries

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A meeting was held last Saturday in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss current thinking on the status of the Steyr Scout rifle. In attendance were John Gannaway, Giles Stock, Heinz Hambrusch, and Jeff Cooper. Our objective was to discuss the reception, most specifically the complaints, thus far noted on the weapon as currently being sold. Some of the complaints so far deserve full consideration. Some are worth considering. And some are perfectly idiotic. However that may be, all objections to the rifle must be placed on the table and talked about.

It is important to remember (especially for me to remember), at this point, that there is a considerable divergence in objectives when one considers the design of a firearm. This is particularly true when the weapon is radical and does not follow the beaten path. The scout rifle as now designed (conceived by me and executed by Steyr Mannlicher) is indeed radical, and that in itself dismays many traditionalists. From the beginning it has been my idea to make the rifle right, and the idea of the manufacturer to make it sell. What is right does not necessarily sell, and what sells is not necessarily right, though your definitive businessman may not agree.

It is obviously desirable from the standpoint of the manufacturer that the Steyr Scout rifle sell widely and immediately. Since I am not involved in the finances of the operation, I want to see the weapon qualify as the standard of the world for the first part of the 21st Century. Whether it sells or not, of course, that is the view of the shooter rather than that of the salesman.

The first major difficulty that I have detected is a quality that I would have thought desirable, and that is universal utility. I discover, somewhat to my surprise, that a great many people do not like the idea of universal utility. They would prefer to have a piece which is perfect for shooting prairie dogs on Monday, and another which is useful for generalized police work on Tuesday. The Steyr Scout has achieved very nearly perfect utility in one piece, but that is not evidently what the arms collector wants to think about. We cannot do much about that because the ideal of the universal rifle is basic to the scout concept. People who want specialty guns are welcome to buy as many different specialties as they wish.

A second major concern which I did not anticipate is this popular rage for cartridge diversification. I have always thought that overwhelming variety in cartridge selection was a drawback when almost any cartridge will do well if it is well used. Thus it was my idea to produce the weapon in the most universally obtainable serious cartridge in the world, which is the 308, or 7.62 NATO. Immediately we heard cries from people who want the piece to be available in some other cartridge, not because the suggested other cartridge is better, but because it is different. As you know, the production of the weapon in 7-08 was contemplated for use in jurisdictions where 30-caliber rifles are forbidden by law. Turns out that demand is pretty small. Many of the Swedes want the piece to be available in 6.5 Swedish, apparently because they have a lot of that ammunition available and nothing to shoot it in. The 6.5 Swede is an adequate cartridge, but inferior in all respects to the 308. As of now the only other cartridge which seems to be forthcoming in the Steyr Scout is the 376 JCS, of which more later.

If we turn to more serious complaints, we hear of people who report inconsistent ignition with the SBS action. This appears to be the result of the use of inferior ammunition, especially military ammunition made in marginal countries. I should think that if one is going to use a gun for any serious purpose he will use the best ammunition available, and test it before putting it to serious use. I see no objection to shooting junk ammunition for play, rock busting, etc., but not as "main battery ammunition." Still, circumstances might arise in which one had no choice, and we attacked that problem by considering alterations on the face of the striker tip, and also its diameter. Those changes may be forthcoming.

We have several opinions that the bolt lift calls for too much force, and slows down the operation of the bolt. I do not find this to be the case, but if some other shooter does we must listen to him. One answer to this was the future construction of a two-piece bolt handle by means of which the individual shooter may fit any sort of bolt handle or bolt knob that pleases him. ("Build your own bolt knob.")

My most serious objection to the piece as it now stands is that it is not available in left-hand version. I do not want to get ahead of myself here, but I detect a willingness on the part of the factory to take this matter seriously. At least the matter of filling in the bolt handle groove on the right-side of the stock was discussed, as a minor aesthetic problem. I suggest you stay tuned on this one.

Stock color is a subject which fills me with exasperation, but there it is. It seems that various prospective customers simply must have stocks of a color different from the standard grey. This is not a manufacturing problem, of course, and the factory seems inclined to give the customer anything he wants, including, I suppose, a lavender version for queers. To show how silly this can get, one commentator from Sweden, where flame orange for hunters is required (as in some of the sillier parts in the United States), requested a snow camouflage stock pattern, presumably so that even if the quarry can see him, it cannot see his rifle. Curiouser and curioser!

I have had considerable success with color-coding, in various ways, and I strongly suggest to the manufacturer that the composition stock lends itself to this. If the 376 JCS version comes to pass, it should have a stock of a color different from that of the 308. And the magazine, too. It would not do to confuse those.

A further odd problem has arisen in connection with the trigger-action. The trigger on my personal piece, "Galatea," is two-staged and breaks beautifully at 26 ounces. It was set for me at Whittington by Steyr engineer Elmar Bilgeri, and presumably can be set that way by any individual owner, if he knows how, without recourse to gunsmith tools. However, the factory will not supply that trigger over-the-counter for fear of litigation. (In a society where anybody can sue anyone for anything, this terror of the courts strikes me as not only unreasonable but cowardly. I want the gun to be right. The distributor wants the gun to be impervious to product liability action. We can make the gun right, but we cannot do anything about product liability action.)

It seems odd to me that no one so far has made any mention in the press of the night-light rail which comes on the piece over-the-counter. There are a number of places where one cannot hunt legitimately after dark, but this does not take pest control into account. All sorts of pests, four-legged or two-legged, may wander into your compound at 2 o'clock in the morning on a dark night. If you slip the night light on your SS, which rides next to your bed after dark, you can respond to that alert out by the garage in expert fashion. When you have a suspected target you point in from the shoulder, and with your left hand touch the light switch. You do not use the light as an aiming index, since when you glance through the glass you can see your crosswire right there in the middle of the illumination spot. This is a "*Good Thing*," but while everybody with a typewriter seems to want to discuss group size, no one, so far, seems to have used that night light.

On the subject of group size, I have nothing to say. The SS, as it comes over-the-counter, is a tack driver. Using good ammunition, it will shoot better than any shooter can shoot it.

Hirtenberger of Austria has now completed studies on the 376 JCS, a medium cartridge short enough to fit into a short action and offering a distinct step upwards in power over the 308. This cartridge meets the African bore-diameter floor and should take a 260-grain partition or solid bullet out the 19-inch muzzle at 2500f/s. (I hope the Swift people will build suitable bullets of this weight and diameter, and wash them with molybdenum disulfide for good measure, in factory loadings.)

The 376 JCS rifle will have to be slightly overweight because of its necessarily heavier barrel, but this increase need not be more than half-a-pound. Naturally the cartridge will be a proprietary item and not readily available at the corner hardware store. I think those who feel the need for more muscle can put up with these drawbacks, if that is what they are. The JCS cartridge should be superb for the Alaskan whose targets are moose and big bear, as well as for the lion hunter. You can get more power, but hardly in a scout package.

The sighting system calls for further development in the future. I have been happy up till now with the Burris and Leupold scoutsopes, but there is room for improvement, especially in the direction of the fixed glass with all adjustments in the mount. (We have already heard of people mounting goofy glasses on scouts, just why I cannot say. Parry's rule is, "If I can see it, I can hit it." Gadgeteers should bear that in mind.)

However much I may dislike it, people will immediately start hanging gadgets on their scouts. The idea was to keep the weight down, the length short, and the protuberances minimal. People who do not understand this might do well to go back to their Martian guns.

You may not believe this but one customer actually quarreled with the fluted barrel, crying that the edges of the flutes were so sharp that they cut his tender fingers. Herr Hambrusch suggests that he shoot the gun enough so that the barrel becomes too hot to touch, thus obviating that problem. But, of course, a salesman must not jeer at the customer. That is the reason I have never been able to be a good salesman.

The conclusive criticism is the price. We must be gentle about this because regardless of what you see on the tube, a lot of people seem to be distressingly short of cash. But the price of the scout is not going to come down. Considering what you must pay at a good restaurant for a good dinner, which will be only a memory tomorrow, the Steyr Scout, which will last you the rest of your life, is a conspicuous bargain. If you must make do with a junk gun you can get it for a lot less money than an SS. And it will shoot, and that may be your only overriding consideration. Most, however, do not acquire guns because they absolutely must have them, but rather because the possession of a fine instrument enriches the quality of life. So shoot what you have now until you can afford a scout, and thereafter be happy.

