

TEXAS SPORTSMAN'S NEWS

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW ULM, TX 78950
PERMIT No. 5
PRESORT

Volume 20 Number 1

January, 2010

The Newsletter of The Texas Sportsman's Association

"Dedicated to educating the public about the need for protection, conservation and improvement of fish, game and other wildlife, grasslands, and forests and to safeguard the freedoms that enable these pursuits."

TSA Business Meeting March 7 at Mentz

The Texas Sportsman's Association annual Business Meeting will be held Sunday, March 7, 2010 at Mentz Hall beginning at 11 a.m.

Buck Kollman and his crew of volunteer cooks will prepare a tasty stew for members to enjoy. Serving will begin at noon with tea, coffee and desserts available.

Helen Holdsworth from Wildlife Intensive Leadership Development will present a program on The Texas Brigades Summer Camps for Youth.

The camps are for student ages 13 to 17 years who are interested in wildlife and fisheries biology, natural resource conservation and enjoy the outdoors.

Participants learn valuable leadership and critical-thinking skills that promote team building and communication.

Also at this meeting, the Board of Directors will announce the winners of the first scholarships to be awarded by The Texas Sportsman's Association.

During the business meeting, elections will be held for the offices of President and Secretary.

Desserts, Attendance Prizes Needed

Members are asked to bring a dessert to enjoy with the stew meal.

Also, anyone wishing to donate attendance prizes is encouraged to do so.



EDDIE LUX of Sealy took this nice buck last Nov. 7 at 5:45 p.m. near Cat Spring. It weighed 165 lbs. The rack had a 16-inch spread and totaled 111 inches. Eddie brought the animal down with a Sako 243.

Scholarship deadline is Sun., Jan. 31

The application deadline is Sunday, Jan. 31 for two \$500 Texas Sportsman's Association Scholarships which were approved at last year's Business Meeting.

Following are the guidelines to be used in applying for the scholarships:

Eligibility

- Applicant must be a U.S. citizen.
 - Applicant must have a cumulative high school grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
 - Applicant must be enrolled in a U.S. college, university or technical school as a full time student.
 - Applicant must be a TSA member or a child, stepchild or
- (Continued on Page 4)

**TEXAS
SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION**
P.O. Box 26,
Columbus, TX 78934



STATE OFFICERS
PRESIDENT

Mary Lou Henneke
1263 Kveton Rd., Cat Spring, TX 78933
Phone: 979-732-5349

VICE PRESIDENT

Herman Brune
1079 FM 1890, Columbus, TX 78934
Phone: 979-732-5241

SECRETARY

Marcella Maertz
1368 Frelsburg Rd., Alleyton, TX 78935
Phone: 979-732-5433

TREASURER

Terrel Maertz
1380 Piney Woods Rd., Alleyton, TX 78935
Phone: 979-732-5339

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Herman Brune
1079 FM 1890, Columbus, TX 78934
Phone: 979-732-5241

Visit TSA On Line!

The TSA web site is up and running, and members are encouraged to visit:

<http://www.texassportsmansassociation.org>

The website is maintained by
TSA Director Leslie Heinsohn.

TSA County Officers

Austin County

President — Shane Scherbig
Vice President — David Wade
Secretary — Diane Boehme
Treasurer — Charles Abel
Committeeman — Wilfred Eckardt

Colorado County

President — Terrel Maertz
Vice President — Jerry Woodward
Secretary-Treasurer — Ruth Poncik
Committeeman — Walt Glasscock

2009 TSA Raffle Winners

1. Donna Bubela Savage 16 243 Accu-Trigger
2. Gerry Able Weatherby Vanguard Sporter 270
3. David R. Kulhanek Remington 20 ga. Over & Under
4. Rex Waxler Remington 870 Express 12 ga.
5. Francis Truchard Savage 93 17 HMR
6. Debra Zettel \$300 Gift Certificate - Heinsohn's Store
7. Cindy Gohlke Ruger 10-22
8. E.J. Machala Leupold Vari-X1 3x9 Scope
9. Ryan Strauss Hand-Made Quilt
10. Russell D. Vinklerek TSA Lifetime Membership
11. Kirk Hoppe Rod & Reel Combo
12. David Sullivan \$100 Gift Card-Academy
13. Mike Mueller \$100 Savings Bond
14. John Greenstreet \$100 Savings Bond
15. John Walla \$100 Savings Bond
16. Joyce Loessin 4 Bag Chairs
17. Butch Sodalak \$50 Wal-Mart Gift Card
18. Josh Zapalac 2 Sets of TSA Dominoes
19. Shane Siptak \$50 Bass Pro Gift Card
20. Stephen Schoen 2 Bag Chairs
21. Monica Fricke 11 pc. Wrench Set
22. Gerald Trojacek \$25 Gift Certificate-Lindemann Store
23. Andrew Weido Ice Chest

