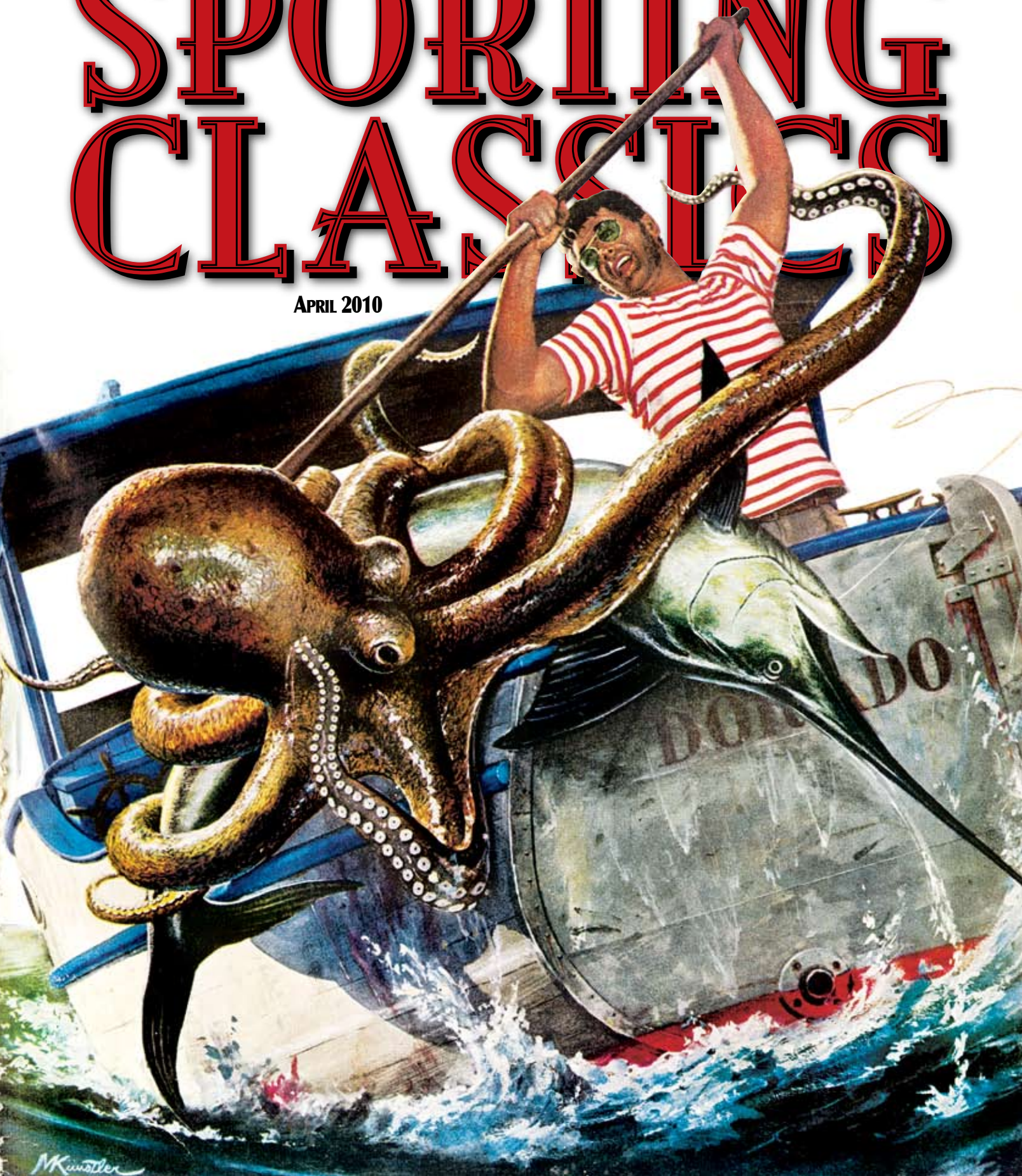


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Today's modern sporting rifles are just another step in the evolution of the tools hunters and target shooters use to enjoy our sports. These rifles may not look like your current hunting rifle, but remember, your rifle probably doesn't look much like your grandfather's either.

••WW I Era



Image courtesy of Rock Island Auction Company

1903 Springfield bolt-action rifle adopted for use by U.S. Army in World War I. Introduces .30-06 cartridge.

••Post WW I Era



Bolt-action hunting rifles became popular after World War I. The .30-06 continues today as one of the most popular big-game calibers in the United States.

••WW II Era



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First semi-automatic U.S. service rifle, the Garand, is first used in World War II.

••Post WW II Era



Image courtesy of NRA/National Firearms Museum

Semi-automatic rifles and shotguns gain popularity among both hunters and target shooters in post-war years.