Which leads me to one last point. I have a friend and client who is quite well off and lives elegantly on the elegant coast of California. Among his other possessions he prizes a Ferrari and two Scouts. The question before the house is: Is it "cooler" to have two Scouts and a Ferrari, or to have two Ferrari and one Scout?

Jeff Cooper  
August 26, 1998

The foregoing is a supplement to, but not a substitute for, the high summer edition of Jeff Cooper's Commentaries. (Vol. 6, No. 9)

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 10

September, 1998

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## Summer's End

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And none too soon for us. Warm weather is all very well in its way, especially when you think about it in February, but enough is enough, and we may now look forward to the first touch of Fall in the air. We had a very poor growing season here on the Yavapai Plateau, but we still hope that our garden tomatoes may hold out until the first freeze. The pears and apples are doing fine, and soon it may be cider time. The countryside is unusually green for these parts, following an almost continuous succession of thunderstorms.

By now you have satisfied yourself as to the zero of your rifle with the ammunition you intend to use. You may now continue practice on snap shooting and quick assumption of position without going to the range.

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"You know you are in trouble when Geraldo Rivera is your principle character witness."

Joseph Sobran

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In view of the continuous complaints we get about the sale price of the Steyr Scout, we now offer a proper response. It seems that Herr Budischowsky of Eislingen, Germany, is now offering what he considers to be the pistol to end all pistols. This is the "Koriphila Model HSP 701" and its retail price in Germany is 15,900 Deutsch Marks. (Last we heard there were about 1.7 DM to a US dollar.) This, of course, is in its deluxe version in solid Damascus steel. Its less ornamental brother in plain blued steel is way down at DM 8,000. Basically it is a 9mm *crunchenticker*, but it may be offered in the future in a major caliber. I do not know if Herr Budischowsky is taking orders at this time, but you might check with him at the SHOT Show.

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An overseas correspondent tells us that a left-hand bolt-action rifle is of no particular interest since European shooters always take the weapon out of the shoulder when they work the bolt. That is rather like telling a motorist that he has no need for opposite lock in a power slide since all Europeans always turn in to a skid. Apparently the word is "Right or wrong, that's the way we do it!"

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I see by a couple of notices (which I did not supervise) that I am due to teach a course in "Tactical Pistol." I am sorry, but I do not know what a "tactical pistol" might be. As I see it, a pistol is a totally defensive weapon, intended to be used to stop a fight that somebody else starts. I do not know where the term "tactics" got into this. Whenever I think of tactics I think of group combat. Pistols are not correctly used in groups. Of course there are exceptional circumstances.

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Our good friend Shep Kelly, a director of Federal Ammunition, sent us the print of a 5-shot 100-meter group that measured an inch and five-eighths side-to-side, and half-an-inch vertically. I did not respond to this properly, since a good shot with a good rifle and good ammunition might consider such a group good, but not outstanding if fired from a bench one slow shot at a time. What we did not realize until we heard the rest of the story was that Shep fired that group from loop sitting, snapping the bolt as rapidly as he could. Now that is indeed good shooting. Shep pulled it off with his SS, mainly in response to those who claim that the bolt lift is too heavy and the bolt handle is too flat. Shep is an extraordinarily good shot, but the friendliness of the SS is what made this possible.

We are off shortly now for Whittington where we expect to conduct both a pistol and a rifle class, thus there will be a three-week gap in our communications. Sorry about that!

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Our esteemed patron, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., is on record to the effect that voters should choose for their elected representatives people who are "honest, courageous and wise." Those are three excellent adjectives, but we do not observe them as much as we should in our halls of legislature. Honesty has been made ridiculous by the highest officials of the land. Courage is conspicuously absent when it comes to taking a stand which might conceivably lose votes. Wisdom is hard to judge, but it does not seem to be high on the list of the attributes the voters like. Ronald Reagan may be the last chief executive who might be considered to be honest, courageous and wise. People to whom those words apply seem reluctant to put themselves forward in our current political system.

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There seems to be no agreement amongst our leaders as to what must be done about these ragheaded terrorists. It is adduced that if we kill the leaders there will simply be more to take their places. This may or may not be true, but we can be pretty sure that blowing up installations with Tomahawks is not going to accomplish much, apart from making a number of uninvolved people angry. The Tomahawk is a marvelous instrument and I stand amazed at its efficiency, but the way to take out irregular murderers is individually – one at a time. You will remember the tale of Herman Hanneken, CMH. In 1918 in Haiti we were being tormented by an ephemeral guerrilla leader known as Charlemagne Peralt. Nobody knew what he looked like or where he was, but Sergeant Hanneken, then acting as a Captain of Haitian Constabulary, set up an artistic spook action and took out his man with one round of 45 ACP.

No two tactical situations are ever identical, but Hanneken was the right man at the right place at the right time. As of this date we need another.

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Thomas Sowell, who is one of our favorite commentators, points out three things that make the collectivists uneasy. These are cars, guns and home schooling, all of which grant to the individual a degree of independence of action which terrifies the champions of the super state. Cars, guns and home schooling reduce the need for the statism so prized by the socialists. They do not wish you freedom to move around. They do not wish you to be able to protect yourself. And they do not wish you to decide what your children should be taught. Such things reduce the power of the state over the citizen. If you know any Democrats you might make that point to them.

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There seems to be some confusion about the dates of the *Reunion* this year. It will be held two weekends before TR's birthday – on 16, 17 and 18 October.

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We are given to understand that the term used by the Rangers for the MP5/9 is "skinny popper." This seems to have shown up first in Somalia, where the locals appeared to be conspicuously scrawny. The Parabellum cartridge did not work particularly well even on them.

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We hope to test out the "sporting rifle trail" shortly now at Whittington. We will give you a report.

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Despite a hundred years or more of fiction, we should realize that the heart shot is not an "icer." A man shot or stabbed in the heart may manifest no particular discomfort or disability for several seconds – the time it takes for the blood supply to his brain to shut off. A quadruped shot in the heart usually runs quite a good distance before falling down. Only a hit in the central nervous system turns your target off like a light – without fail. The violence of a blow transmitted to the heart naturally has something to do with this, and if more tissue is destroyed the lethal effect may be more immediately apparent, but it is rarely instantaneous.

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"The doctrine of the separation of powers was adopted by the Convention of 1787, not to promote efficiency but to preclude the exercise of arbitrary power. The purpose was, not to avoid friction, but, by means of the inevitable friction incident to the distribution of the governmental powers among these departments, to save the people from autocracy."

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis in the 1922 case *Myers v. United States*

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From the great world of business, wherein we have a couple of spies, we hear of a man who achieved conspicuous success at an early age. You could tell he was a success because he boasted "a pony tail, a mistress and three Cadillacs." Is this the standard of *the Age of the Common Man?*

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"According to a study by Mark Helprin of the Hudson Institute, the following are gone from our military: four aircraft carriers; 121 surface combatants and attack submarines (plus the support that normally accompanies such a force); 13 ballistic missile submarines (with more than 3,000 nuclear warheads on 232 missiles); 500 intercontinental ballistic missiles; 232 strategic bombers; 20 air wings of the Navy and Air Force (about 2,000 combat aircraft); two Reserve Army divisions; eight Regular Army divisions; 293,000 Reserve soldiers, and 709,000 Regular Army soldiers. Had an enemy inflicted such losses, it would have been termed a military disaster."

*The New American*, Vol. 14, No. 17, Page 19

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It is time to mention this again. We know who killed Nicole Simpson. We know who killed Vicki Weaver, but we still do not know who killed Vince Foster. We have a pretty good idea, but up till now nothing that can be proven. Well, we do not know who killed Jimmy Hoffa either. This would seem to be ripe ground for a couple of really good fiction writers. According to Hemingway, really good fiction is truer than fact.