2009 Fall Fundraiser

	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>EXPENSES</u>
PENNY RAFFLE	\$586.54	\$328.54 (Binoculars, Rod & Reel, Knife Set, Cap Lights)
SILENT AUCTION MEAL	\$539.00 \$948.50 (125 Plates @ \$6.75 + tax)	\$900.70
MEMBERSHIPS (70)	\$350	
RAFFLE	\$5,029.00	\$2,995.80
HALL RENTAL		\$137.75
MISC. EXPENSES		\$44.99
TOTALS	\$7,453	\$4,407.78
FUNDS RAISED		\$3,045.26

Caught in the act, part 2

On Oct. 15, 2009 at 1 a.m., two Montgomery County game wardens were running a deer decoy operation near Montgomery when they apprehended three subjects night/road hunting deer.

A vehicle passed the decoy, turned around and, on its way back, started shining a flashlight. As the vehicle approached the decoy, the

passenger shot at it one time, hitting it just below the head with a .17-caliber rifle.

The wardens stopped the vehicle, and after identifying the occupants realized they had caught the shooter night/road hunting three years before.

The subjects confessed to having done this many times before. The driver and the shooter were arrested.

Looking Down from the Saddle

By
HERMAN W. BRUNE

The dog ran behind me and the young cow bellowed and charged. The knob-horned juggernaut had me in her sights, a

brand new wet and leggy calf straggled behind her, and I cursed for being afoot instead of horseback. There was no way to escape and I had no club. So, in typical he-man fashion I cocked a foot and prepared to plant a boot heel between her eyes.

"I'll kick her brains out her rear end," I swore.



But that's not what happened. My championship kick fizzled and the red and white-faced cow hit me like a freight wagon. Her head was lowered and instead of being plowed down she scooped me onto her bony crown. Her horns rattled my knees and my hands pressed against her shoulders. For two jumps our worlds collided. The dog was back in the fray, the calf bawled "maaaaaa", I cussed, and the cow boomed a continuous ululating war anthem.

Then the critter swung her rack and one of those knobby horns smashed into a place where some of my brightest ideas originate. Something lumped in my throat. My eyes crossed and rolled back. Showing no mercy the cow slung her head again and chunked me into a nest of bull-nettle bushes.

There was nothing I could do but lay there and whimper. My hat was tromped on. All my air was gone. And my guardian angel was screaming through the brain fog that the mad mother might be coming back. The thought jerked me to my feet. But the baby calf had convinced Ma it was safe, and the two trotted back to the herd.

It was time to catch my breath, brush the hot sand off my hide, and reflect. There was no reason to be upset with the cow. She was a first-calf heifer and was protecting her newborn.

"Wish I had another 100 head just like her," I muttered, then limped to the pens, rubbing myself, and sniggering at my agony. "You know that would have killed an ordinary man."

Such is the norm at the Brune Land & Cattle Company (BL&C). There is no sympathy for getting "wrecked-up" in the course of cowboy duties. Having a perturbed cow scatter you across the pasture, or letting a colt potato plant your head in the dirt, is going to get you laughed at. The worst mistake a green hand can make is to whine or lay there like a busted melon. So, you may as well smile past the bruises and cracked bones, and wait your turn to hoot at someone else's disasters.

It was once suggested that yours truly is so blasted mean that I should ask for a set of horns for Christmas. The idea was appealing, and ever since the deep longing to sprout a stout set of bull horns has tickled the dark chambers of my sense of humor. A girlish set of Bevo-style steer horns won't suffice. My adornments must be shiny black, wickedly curved, and sharper than a surgeon's steel. They should be thick as drill stem and ring like the Bells of St. Mary's when beaten against a dense skull. The sight of these mortal weapons would cause evil women to perspire and non-virtuous men's hearts to seize

Growing Horns

in terror. Yes, a sturdy set of bull horns would serve me well.