••Vietnam War Era



Image courtesy of Colt

M-16 becomes service rifle, first sees combat in Vietnam War. Updated versions continue as current U.S. service rifle.

••Today



Photo courtesy of Remington

AR (Armalite)-platform rifles are semi-automatic versions that look like their military counterparts. Now offered with hunt-specific features, these rifles are popular for varmint and big-game hunting.



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Young Outdoors

By Gayne C. Young

As a public high school teacher for more than . . . oh man, that's depressing. Has it really been that long? Maybe I should look into writing full time.

I'm sorry. Let me start over: As a public high school teacher for most of my adult life, I know a little something about "investing in our future." Although that term has been warped by politics and failed banking institutions as of late, the basic idea is still sound and makes perfect sense; entities should spend resources now so they can grow in the future.

This applies to society – thus the public school system – companies, families and to the world of hunting. And in the world of hunting, investing in the future means acquiring new hunters.

Yes, there are other factors involved in the preservation of the sport, but none as important as the recruitment and training of a new generation of hunters. Thankfully, there are a host of individuals and organizations around the world working to bring new hunters into the fold. Perhaps none are doing it on such a grand scale and as well as Oak Creek Whitetail Ranch.

Purchased by Donald and Angi Hill in 2004, Oak Creek is an 1,800-acre whitetail ranch located in central Missouri. The Hills wanted to do something for youths in the area that gave them, according to Donald, the "opportunity to hunt and to learn about hunting and safety."

At Oak Creek Whitetail Ranch in Missouri, they're investing in our hunting future one big happy weekend at a time.



John Snodgrass instructs young Bryant Colombo on shooting a muzzleloader at the Oak Creek JAKES event.

The Hills began their quest in 2007 by contacting the Rhine Valley Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation in the neighboring town of Hermann. After much brainstorming, both groups agreed that a larger version of the JAKES (Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics

and Sportsmanship) Program would best meet the Hills' criteria.

Once the format was decided upon, the real work began. Countless hours were spent developing activity schedules, recruiting volunteers, purchasing

supplies and equipment, and obtaining donations from local and national businesses. To promote the event, flyers were created and distributed and press releases sent.

The most important promotion came when Donald visited area schools to announce the event at special assemblies. There, he laid out the requirements for application to attend the weekend affair. To apply, students between ages 9 and 15 had to submit an essay addressing one of two prompts: "Detail your most memorable experience in the wild." or "Explain why you want to hunt at Oak Creek." Students also had to show proof of good grades, or at least improvement, and provide letters of recommendation from a parent and other individuals such as a teacher, coach,

pastor or business owner. Many teachers voiced gratitude that the program included an emphasis on getting good grades as well as creating and maintaining a diligent work ethic at school. The response was extremely encouraging: 42 applications were received and of these, 30 students were selected.

The first Oak Creek JAKES Weekend began on the afternoon of December 13, 2007 and was a rousing

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success. The students learned about hunting, their hunting heritage, safety in the field and conservation. Afterward, they headed into the woods to hunt for a whitetail doe. For many, it was their first hunting experience. Only 13 does were killed, but all of the students came away saying they had a great time and couldn't wait to do it again.

The day's events were open to the public and despite snowy weather, more than 150 kids and parents came out for the festivities. They had the opportunity to shoot BB guns, .22 rifles and pistols, 20- and 12-gauge shotguns, muzzleloaders, and both compound and long bow. They also got to throw tomahawks, go on a wagon ride, visit with local game officials, and learn to identify animal tracks. Thanks to a number of generous sponsors, every kid got a goody bag filled with outdoor gear and could choose two items from a cache of prizes that included guns, optics, knives, flashlights, clothing, saving bonds and free taxidermy.

Although the first Oak Creek Whitetail Ranch JAKES Weekend took years to plan and months to implement, the end result was phenomenal; more than 50 new hunters were brought into the fold.

In 2008 and 2009 another 60 young hunters came into the sport via the program, and last December 31st and January 2nd, the fifth annual hunt involved 32 more youngsters, with a total attendance of more than 200.

Investing in the future often takes a great deal of commitment. In this case, the commitment is time, both in the planning and execution, and money. But if companies such as Oak Creek Whitetail Ranch and a host of others don't invest in our future, there may not be one for the sport we all hold so dear – and then I wouldn't have anything to write about.

And I've have to teach another few . . . oh never mind, I'm getting depressed again. 🐾

Author's Note: My thanks to Bonnie Prigge for her help with this story. To learn more, visit oakcreekwhitetailranch.com.

OWN A PIECE OF HEAVEN.