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"I remember peering out of the T.C.'s hatch and seeing a large number of enemy soldiers alongside of the tank. We had outrun our support. The grunts had not yet caught up with us, and we were alone. We were in the unique position of having advanced past a retreating, disorganized enemy company. I grabbed my M14, and as I climbed out of the tank, one of the enemy raised his K-50 smg, and at a range of 10 feet, emptied the magazine at me. Above the noise of the rest of the battle, the sound of those bullets passing by my head was easily the most distinctive. I put the front sight on his chest, and shot him. He went down, but there were many of his comrades close by. Some were retreating along a trench, and some were attacking O.G. Clank, the closest obstacle to their perceived survival. I will never again hear the term "target rich environment" without thinking about this incident. I started engaging as many as I could, one at a time. While changing magazines, I caught sight of movement below me, and saw Gene standing in the driver's hatch, shooting enemy soldiers off of the tank with his .45, buying me time.

"I remember thinking, for a brief moment, that this kid was going to be all right."

Pat Rogers

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You may remember Amy Biehl, the white girl who went down to Africa to help the downtrodden and who was murdered by a black mob with rocks. Four of her killers have now been turned loose, one remains in custody. The only reason Amy was killed was because she was white.

Now on the other side of the world we have this particularly nasty murder of an unarmed black man by three white thugs in East Texas. It seems that the only reason they killed him was because he was black. I am

willing to bet that they will not go free. It is more likely that in this case the death penalty will be invoked – and quite properly so.

Shall we conclude that it is okay for Negroes to kill a white girl because of the color of her skin, but it is a dreadful sin for white men to kill a Negro because of the color of his skin?

I am sure that there are those who will call this "racial justice."

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The next thing we can expect is to see street kids wearing their football helmets on backwards so that the face guard can protect the back of the neck. Cool!

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Those of you who found the *Keneyathlon* to your taste will be interested to know that Dave Wheeler (505-576-9529) is putting on a rifle contest that examines practical hunting skills at the "Blue Steel Ranch" at San Jon, New Mexico. This promises to be a very interesting event and I regret that I could not get the information to you in proper time. For further information and details you may call Dave at his telephone number listed. Deadline is 11 September, which I guess is right now.

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You may order a night light assembly for your SS from

Medesha, Box 367, Apache Junction, Arizona 85217, phone: 602-986-5876

(Price is \$30.00).

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In view of the difficulties that shooters have been having with the Mexican border, it has been suggested by John Stalmach that the NRA post a billboard at all border-crossing points emphasizing that the US citizen in a foreign country is not protected by the Constitution, and especially not by its Second Amendment. This could be sponsored by the NRA, both protecting the interests of American citizens and calling attention to the fact that they are indeed protected, insofar as possible, by the National Rifle Association. I do not know if I can get this idea across to the Board of Directors, but I will try.

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"Our principle trouble today in this country seems to be that too many people have too much time on their hands."

Clarence Thomas, Justice of the Supreme Court

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Note that the only place that you may now get a copy of "*Another Country*" is from Blacksmith Press, which has relocated to Ohio

PO Box 280, North Hampton, OH, 45349, 1-800-531-2665.

I believe this is my best book, and under present circumstances it seems to be going to remain out-of-print.

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It is curious to note that Sylvester Stallone, who has the screen reputation as the epitome of Rambo, has no interest in living up to his image. He has now moved to England, and he has stated publicly that the US has no need for the Second Amendment. He is making a movie about motor racing in Europe, and the McLaren people offered him a ride in their fantastic two-place Formula I car in order to give him a feeling for the job. Rambo found it necessary to be elsewhere at the time.

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The General Orders for a sentry, which I was required to memorize in my youth, specified (number 7): "I will allow no one to commit a nuisance on my post." It may be that those general orders have been rescinded – or

perhaps they do not apply to chief executives.

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The more we study it, the more it appears that people do not usually miss because they are bad shots, they miss because they are not paying attention. Concentration is what puts hits on the target. Distraction is what causes misses. The effective marksman learns to blot out all aspects of the situation but his sight picture and his trigger press. He must wear "psychological blinders" until after his target is down. This should be obvious, but apparently it is not.

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Too many people seem to think that the president of the United States "runs the country." No man – not even George Washington – was ever able to run the country. It is too big. No president can even memorize the number of federal agencies under his authority, still less what they all are supposed to do. What the president should do, and must do, is to serve as an example of what a distinguished citizen ought to be. Washington did that. Theodore Roosevelt did that. In my opinion, Reagan did that. And look what we have now!

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 11

October, 1998

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## Hunting Season

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So here we are in October, the finest month of the year! Now is the time for all good men to take the field and put meat on the table. Despite the disgusting scene in Washington, and the two dozen vicious little wars now underway in various parts of the world, the joy of the hunt suffices to lift our spirits. May Artemis support you, and when you succeed be sure and tell me all about it!

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Here at hunting season again, I am reminded that when I was in junior high school a teacher asked the class to name the four seasons. The first little boy to respond said, "Duck season, deer season, trout season, and Christmas."

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The popular cliché "Been there, done that" does not ever apply to the African hunt. As it is said, "You cannot step into the same river twice."

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We just polished off two week-long classes at Whittington, and as usual the teacher probably learned more than the students. I recall at the close of World War II when I was assigned to the G2 Section of Command and Staff School at Quantico, I observed dubiously to my superiors that I had never seen a G2 Section at work. Their response was, quite properly, "Never mind, Major. You will learn." And I did.

From the pistol class I learned again the need for a proper service pistol with a reduced butt circumference, and from the rifle class I learned about the "unfair advantage" granted to the student by the Steyr Scout. In the rifle class we had 24 students, of whom seven used Steyr Scouts. In overall performance scout shooters placed first, second and fourth.

(I repeat that I am not in any way financially hooked up with Steyr Mannlicher. I receive no royalty, and no other financial return.)

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Despite the emotional convictions of the bambiists, the American whitetailed deer is gradually turning from a prize into a pest. I dislike culling, having been involved in it on one occasion, but in this case there may be no reasonable alternative.

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It appears that the sharks are getting uppity as the century draws to a close. In addition to the increase of shark attacks reported from South Africa, we now learn of a 20-mile stretch of the Adriatic coast of Italy shut down due to the unlikely appearance of a great white shark, and just recently a young man was hit by a white off of Stinson Beach near San Francisco. Sharks are interesting creatures, and it is fun to hunt them. Carry on!

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The *Gunsite Reunion and TR Memorial* promises to be more fun than ever this year. In addition to our other activities, we will all get a chance to visit the Sporting Rifle Walk, and its nifty little range house. Those of you who wish to bring furniture, wall decorations, or power tricycles will be most welcome.

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In our recent pistol class we had a couple of Glocks, a revolver, and a *crunchenticker*. This made it necessary for me to introduce the entire class to the four firing strokes which may be used with the double-action

self-loader.

- A. The Weaver System. In this method the weapon is fired by cocking it with the trigger finger on the way up. Pressure commences as the piece is raised from "smack" to "look." The pressure is even and so timed that the trigger stroke is completed exactly as the sights are picked up by the eye. This system was used by Jack Weaver in his prime with a revolver, and I can testify that it worked beautifully in the hands of the master. It is difficult, however, and calls for unusual talent and coordination.
- B. The Crunch–Through System. This system is most commonly used in law enforcement schools, and it is the least efficient way of using the weapon. No pressure is applied to the trigger until the sights are picked up, at which time the shooter presses straight back (crunch) completing the firing action while attempting to maintain the sights on the target. The second shot is fired with the piece cocked, hence "crunch – tick."
- C. Thumb–Cock System. In this system the shooter catches the hammer with the thumb of his support hand when the hands come together at "smack." Then as the piece is pressed up into line the hammer comes back, reaching full cock just at the top of the presentation. This is probably the best method for handling the double-action automatic. It is every bit as quick as the two foregoing systems, and it offers a shooter a cocked hammer for every shot.
- D. The Shot–Cock System. With this system the shooter simply flings his first shot down range, cocking the piece with his trigger finger as fast as he can without particular attention to sights or alignment. He then places his second shot from a cocked mode with the precision that affords. This may sound bizarre, but I have seen it work on the range and I have discovered it to work on the street. The interval between the first shot and the second is almost nil, and the first shot just may hit. The shooter, however, concentrates on the placement of his second shot. (I do not teach this system, but I do mention it. Whether it is "correct" or not is beside the point, since it works.)