But then, something happened at the BL&C. Where once the ranch hands peppered their breakfast eggs with ground cayenne and a chew of tobacco was fine for dessert; now we temper our cussing and keep one pair of boots shined for Sundays. The reason for this sudden change wasn't caused by any lightning bolts from heaven — or maybe it was. The transformation occurred because Sam, my daughter, wanted to come home. Sam was 12 years old, as pretty as sunrise, as fresh and open as a spring day, wise for her years, and needed a steady Dad. This ol' cowboy had to wise-up.

The next few years were better than any spent on the rodeo trail or slipping through the dark timber in backcountry haunts. There were basketball games and then treating the team at Pizza Hut. There were school awards and summer trips. There were dresses for proms and gulping explanations to questions normally reserved for Moms. And throughout our growth together her smiling reassurance let me know I was a pretty good Dad.

Then the college boy showed up.

I felt my horns bud out. He was taller than me, wore jeans with holes and had his cap on backwards. His eyes ogled like a perch. The glistening hooks spread past my ears and hooked up. Sometimes he wore baggy shorts sagging to his knees with a torn t-shirt, and his cap tipped northeast. My horns grew thicker.

I asked Sam, "Have your eyes gone bad?"

"Booot Dadeee I Luuuuv Him!" she said.

I almost choked and my horns stretched forward. His head reminded me of the mascot from Jack in the Box. This was going to get ugly, a hard step for me but easy for him. Then he did the durndest thing and called me on the phone.

"Hey Mr. Brune, I gotta haul Mr. Joe Schindler's hay and I can't find any of my buddies. I haul his hay every year and he lets me fish in the river on his place. Would you help me?"

Of course I did and later he won the Spring Catfish Tournament in the Colorado River. Bit by bit he ate at my resolve. He understood deer management and listened to country music. He took one of my mama cat's kittens to his college apartment, kept a beer cooler in the back of his truck, and dipped Grizzly snuff. He always used "sir" and called me "Mr. Brune". It was getting difficult to not like him but I endeavored to persevere.

Then he called me again.

"Mr. Brune, anytime you need help hauling hay, or working cows, or fixing fence give me a holler. I'd be glad to help. And Mr. Brune, I'd sure like to go horseback with y'all on a hog hunt sometime."

My horns drooped. My attention turned to Sam. She's become a beautiful young woman that I admire and respect. I know she makes good decisions and she likes to hunt and fish with her beau. So, it's time to pull in my horns. For the time being, I don't need them. I'll stay ready — that's what good Dads do. But for now, it's good to see the kids happy.

HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!

Scholarships

Continued From Page 1

grandchild of a TSA member.

General Policy

- Scholarship committee will be comprised of three TSA directors and two active, impartial TSA members. The committee's selections are made on the basis of scholastic achievement, character and financial need.
- A maximum of two \$500 scholarships or scholarship renewals will be awarded annually.
- Each scholarship awarded is renewable if the committee decides

- that the student's record justifies the renewal. Scholarship recipients who wish to apply for renewal will be required to submit a copy of their college grade report to the selection committee.
- Scholarship checks will be issued to recipients after proof of enrollment is provided to the TSA scholarship committee.
 - Application deadline is Jan. 31.
 - Successful applicants will be announced at the annual business meeting on Sunday, March 7 in Mentz.

Texas Sportsman's Association Scholarship Application

IMPORTANT! Please verify and complete all the information on this application. You may attach supporting materials that will help the Selection Committee learn more about your commitment to education. The application and attached materials become the property of the TSA.

Name:	Phone:
Address:	City:
School Name:	Address:

ACT	SAT	CLASS RANK	SIZE OF CLASS	GPA	GRADE LEVEL

Honors/Awards:

School Activities/Leadership Positions:

Special Interests, Hobbies, etc.

In 100 words or less, describe your higher education goals. How will achieving these goals benefit you?