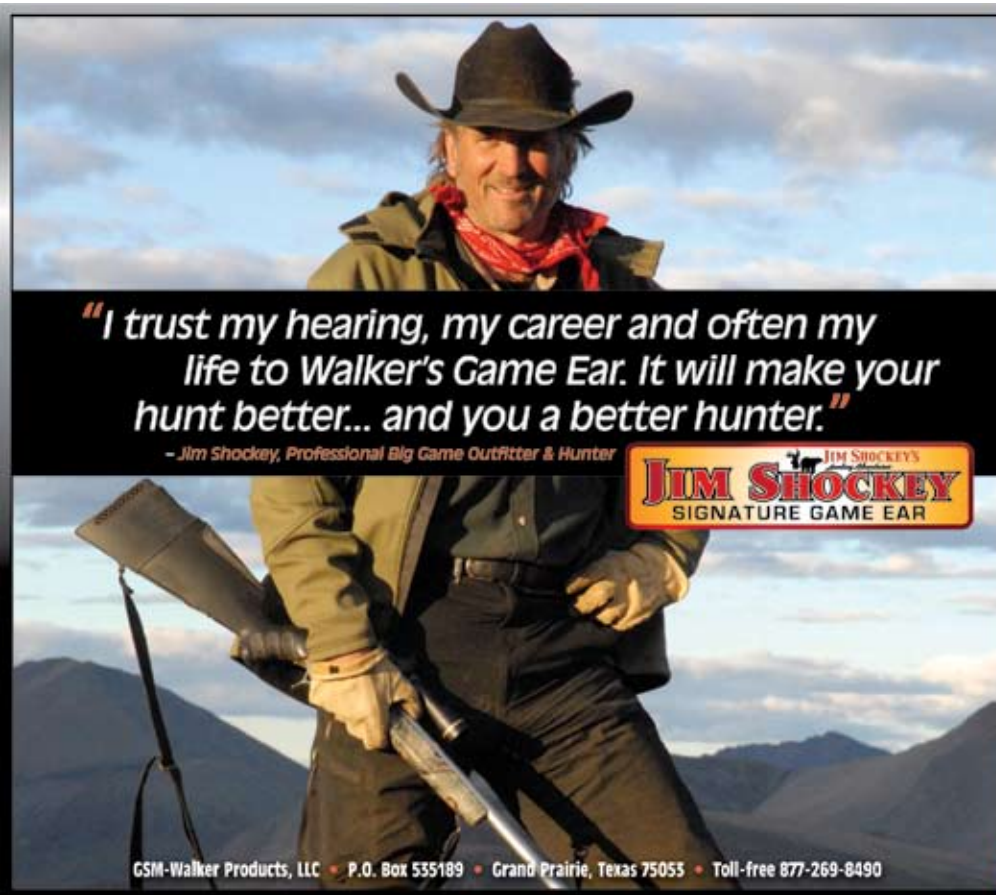
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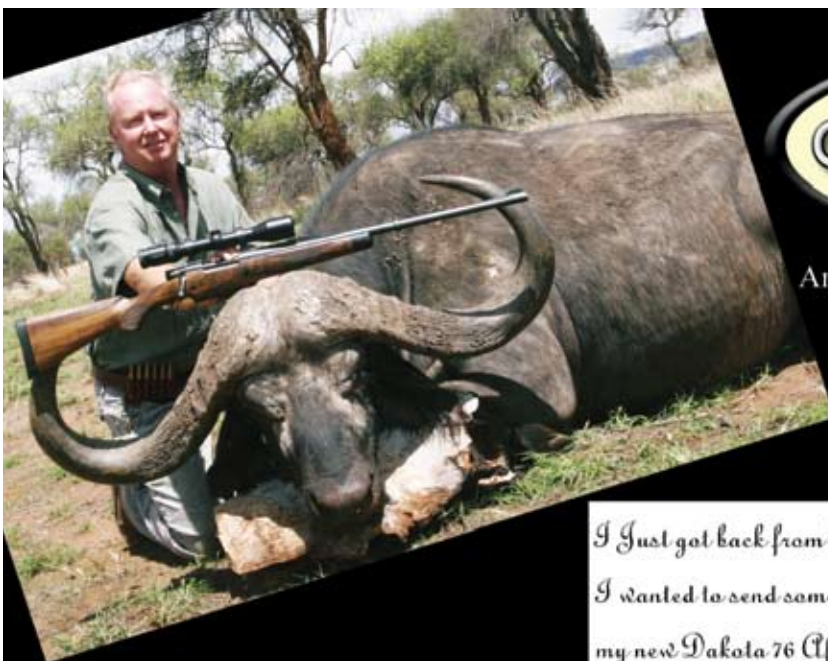
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I Just got back from Tanzania and I wanted to send some pictures of my new Dakota 76 African in .404 Jeffery
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 P.S.
 I almost forgot, that's me with a 50" buffalo I shot with Jonny Hulme of Zambezi Hunters and my new Dakota.



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