Anyone who chooses a double-action auto-pistol as his service arm should experiment with all four strokes and find out which suits him best. It takes a master to master the Weaver System. The Crunch–Through System is unsatisfactory. Thumb cocking works just fine for most people. The Shot–Cock System is viewed askance by most instructors, but, as I say, it works and I will not condemn any system which works.

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We thought everybody knew by now that barrel length has almost nothing to do with accuracy. I believe the myth of the superior accuracy of a long rifle dates from colonial days, when the only way to extend sight radius was to make the barrel as long as possible. It is interesting how long it takes a myth to die.

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It should be understood that the student should be in reasonably good physical shape in order to undertake a rifle class. Rifle shooting as we teach it does not involve sitting at the bench or lying on one's stomach. You need not be in shape for competition tennis in order to shoot a rifle well, but you should be in at least as good shape as a serious golfer.

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In case you did not catch it before, the dates for this year's *GR and TRM* are 16, 17, 18 October.

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At the pistol class, staff member Tom Russell showed me his "Concealed Carry Officer's Model" Colt. Among the flurry of recent efforts in the service pistol line, this one stands out. If it were slimmed down to make it suitable for smaller hands, it would be just about perfect.

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This one we get from *family member* Barrett Tillman, and we would not pass it on except in the mode of Herodotus. You will remember that the Father of History said, about fantastic tales, that he could not vouch for them personally, but that he was told by people who were there.

It seems that a new boy moved into a semi-rural area and after a couple of weeks he called upon the

authorities to take down the sign designating the road in front of his house as "Deer Crossing." He said that too many deer were crossing there and getting hit by cars. (Honest to God!)

---

Doubtless you have heard about the Earth First activist who was fatally beamed by a falling tree while endeavoring to block logging activity. If one feels that logging should be blocked he has a right to his opinion, but his course of action lies through the courts. To bounce around and get in the way of legitimate activity is not the answer. Well, this bird won't try it again! I leave you to work out the moral of this story for yourself.

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The outstanding performance of the Steyr Scouts in the last rifle class will be immediately challenged by target shooters on the grounds that "the weapon fit the test." This position cannot be substantiated, since the tests to which the students were subjected were totally diversified, ranging from short-to medium-range and requiring complete variety in firing position. It is my view that the Steyr Scout is the easiest rifle to hit with that I have ever seen, and this seems to be verified in the training exercises we have so far conducted. Some observers have opined that to use a SS is a form of cheating, and thus I have proposed an advertising slogan to the company:

#### Steyr Scout – The Unfair Advantage!

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Note again that slow fire from off-hand is foolishness, regardless of what the silhouette shooters may say. If you can take your time, you can get a better position than off-hand, or for that matter, standing. And "rice paddy prone" is definitely better than kneeling, but it takes a certain amount of arm twisting to convince some people of that.

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At Whittington we had no mechanical failures in the SS rifles. We had two failures to chamber a round due to badly sized ammunition, and we had two more reloads misfire, apparently due to badly seated primers. One enthusiast stripped the threads on his telescope mount, and one reticle collapsed on the last exercise of the last day.

I have long preached that internal adjustments in telescope sights are just not strong enough for serious work. I always advise any hunter taking off for foreign parts to bring two telescopes. His rifle is unlikely to break, but his telescope just may. When *family member* Dick Culver was head of the sniper school at Quantico he emphasized to me that the Marine Corps had simply not come up with a telescope that a Marine could not break. Unfortunately it does not require a Marine to break one. The scopesight of the future, which I will push as hard as I may as long as I can, will have no moving parts inside the tube. (Variable power is, as we have often pointed out, another answer in search of a question.) The tube itself will be rigid, and the reticle will be painted on the glass, probably in the form of an amber pyramid. Elevation and deflection adjustments will be achieved in the mounts, and thus we will achieve reliability.

The problems facing this concept are serious. In the first place, the market is used to what we have got, and simply ignores its drawbacks! Secondly, sight makers and rifle makers are separate entities, very difficult to bring into coincident endeavor. The glassmakers are not attracted by the idea of simplicity, since they regard complexity as a marketing asset. The telescope I propose could be manufactured for less, and the increased price of the mount would not be an advantage to the sight maker. Just who would manufacturer the mounts is unknown. Always when something new is proposed the question comes back from the fabricator, "How many items do you want?" Since no one can predict sales on an innovative design, we will have to find some ingenious fellow who is trying to make a name for himself in small volume production before going on to greater things. The riflemaker could undertake to make the mounts, but that would require the establishment of a new "division," with attendant expense. Thus the perfected scout sight lies in the future. May I live to see the day!

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Some of the troops had occasion to use shooting sticks in Africa this year, where this sort of thing is becoming more common all the time. I dislike the concept of shooting sticks, but in a situation where you always have a couple of henchmen tagging along with you, as you must in Africa, shooting sticks do offer a certain advantage in high grass. I do not, however, intend to teach the use of shooting sticks in school. Those who find that they need them can easily figure out the technique.

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Colleague Ross Seyfried tells of a good response he had for some sportsman who was talking about long shooting on pronghorns. Concerning long shooting Ross responded that his range on pronghorn was 655 yards – to which he added, after a short pause, "for nine bucks." If you divide nine into 655 you get a pretty good average range for antelope shooting.

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Incidentally, the new medium scout cartridge may be designated the 376 JCS. This is to avoid confusion with the 375 on the dealer's shelf. This cartridge is being test fired by Hirtenberger of Austria right now. How long it will take Steyr Mannlicher to build a rifle for it I cannot say, but it should be as good or a little better than the improved 350 Remington Magnum with which I have had outstanding success. It is designed to start a 250-grain bullet of .375-inch caliber at 2600f/s from the 19-inch scout barrel. Its efficiency will depend to a large extent upon the actual structure of the bullet. Personally I admire the Swift, but the Hirtenberger people may have ideas of their own. One thing we will need is a very hard-jacketed, blunt-nosed solid for those who need maximum penetration.

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During the pistol class as we got into dim light, we discovered that all sorts of dots and spots on the rear-sight are not necessarily a good thing. One of our young ladies was having much difficulty until the coach simply sprayed her sights black, and she came on from that point very well. This tells us that it is necessary to put theory to a test in actual practice. It is all very well to opine that such and such system should work, but until you try it, and with as many individuals as possible, you do not have a real basis for opinion.

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It must be emphasized again that recoil effect is subjective – it depends upon the individual, rather than the weapon. Certainly the rearward impetus of the piece on firing can be measured in a laboratory, but how that affects the shooter depends entirely on that shooter. We have heard people complain about the recoil of a 7lb. 308, and when I was a boy the 1903 Springfield, in 30-06 at about 9lb., was considered to be a mankiller – at both ends. Having taught several thousand people to shoot rifles of various calibers, I am now convinced that the psychological approach is what works. This does not have to do with the bulk, strength, or gender of the shooter. It has to do with his or, in this case, her attitude. I have a feeling that the 376 Scout will bounce briskly on discharge. If this bothers you, change your attitude.

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One of our customers showed up at the rifle class with what I can only describe as a "goof sight." This was an L-shaped glass arrangement mounted out there on the rear of the barrel. The physics involved in this gadget seemed unworkable to me, but I could not find out because the device broke off on the second day, and we replaced it with a more conventional telescope sight.

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I was not too happy about the idea of bringing out a medium cartridge for the Scout Rifle, but the more I think about it, the more I think it may work. Certainly we have too many cartridges to choose from now, but a medium scout should handle certain problems very well. It should be practically perfect for moose and big bear, and likewise for lion. In view of the historic record of the 375 H&H on buffalo, I cannot push it for this beast, but certainly it will do with the solid bullet, if the shot is well placed. The eland is an unlikely target, but for those who pursue him, the medium scout should be ideal. And, of course, there is no great harm in being overgunned unless you are intimidated by the weapon, and that is an individual matter. A mule deer or a boar or a zebra will be no less dead for having been hit somewhat too hard. (And now that I think about it, I do not suppose you can hit a zebra too hard. That one is a tough customer!)