Applicant's Signature: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Mail your application to: Texas Sportsman's Association/Scholarship Application
P.O. Box 26
Columbus, TX 78934-0026

The Ten Commandments of shooting safety

- Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.
 - Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow.
 - Be sure of your target.
 - Unload firearms, arrows and ammunition with care.
 - Handle firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.
 - Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
 - Control your emotions when using weapons.
 - Wear hearing and eye protection.
 - Don't consume alcohol or drugs before or while handling firearms or bows.
 - Be aware of circumstances that require added caution or safety awareness.
- If you practice these rules, you'll help to ensure a safe future for yourself, for others and for the shooting sports.

Hen, Fawn or Vixen?

Sportsmen have always argued over the names of the sexes and young of animals and birds. Listed below are the correct names for some North American animals and birds, in the order of: species, male, female and young:

Antelope: Buck, Doe, Fawn

Bear: Boar, Sow, Cub

Caribou: Buck, Doe, Fawn

Deer: Buck, Doe, Fawn

Elk: Bull, Cow, Calf

Goat: Billy, Nanny, Kid

Moose: Bull, Cow, Calf

Sheep: Ram, Ewe, Lamb

Swine: Boar, Sow, Shoat

Beaver: Male, Female, Kit

Coyote: Dog, Bitch, Whelp

Duck: Drake, Hen, Duckling

Fox: Dog, Vixen, Kit

Swan: Cob, Pen, Cygnet

Coyote Tags Locations

Austin County Linseisen Feed & Supply 551 W. Main, Bellville, Texas 77418 (979-865-3602) Lindemann Store P. O. Box 96, Industry, Texas 78944 (979-357-2211) Sealy Oil Mill & Feed Store 228 E. Front, Sealy, Texas 77474 (979-885-3568) Steinhauser's P. O. Box 1048, Sealy, Texas 77474 (979-885-2967) Fayette County La Grange Farm & Ranch Supply 623 E. Colorado St., La Grange, Texas 78945 (979-968-6441) Graeter Motor Company 429 N. Rusk St., Fayetteville, Texas 78945 (979-378-2227)	Colorado County Johnny's Sport Shop 101 Boothe Dr., Eagle Lake, Texas 77434 (979-234-3516) M-G Feed 201 E. Post Office, Weimar, Texas 78962 (1-800-460-8584) Heinsohn's FM 109 @ FM 1291, Frelsburg, Texas 78950 (979-732-5081) Colorado Feed Store 2105 Walnut, Columbus, Texas 78934 (979-732-3691) Bernardo Farm & Ranch FM 949, Bernardo, Texas 78933 (979-732-5161) Lavaca County Migil Feed & Grain 90A West, Hallettsville, Texas 77964 (361-798-4368)
--	--

'TINES' ARE CHANGING

Despite the skepticism of some, 13 is a lucky number for deer hunters in growing number of Texas counties

By LARRY BOZKA

Grandpa Bozka was not a man who was easily impressed. But if he were alive to see it today, I have no doubt that his pale blue eyes would be bright with fascination. So much about deer hunting on the family place has changed, and in striking contrast to so many of the iron-clad management concepts that he and other ranchers of his time strictly adhered to throughout their lives.

In Grandpa's day shooting a doe was heresy, the imposition of a virtual death sentence on a fragile and always-vulnerable deer herd. Killing a doe translated to killing a buck in waiting. It was a mistake that could get you kicked off of a lease for life if made in the presence of an especially adamant landowner.

A spike buck was simply a young deer, a "late fawn" that if given enough time would grow to proportions every bit as impressive as any other buck on the property. Spikes, outside of oldsters with pitchfork tines, were purely off-limits.

As for "trophy" bucks, it was all about points ... not Boone & Crockett points, mind you, but the kind of points that pierce hides and glint like wet ivory spears in the early-morning sunlight. Yesterday's success scale was measured by tines. A 6-point buck presented an acceptable average back at camp. An 8-pointer elicited handshakes, and with truly special animals a hasty trip to Hallettsville taxidermist Franklin Stary's shop.

A 10-pointer? It made the Lavaca County Tribune-Herald newspaper, complete with a sepia-tone photo of the trophy, the hunter leaning against the rusty tailgate of a hard-driven 60-something Ford pickup. A high-racked 10 was the holy grail of Post Oak Savannah deer, for all but the most fortunate of hunters the result of countless hours spent afield before persistence and luck ultimately prevailed.

That's the way it was for a long, long time. It wasn't that long ago, only seven years or so, when things seriously changed.

When they did, they changed exponentially.