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We all remember the happy day when the town of Kenesaw, Georgia, passed an ordinance requiring householders to maintain an appropriate firearm in every house. The hoplophobes, of course, were horrified. Being hoplophobes, they did not need to make sense. It is nonetheless gratifying to note that crime, which was very unusual in Kenesaw, Georgia, has decreased steadily since the passing of the ordinance. If you mention this to those other people, they have nothing to say, and simply change the subject. Actually that is the only valid position that these disarms can take – change the subject!

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Those of the faithful who are aware of the classic "*Jock of The Bushveldt*," by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, should know that that great book is now being issued in expurgated form – politically correct. As an author of sorts, I regard political expurgation of a completed classic as a deadly sin. I cannot visit punishment upon the sinner, but I can warn anyone who sees a copy of Jock or wishes to order one to make sure he gets it in the original version in which the relationship between the races in South Africa is portrayed as it was, and not as certain goof balls would like to think it was. Jock is a great book, but get it clean or do not get it at all!

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The 19th century might properly be called the century of the rifle, but the successful employment of this artifact has continued on into the 20th. I am a man of the 20th century, and my rifle has lived with me as my intimate companion since I was old enough to carry it. It is interesting to note that in this age of the scientific revolution relatively little improvement (a part from the mighty Garand) has been brought forth in the rifle itself, this in opposition to the enormous changes which were seen in the 19th century. Now as the 20th century winds down and we look forward to the future, I consider that there are three noteworthy forward steps in the design and fabrication of the rifles themselves. These steps are embodied in three rifles: the Blaser R93, the "Co-pilot" of Jim West, and, of course, the Steyr Scout. Each of these three weapons has created its own niche, as opposed to those rifles which fill a niche already there. In a sense, you can do certain things with each of these three that could not have been done as well with any weapon previously existing. That is a broad claim, but I am confident that it can be supported.

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It is a great bore to hear people claiming that "being judgmental" is some sort of sin. God gave you your brain so that you could make judgments, and it is only sinful when you make judgments without understanding the questions involved. We like to see things done right and we like to see good stuff. We cannot achieve either desire without making judgments, so let's!

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 12

November 1998

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## First Frost

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*The Sixth Annual Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* was an even more resounding success than the previous five. The amount of histrionic and literary talent possessed by the Orange Gunsite family is quite amazing. In addition to the various declamations, both as original work and selected from renowned artists, we had two renditions from Shakespeare that were quite enough to blow you off your perch – one by Amy Heath and the other by Colonel Clint Ancker.

The theme for this year's gathering was "honor," a word less frequently used by our citizens at this time. The words Duty, Honor, Country are inscribed above the portals of our service academies, and yet I wonder if our mythical "man in the street" would be able to define them. So we spoke about honor, especially as exemplified by our patron hero, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. We attacked the subject from various directions without, of course, coming up with a flawless definition of the term. But the fact that we have difficulty defining it does not mean that we ought not to think about it, especially at a time when our nation has been held up to ridicule throughout the civilized world by the behavior of a conspicuously dishonorable man. A very popular tattoo in the 19th and early 20th centuries was "death before dishonor." To make that statement today in or around the District of Columbia would be to provoke dirty jokes and raucous laughter. To this level we have descended.

The situation in which we find the United States of America – the last best hope of Earth – is the worst since Valley Forge. We cannot, on that account, give way to despair. We must fight back at every level and by every means. And the first weapon is the vote. The forthcoming election will demonstrate whether the people of America are worthy of what their forefathers gave them. Those forefathers were extremists in every sense of the word. Let us hope that we need not put the matter to a test again. However, if it comes to that, let us all vow to be worthy of the task.

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It seems to be firm now that Steyr Mannlicher will not go to a left-hand version of their new bolt-action, as used in the scout. You lefties may just go to the Blaser R93, which is certainly no tragedy. The 93 is not a scout, but it is a delightful rifle nonetheless – one of the outstanding artifacts of the day.

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The shooting games at Whittington were great fun, marred only slightly by unnecessarily brisk winds. The basic pistol tests showed very clearly how easy it is to lose one's edge through lack of practice. I emphasize again that one need not go to the range to conduct his pistol practice. The difference between a qualified marksman and a duffer is that the former knows where his shot would have gone if his weapon had been loaded. Thus he can put himself to very profitable exercise in his own quarters without firing a shot.

We noticed also that too many people seemed to think that elementary gunhandling is a superficial requirement. Part of this was due to the fact that a good many participants had not been to school. We have made it a practice in the past of allowing only those people to shoot who have been to school and acquired certificates. This year we thought to relax that a bit, and I was shocked at the result. Next year we will apply the basic rule – "If you haven't got your ticket, don't get on the line."

The balloons and the rifle clays are all the more entertaining for being a Whittington exclusive. I do not know

of any other place where you can try flying clay birds with your rifle. (Marc Heim distinguished himself by breaking four out of five with his Steyr Scout.)

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I must apologize to the great state of Texas for getting my story garbled about the decimation by the Mexicans of the Texan prisoners. I have made much worse mistakes than that in my time without attracting nearly as much rage from the bleachers.

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On the tactical walk, which is operable if not yet complete, we noticed that the hunters had all the advantage. Hunters seem to develop a "situational awareness" that city slickers cannot match. People who do not regularly take to the woods can be counted upon to walk right by targets in plain sight. I guess city dwellers cannot be bothered with the perils of their surroundings.

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On the subject of the perils of one's surroundings, we note that a young park ranger was instantly killed just last month in the southern end of the Kruger Park in South Africa. He had been given the job of protecting a bunch of tourists on a night game watch. The only sound the tourists heard was the clatter of his dropped rifle. One correspondent expressed surprise that the leopard had been able to get so close without being noticed. I do not know very much about leopards, but I do know that the leopard owns the dark. At night a leopard moves like smoke through a fog.

It is nice to know that tourists in African game parks are protected by armed rangers. There is some question as to what protects the protectors.

We have been out on a night prowl in just that part of Kruger Park. It was a very fine experience.

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We hear of a Glock problem in New York caused by repeated failure to function in many different instances. This is rather interesting in view of the fact that the Glock appears to be a conspicuously reliable pistol. It does need, however, a stiff wrist. If you limp-wrist a Glock its slide may not retract fully. This suggests that probably there is no trouble with the pistol, but there may be trouble with the training staff.

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*Family member* Paul Kirchner informs us that you can get the deluxe version of Ortega's "*Meditations on Hunting*" from "amazon.com" for \$40.00. The regular price is \$60.00. Jump at the chance!

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If you visit the Jefferson Memorial in Washington you will note that it is your civic duty to be politically incorrect. In gold letters around the inside of the rotunda President Jefferson declares unalterable opposition to "every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Political correctness is neither political nor is it correct. It amounts to social censorship, and the sooner we spit it out, the better.

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The behavior of our federal and state ninja in their conduct of firearms investigations is quite peculiar. They seem given to explosive speech and foul language. In every case we have heard about recently the people who break down the door on the possibility that there may be an improperly registered weapon in the house give forth with language which makes law enforcement look bad. There is a curious violence about this whole matter which is hard for me to understand. In the two most flagrant cases – Waco and Ruby Ridge – all they had to do was ask, but when it appears that there may be even passive resistance to these midnight riders, they seem to lose all sense of balance. They not only disgrace themselves by their speech, but they frequently resort to physical force with no cause at all. *Family member* John Schaefer was on the receiving end of such an action in New Jersey recently, and he gave us a clear description of it at the reunion. And just last month in Taft, California, an honest shopkeeper, with no previous record of any kind, wound up dead behind his counter. The ninja reported that he had killed himself and then they had shot him three times after he was dead. I cannot put much credence in that story, but that is what appeared in the papers.

Apparently a certain kind of enforcement type in this country operates in deadly fear, warranted or not. Up till

now I have not heard of a victim who shot back and killed the law enforcement officer. (An exception was the initiation of action by shooting a pet dog at Ruby Ridge.) These people seem terribly afraid. One wonders of what.

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On 15 October *USA Today* ran a photograph of a Albanian militiaman in Kosovo packing a Steyr Scout. He was apparently leading his troops. I guess the word gets around.

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"One of the common failings among honorable people is a failure to appreciate how thoroughly dishonorable some other people can be, and how dangerous it is to trust them."

Thomas Sowell

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South Africa has long had a problem with illegal immigration across its borders from the north. This has grown since the revolution because of the almost total deactivation of the police and border guards. The army (the South African National Defense Force), is now in charge of patrolling the borders, and it arrested 2,601 illegals during 1997 and another 2,159 so far in 1998. It turns out that the army is now getting some help from the wildlife, as there are now eleven cases of illegal immigrants being scarfed up by lions in the dark as they try to sneak around check points. These are reported, and it is likely the total is much higher. In extracting somewhat out of context I can quote: "Three illegals were killed by lions within a matter of three weeks, and the KNP officials are concerned about their safety." To quote Dr. William Gerrenbach, "The problem is caused not by the lions, but by the illegal immigrants." Now, there is a man who has his priorities straight.

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Colonel Bob Young, our neighbor from just up the road, has taken off for far places for a whole month devoted to enlightening the ignorant. This is a excellent way for a Master to acquire a pleasant amount of spare cash, but "Ya gotta know the territory."

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"You need only reflect that one of the best ways to get yourself a reputation as a dangerous citizen these days is to go about repeating the very phrases which our founding fathers used in their struggle for independence."

C.A. Beard, via Harold Hayes

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On the way over to Whittington, the staff decided to define "The Four Wimps of the Apocalypse," as follows: Timidity, Avarice, Sensitivity, and Ignorance.

We got into some discussion about the matter of sensitivity, since it seems to be definable in several ways. We do feel, however, this exaggerated social tenderness manifest in the school system definitely deserves a place on the list.

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Note that street crime is on the way up in Britain, whereas it is on the way down in the United States. We may attribute that to the attitude manifest in the two nations toward the personal ownership of firearms.

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"Day by day, case by case, the Supreme Court is busy designing a constitution for a country I do not recognize."

Supreme Court Justice Antonio Scallia

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My own personal SS rifle, which was previously designated "Old No. 6" after the original press demonstration at Whittington, I have now renamed "Galatea." Galatea is a true treasure, and one of her most outstanding features is a superlative trigger personally adjusted by Elmar Bilgeri from the factory. Now it comes to pass

that the factory is unwilling to put triggers like that on guns to be sold over-the-counter. At 26 ounces on the final break, it is deemed to be "unusual" and an invitation to mishaps in the hands of the unenlightened. Therefore you are unlikely to have, at this time, that trigger in your scout. Solution: Send your piece to Gun South in Alabama and tell Einar Hoff that you want a "Jeff Cooper trigger" in your gun. There is a factory technician at Gun South who can do this job. Moreover when you take delivery on your scout, either before or after the tuning job, take the butt spacers out. One of the prime advantages of the scout is compactness. Extra stock length does you no good.

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Gun South, PO Box 129, Trussville, Alabama 35173, (205) 655-8299.

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I am now informed that there is a specialized security detail in evidence around the Pentagon after dark wearing black uniforms. Now black is an excellent color for a dress uniform, as demonstrated by the SS before and during World War II, but black is a very poor color for a fatigue uniform. It does not make the wearer look smart, it just makes him look scruffy. Plus that, a black fatigue uniform makes its wearer highly visible except in pitch black, where target identification is the main problem.

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Bumper sticker: "Help Stamp Out Sleaze"

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These bunny huggers used to be simply comical, but it appears they are no longer a joke. They feel they cannot make their case in the courts, so they resort to popular disturbance, including vandalism, arson, and serious property damage. It is getting to the point where if they do not like what you do they feel justified in preventing you from doing it by force. Anarchy has its points, but this is not one of the good ones.

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"Who wanders unarmed deserves what he gets."

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#### The Guru

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It is not only the cats who are doing the killing in the African bush. We now have a case in which an American sportsman was squashed after dark by an elephant up in Zambia. From what I make out in the story, it was a clear case of *Condition White*. The first principle of personal defense is alertness. If you are not alert, decisive and fast, you should not be surprised if something gets you.

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We now have 24 steel reactive targets either on station or in production for the tactical walk at Whittington. About half of them have been paid for by the faithful. Note that if you choose to buy a target your name will be attached to it for all to see. Everyone who tried the tactical walk enjoyed it, which is no surprise since we have used similar exercises before to everyone's satisfaction. The targets are expensive, of course, and they are subject to vandalism, but I think the situation at Whittington will prove satisfactory to all. As with our original "fun house" at Orange Gunsight, this sort of shooting exercise may become popular worldwide. As of now there are some excellent field reaction courses on military establishments, where money is no object, but as far as I know the private trail walk at Whittington is unique at the present time.

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*Family member* Frankie Lou Nicholson of Nebraska tells us she ran across a counterman at a gun store who explained to her that high velocity in a rifle cartridge "enables you to miss quicker."

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We note an unfortunate tendency on the part of the unenlightened to categorize firearms, particularly rifles, by caliber designation. The first question asked is, in examining a firearm, "What is its caliber?" apparently not realizing that most commercial offerings can be had in a variety of different cartridges. This habit, I guess, is the backbone of the industry, wherein a new cartridge is always greeted with glad little cries, regardless of whether it does anything that needs to be done. In my opinion, there is no reason at all for such items as the 264 Winchester, the 280 Remington, the 338 Winchester, or the 8mm Remington. Still, if you can tell your

questioner that the rifle that he is looking at is chambered for a new and exotic cartridge, you have really grabbed his interest. I will doubtless be criticized on this very point when the 376 Steyr appears; however, I think that here we have something that is demonstrably useful. The 376 Steyr is ballistically very much the deceased 350 Remington Magnum, which, though it did not sell, was an excellent round. Its caliber is 376, rather than 350, simply as a rule-beating device – the rule being silly and worthy of evasion. The 376 Steyr has no belt, and it is no longer than the 350 Remington Magnum or the 308, making it suitable for use in a scout-type action. In a light rifle, it will kick. (As I was told the 350 RM would when I first bought it.) But those who are recoil sensitive are advised to stick with a lesser weapon. It may jar loose the reticles of telescope sights, but there are developments in the works to obviate that. The 376 Steyr cartridge is apparently ready for production, and it should be just about perfect for Alaska, as well as very handy in Africa.

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We got into a pungent discussion with *family member* Larry Berry as to the curious fact that a great many people who consider themselves shooters do not shoot. Apparently a certain kind of personality enjoys owning firearms, but he feels that shooting them is not part of the play. He will quote you ballistics and group sizes, but he will very rarely go to the range and shoot recreationally. Very frequently he thinks that the number of guns he owns is the measure of his personal worth, whether or not they are particularly good guns. Hence a properly designed general-purpose rifle, such as the Steyr Scout, frustrates such a person. He does not want a rifle that will do everything. He wants to have a different rifle for every day of the month – not to shoot, but to talk about. Well, to each his own, and as long as a man is a recreational shooter and gun owner, he is on our side and we both vote the right way – or so I hope to believe.

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Our great good friend Danie van Graan of Engonyameni reports two buffalo kills now with his "Co-pilot." That little gun is, like the Steyr Scout, a triumph of design. It is definitely a specialty item, but for people with that special need, it is the perfect answer.

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We continue to be depressed at the level of weaponry skills manifested by our law enforcement establishment. Some cops are quite good with their weapons. Most are not. In the 19th century it was customary, especially in the western United States, for a peace officer to furnish his own weapons, and I think there is much to be said for that. A man has more confidence in the gun that he picked out and trained with himself. There is an additional advantage that there would be no need for police firearms training, since the officer would not be hired until he could demonstrate that he was fully qualified with the weapon of his choice. Now there is a way of saving money that no one has brought up till now!