The evolution has been both astonishing and gratifying to witness. In years to come it will continue to manifest itself more and more impressively in regard to both the

animals we hunt and the way we perceive and anticipate the hunting experience.

Either way, it's a whole different world in the hometown woods.

The bucks are bigger nowadays. Hunters' daydreams are no longer fantasy. Eighteen-inch-wide 10-pointers, once as elusive as unicorns, are now realistic quarry. We have higher expectations, based on experience, and we head afield with realistic hopes of seeing bucks that less than a decade ago were mostly the stuff of whiskey talk.

It began with the initiation of what is now generally called "The 13-inch Rule." That it

came to exist is largely to the credit of a maverick group of South Central Texas landowners and deer hunters who to this day still pay dues and meet as members of the Texas Sportsman's Association.

In 1990, the pioneers of TSA kicked off the then-radical concept of management "co-ops" with the creation of the Harvey's Creek Wildlife Co-Op in Colorado County. Throughout the next 10 years, at TSA's urging and with the support of TPW Commissioners (in particular, a retiring Nolan Ryan) some 3,100 landowners throughout six counties ultimately put almost a half-million acres into wildlife co-ops and set the stage for a collective buck management plan.

It became reality in 2002, the first year of a three-year experiment that has since been proven beyond successful.

The TSA folks elected to aggressively address a dilemma that I and many others had reluctantly acknowledged for so long. Sitting at camp with us one cold December morning in the late 1990s, sharing a cup of coffee by a loudly crackling fire, our resident Texas Parks & Wildlife Department biologist informed us that a recently-conducted study had revealed the average age of bucks harvested by deer hunters in our area of the state to be less than 18 months.

No surprise there.

We're situated only two hours and change west of Houston and east of San Antonio, hunting deer on properties that with the passing of landowners and the inheritances of numerous heirs continue to grow progressively smaller and more and more crowded. At the time of our visit with former TPWD biologist Gene Rees it seemed not just unlikely, but virtually impossible, that between day-hunt operators and 30-acre tracts with three or four hunters we'd ever stand a chance at seeing a grown-up buck walking the game trails of Lavaca County's rambling oak forests and cedar stands.

Minimal doe harvests assured the perpetuation of sheer numbers of animals, year after year. I remember counting 24 deer in a single two-acre oat patch one evening in the late 1970s.

Not a one of them sported antlers.

Grandpa and his friends always said, "We have lots of deer, but in this part of the state they don't get very big." To that story, my biologist friend answered with a quote that I've never forgotten.

"You know how you hear so much about genetics these days?" he asked.

We nodded our heads.

"Well," he continued, "there's no gene to account for age. It's not genes that are keeping your bucks from growing respectable racks.

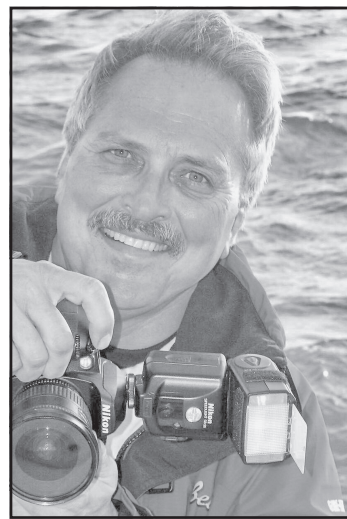
"It's bullets."

So, given the factors we were facing we entered the new millennium cynically believing that our deer hunting scenario was, in Jack Nicholson movie title terms, "as good as it gets." Not that we didn't make an effort. We passed on countless young bucks, basket-racked little fours and sixes, and even the occasional eight, never to see them again.

Most years, despite the diligent efforts of some co-op members, opening morning sounded like a gun range. The little bucks got hammered while the does continued to walk.

Then, unexpectedly, we heard about the Columbus, Texas-based upstarts from the TSA, clamoring for change in the form of a collective, multi-county deer management plan. To our amazement, and thanks to the cooperation of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, TPW Commission and a sur-

(Continued on Page 7)



Changing 'tines'

Continued From Page 5

prising number of area landowners who had worked for years to assemble a workable framework of wildlife management co-ops, they got it.

We got it.