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We regularly see the English publication "*The Week*" and we admire it for the breadth of its interest in world affairs. It is filled with odd and curious notations about international activities and it is quite thorough in its examination of the United States scene.

We discover, however, a curious and unsavory aspect of the British culture, and that is the proliferation of foul language by people whom one would have thought to be "respectable." A good bit of the coverage in "*The Week*" periodical is given over to the activities of celebrities, and if we are to believe it, people in prominent positions today actually prefer to be disgusting in their speech. Obscenity does not lend force to one's language, it merely reveals a paltry vocabulary. When I was a lad, cadets at the military academy and midshipmen at Annapolis were required to memorize a speech made in Congress by a gentleman from Arkansas (what else?) in which he was taking offense at the idea of changing the pronunciation of his state. This declamation starts out, "Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker! May God damn your paltry soul to hell!..." And it continues for a page and a half using what must be considered a masterly command of objurgation. The gentleman does not use the same word twice. If you wish to use obscenity well, note his example.

During my years in the military it was customary to use gutter language under field conditions, if not on the platform. I suppose that is true today, but the monotonous use of four or five obscenities is more dull than forceful, and I gave up the practice as soon as I achieved some degree of sophistication.

But "*The Week*" analyzed this phenomenon and pronounced the idea that the use of foul language establishes the speaker as "one of the boys," and thus permanently identified with the masses, as opposed to the classes. I suppose a celebrity feels that his popularity is what makes him a celebrity, and he cannot be popular unless he appears to be a vulgarian. If this is the truth, it is certainly a very sad truth, for we who are fortunate enough to use the noble English language are personally befouled when we desecrate it. In my opinion, it is far better to be a snob than a slob.

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Victims almost always die in *Condition White*. Do not let that happen to you!

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Let us not forget about Spc New, who received a Bad Conduct Discharge (BCD) from the Army because he refused to obey orders to fight for a foreign power. We can hardly blame the Army for this action, because Spc New was clearly guilty of insubordination, and we cannot have an army in which the lawful nature of orders is open to discussion by subordinates. The principle here, however, is important. It is a perilous thing to dispute the legality of the orders of one's superior officer, but men of honor have sometimes felt the need to do it.

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***Election time is upon us. VOTE! Your dignity depends upon it.***

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 6, No. 13

December, 1998

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## Harvest Home

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Just as every hunting trip is a qualified triumph, every election is a qualified disaster. "The Last Best Hope of Earth" has not been in worse shape since the darkest days of the American Revolution. Our Founding Fathers put great hope in the wisdom of the electorate, but now it appears that, contrary to Mr. Lincoln's dictum, you can fool a lot of the people most of the time. Those of us who believe in liberty were not sunk in this last go round, but we did take a couple of major-caliber hits, the worst of which was Schumer of New York. This man will be in a position of power for the next six years, and he intends to use that power to the best of his ability to destroy the "gun culture." He cannot do that all by himself, but he now has considerable momentum, especially amongst the undecided. He shares with such notables as Tony Blair and Heinrich Himmler the conviction that the private citizen should not have access to arms. The people who read this paper constitute the gun culture, and he is out to get us. Perhaps we deserve it, and if we do not pick up the torch right now and fight the good fight, we will indeed deserve it.

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Progress is being made on this project of a fixed telescope sight with all adjustments in the mount. We know of two people interested in making the telescope, and three people interested in making the mount. If this proposition works out, we will have achieved yet another distinct step forward in the design of smallarms.

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Note that democracy is no guarantee of political liberty. The ancient Athenians are said to have invented democracy, and what they produced was a totally repulsive place to live. They developed into a nation of snitches in which everyone was invited to tattle on his neighbor. All such personal matters as how you dressed, ate, drank and slept could be regulated by a quick and simple majority vote. Believe me, you would not want to live there.

The Athenians are only the first example. In this last election, our native state of Arizona conducted a referendum on the subject of cock fighting. A majority of voters decided to prohibit cock fighting – in purely democratic fashion. So here we have majority rule triumphing over the cultural tradition of a minority. A majority – mainly Anglos – stamped upon the recreational customs of a minority – mainly Latinos – for no other reason except what must be termed whimsical distaste. If a majority can ban cock fighting (which in no way infringes upon the rights of other people) this would establish a precedent for prohibiting, for example, trout fishing. This referendum was pure democracy and it measurably set back liberty.

Liberty and democracy are not the same, and they often actually confound each other.

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In California one must have a certificate from a safety course before he can get a hunting license, but this stipulation is not applied to people born before 1945. Presumably people born before 1945 are automatically wiser than those born since. If we accept that, would it not be wise to apply the same exception to voting?

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In looking for a shaft of light, we discover that *family member* Norm Vroman was elected District Attorney for Mendocino County in California. Norm took on the IRS and, to no one's surprise, he lost. However, he fought for right and justice, and after he was released from prison he stepped into the ring and won his point. He has not destroyed the IRS, but he has certainly embarrassed them, and in this ongoing fight for liberty,

every little bit helps.

Norm points out that he may be the only district attorney in California who is an honor graduate of Orange Gunsite.

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We suppose you all saw that news photograph of the Steyr Scout on active duty in Kosovo. We tried to find out how it got there, but the silence is deafening. It is interesting to note that the high cost of the SS rifle did not keep it out of the hands of these ragged freedom fighters. Money does not seem to be their principal problem.

One of our European friends pointed out that the SS rifle is a "sporting rifle." I guess that depends on one's definition of sport. The Albanians may hold that Serb-shooting is a very popular sport in their neck of the woods.

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How about all this legal chicanery involving the Glock trigger? The ambulance chasers have decided that anything they do not understand must be dangerous to life and limb. One attorney called me and asked if I would be interested in a case against the Glock people because he had heard that I "didn't like Glocks." I responded that I did not fancy the Glock ignition system, but that if he wanted to find someone culpable he should sue the man who pulled the trigger. Dead silence. Obviously he had no interest in suing the man who pulled the trigger, because this fellow did not have any money. There is a moral to this story, and I wish somebody of influence would pursue it.

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I think it would be a nifty idea to remit all taxes to holders of the Congressional Medal of Honor. This would cost the government practically nothing, and it would show that at least some of us are serious about our salutes on Veteran's Day.

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The 376 Steyr seems to be on the way. It is yet to be decided who will manufacture the bullet and what shape it will take, but that matter is under discussion now, and we have reason to hope that the complete package will be ready by next year's hunting season. If so, I will endeavor to take it north after moose. The 350 Remington Magnum was the perfect cartridge for moose, in addition to being useful for a lot of other things, and the 376 Steyr should be slightly better than the 350 RM in all respects.

Incidentally, the 376 Steyr cartridge has been designed and tested. It is based upon the 9.3x64 cartridge case, which has no belt, and it should get a 250-grain bullet up to about 2600f/s.

Steyr Mannlicher has decided not to color-code the stocks, but rather to color-code the magazines. This seems a good idea to us.

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What this country needs is more gun clubs. We need places where shooters can get together and discuss items of mutual interest at leisure. Such groupings might settle upon established shooting ranges, but not necessarily. Shooters should take the opportunity to clump together and to recognize that we all have the same problems and that our liberties are being threatened by people who do not respect our traditions and who do get together in auditoriums and meeting halls to do violence to our freedoms.

We have powerful national organizations, notably the NRA, but we tend to sit back and wait for the NRA to take action, when we should be taking the action ourselves. In my view, gun clubs should be discussion groups. If shooting is involved, so much the better, but discussion and debate come first, followed by political activism and votes. Shooters tend to be individualists, since shooting is an individual activity, but we must not neglect our social and political responsibilities. As the man said, "We must all hang together lest we all hang separately."

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South of the border the government has pretty well succeeded in disarming the citizens, and naturally the rate of violent crime is climbing. In Mexico City recently when a group of bus bandits held up a vehicle, the passengers simply killed the leader. The police tried very hard to find out who killed him and with what, but nobody was inclined to say anything. Clearly the citizen is better qualified to protect himself than any police organization, but that view is difficult to establish with a socialist.

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When we undertake to divide the world into two classes of people, one such system nominates the two classes as (*A*) Those who want to do things right, and (*B*) Those who want to make money. Any proper businessman will tell you that these two things are the same. If it makes money, it must be right, and conversely, if it does not make money, it must be wrong. The trouble with this attitude is that things do not work out that way. Many crummy enterprises do well financially, while a number of others, which are more interested in product excellence, go broke. In all the years I ran Orange Gunsite, I sought only for excellence and tried to make only enough money to keep the lights burning. The results paid off, and Orange Gunsite graduates have indeed "made the world safe for humanity." Just recently we received a marvelous letter from Kansas in which one of our early graduates (E-ticket type) worked his way up to Chief of Police, indoctrinating his people with Gunsite doctrines to the best of his ability. In February of 1997, two of his people interrupted a random gunman and stopped the war in brilliant fashion. Each of the officers told the Chief afterward, that when he saw that rifle barrel trained around upon him, his only thoughts were, "Frontsight, PRESSSSSS!" All other thoughts were blanked out, and the fight was over.

Absolutely made my day!

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A new leopard story from India tells of a cat who wandered into a house where the televistor was on full (as is usual in the homes of the workers and peasants). The program apparently attracted the leopard's attention, so he curled up in a chair to watch, but, not surprisingly, fell asleep. When one of the children discovered the situation he told his mother, who called the police. When they arrived they decided they could not handle the job and called off the mission. What went on thereafter, the news clipping did not say.

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We now note that Taurus is offering a 50-caliber Peacemaker. The piece is supposed to shoot a 350-grain monolithic alloy bullet to serve as a backup for dangerous game. This may be a good idea, but I do not find it attractive. If you cannot stop a charge with your rifle, I do not see you stopping it with a handgun. The tactical advantage that a pistol has over a rifle is availability. There are times when it is inconvenient to carry a rifle with you, but when you carry a pistol which is large enough to do a rifle's job, that pistol is no handier than a rifle. I wore an 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" Model 29 on one African excursion and I found it more uncomfortable in my holster than a rifle in my hand. Any handgun that is so big and clumsy that it is better carried in a box than on your belt has lost its purpose. The purpose of the pistol is unprepared self-defense. If you know that you are in trouble, or that you are going into trouble, you are better off with a two-hand gun.

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Our cousin Steve Lunceford, back from his honeymoon in Africa, points out again that what gets hits in the field is concentration. The ability to concentrate when the pressure is on is what differentiates a man from a mouse. It is also the reason why the meat eaters survive.

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A new standard in journalistic vacuity appeared recently on the cardinal page of *Rifle* magazine. To wit:

"A new standard in homely big game hunting rifles might have been set by Steyr Mannlicher with its Buck Rogers-look Scout rifle. James Bond would like this gadget, and maybe my great grandson will too. Still, I'll take a Winchester Featherweight."

Let's see now, "Form follows function" and "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder." Besides that, the Steyr Scout is not a "big game hunting rifle." It is a general-purpose rifle, designed to do everything. (Well, almost everything. I would not recommend it for elephants, although I have had one opinion back from Africa

already saying that it would be "ideal for elephant culling.") Beauty in machinery, like beauty in anything else, is a matter of taste, but a machine which functions well always tends to look more beautiful the more it is used. The essence of the scout concept is "shootability" and here it reigns supreme – as "The unfair advantage."

The discussion brings to mind the first appearance of the Porsche sports car. It was greeted with howls of derision. "It's only got four cylinders!" "It's not a V-8, it's a flat four!" "It's even air cooled!" And worst of all, "It's engine is in the back!" "This is ridiculous, it will never get off the ground." Perhaps the Porsche is "homely." Personally I do not think so, but I do not think anybody cares.

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I think that we may feel strongly about not shooting people's dogs. Killing someone's pet is a lot harder to accept emotionally than killing the person himself – at least by many people. Shooting the boy's pet dog is what started the bloodshed at Ruby Ridge. If you have trouble enforcing the law because of a dog, beat him off with your baton, or your belt, or even your bare hands, but do not shoot him. Gas sometimes works, but do not shoot him. Even if you are legally justified you will come out on the wrong side of cultural opinion.

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We learn from South Africa of a tourist who was playing golf on the edge of a game park and was seriously killed by an elephant. I did not hear whether the elephant had been hit by a golf ball, but I would not be surprised. I suppose it is sad that these bambiist tourists simply refuse to take wild animals seriously, but perhaps it is all for the best.

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We hear from a reputable glass man that degeneration of the reticle can be obviated by simply sandwiching it between two pieces of glass. Now, why didn't I think of that!

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It is said that the admonishment to the defenders at Bunker Hill was, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes." Did you ever ask yourself how far away that is? Set that test up sometime in your own front yard and let me know the results. This may be established as the effective range of the smooth-bore flintlock musket on a man-sized target.

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It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that hunters make better soldiers. Their situational awareness is better and their control over their firing system is less likely to be affected by excitement. One attack of "buck fever" seems to provide permanent immunization.

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We mentioned in a previous issue that the Glock action may not work properly if the shooter's wrist is too limp. We are now informed from police sources that Glock reliability is also a function of the power of the ammunition used, and much of ammunition purchased in bulk by law enforcement agencies is underpowered. Just buy full-house ammunition, Chief, and keep those wrists straight. It is true that I am no champion of the Glock pistol, but I think it unseemly to pick on this device when it is obviously satisfactory in most uses.

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We have a correspondent who guides for moose in Maine. He has observed the performance of a great many different kinds of rifles, but his favorite is the 350 Remington (short) Magnum. I have never hunted moose in Maine, but I have hunted moose in Scandinavia and I have taken such husky beasts as zebra and lion with the 350 RM in Africa. It is a great cartridge, especially as slightly long-loaded. If you have one of those nifty Remington carbines taking this round, hang onto it. You may have to make up your own ammunition, but it is worth the trouble.

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Doubtless you have heard of the character up in Kenya who attempted to milk an elephant and was harshly treated for his impertinence. I fear this tale "forces me to take refuge in incredulity." That mama elephant has far too good a nose to permit smelly peasants up within milking range.

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Some time ago we mentioned a gent who had achieved a sort of nirvana in the American business world, which was established by his ponytail, the maintenance of a mistress, and three Cadillacs. As we now understand it, this was not enough. This man has discovered that the things of this world are unsatisfying, and has decided to go to Israel and become a rabbi. That is certainly a worthy ambition, but Hebrew is a difficult language. I wish him well, but I do not expect much.

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"Kill them all. Let God sort them out!"

How often have you heard that? That grim exhortation has been kicking around in the special forces circles for some time, and a while ago I got so curious that I decided to look it up. It is attributed to one Amal Ulric on the occasion of the siege of Beziers during the Albigensian crusade of the 14th century. The crusaders were bent on stamping out heresy, and they felt that there were too many heretics in Beziers. When the command was given to destroy everybody there was a protest to the effect that there might be some good Catholics in the town, whereupon Amal Ulric put out the word. But of course he did not put out that word, because there was no such language as English at that time. Nothing was written down, but about two months later a German monk wrote out an approximation of the expression of the besieger in Latin. It comes out: "*Neca eos omnes. Deus suos agnoscat,*" which translates, "Kill them all. God will know his own." This attitude is a little hard on our sensibilities today, but it made perfect sense to a crusader.

I ran this story down about ten years ago and published it somewhere. Now I see it set forth in the South African publication Firearm News. It was not attributed to me, so I assume that somebody else did similar research work. Either that or I must accept it as the sincerest form of flattery.

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I think we are all happy to know that for the third consecutive year fatal gun accidents hit an all time low in 1996, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. (For the statistically inclined this works out to 0.4 per 100,000.)

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I was sitting here, microphone in hand, minding other people's business, when a ray of inspiration came flashing down from on high and struck me just over the left ear. The voice spoke thus (in English yet), to wit:

"If you don't want the piece to fire, don't fire it."

Now why has nobody ever thought of that! I guess it is just too simple for a legislator or a bureaucrat to fathom.

(So much for double-action, single-action, manual safeties, grip safeties, chamber indicators, trigger locks, and voodoo locks. It takes care of everything except cook-offs, and we will consider those some other time.)

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