The 13-Inch Rule was a controversial concept, a political hot potato that some were reluctant to vocally support. As much as anything, deer hunting means money to landowners, no matter what part of the state they occupy. Those going for, pun intended, the "quick buck," were going to have to develop a little patience in anticipation of a wide-racked payback that was at least several years away from showing tangible signs of fruition.

Suddenly there were rules to protect young bucks ... no taking of any buck with less than a 13-inch inside spread or at least 6 points on one side. Deer with one or more unbranched (spike) antlers were legal. Regardless of size, the limit remained one buck per hunter per season.

As they had with the initiation of co-ops, TPWD biologists continued to encourage landowners and game managers to conduct intensive census studies of the deer herds on their properties prior to season. As expected, the results revealed a very high doe-to-buck ratio ... in most areas, 3.5-to-1 or greater. TPWD countered the imbalance with the issuance of antlerless deer tags relegated

according to doe population densities and then strongly encouraged hunters to use them ... an effort that continues today.

Many hunters remain averse to using their doe tags, fearing that shooting does will somehow disrupt their buck-hunting efforts (despite the fact that the vast percentage of does are taken while grazing within a few feet of a corn feeder). A vestige of the old resistance remains. Old habits die hard. Nonetheless, hunters in the continually-growing 13-Inch Rule contingency are making commendable strides in their attempts to stabilize buck-to-doe ratios in places where the percentages have been astronomically stilted for decades.

Buck regulations on the home place changed again for the 2008-09 deer season. The 6-points-on-one-side exception was eliminated in favor of a standardized, across-the-board 13-inch-inside-spread regulation. TPWD also surprised hunters in Lavaca and other eligible counties with a bonus ... the addition of a second buck, so long as it carries at least one unbranched antler on one side.

Some rejoiced in the addendum. For the first time in history, select Post Oak Savannah Counties that had passed the "experimental" management phase became two-buck counties. Many hunters saw the addition as a hard-earned payback, a

tangible reward for careful adherence to a collective management plan that in just over six years had vastly improved the quality of deer and deer hunting alike.

Ten-point bucks were no longer ghostlike rarities. Furthermore, for the first time, hunters were paying close attention to the age of the bucks they were sighting on before squeezing their rifle triggers. Puppy-like noses and spindly legs drew long second looks, and quite often, subsequent passes from observant hunters ... even when thin-tined 8-point racks might have barely nudged past the legal 13-inch-minimum.

If it wasn't going on the wall, more and more hunters figured, there was no reason to let it fall. After all, the possibility of seeing the same buck in the future, and with a much-improved rack, had become a bona fide reality. Seemingly overnight, passing on immature 8-pointers had become a thrill, right along with glassing the brush for signs of mature, heavy-racked bucks. Those wall-worthy animals, everyone knew, were still alive and rutting thanks to a combination of both the 13-Inch Rule and a new brand of forward-looking hunter behavior ... one that made the woods substantially quieter on opening morning.

Others, however, thought the second-buck addition was essentially too much too soon. I'll confess; I had concerns of my own. Specifically, I was worried about two potential dilemmas.

First, it seemed likely that the second-buck amendment would encourage hunters to shoot not just long-horned spike bucks but also yearlings with tiny bodies and miniscule 2- or 3-inch spikes ... deer that I and others believed were simply too young to be taken.

(Yeah, I know. I sound like Grandpa.)

Second, after so many years of passing up bucks with 12-inch inside spreads, we agonized about the possibility of unintentionally creating a colony of high-horned, narrow-spread bucks ... animals that would never grow legal-sized racks. It seemed plausible to us that if we preserved enough meager-spread bucks year after year we might ultimately foster a genetic propensity for narrow racks throughout much of the herd.

Like most people, I don't generally relish

Continued on Page 8

Annual TSA Business Meeting



Sunday,
March 7,
2010

St. Roch Church Hall - Mentz

Changing 'tines'

Continued From Page 7

being wrong. This time, though, I'm thrilled.

I recently addressed both concerns with TPWD White-Tailed Deer Project Leader Mitch Lockwood, beyond question one of the state's foremost deer management authorities. Lockwood's responses surprised the heck out of me, and will hopefully go far in allaying the fears of hunters in the 113 (so far) Texas counties that fall under the 13-Inch Rule.

Regarding the aforementioned spikes, with tines tall or short, Lockwood emphasizes one critical fact. "Ninety-three percent of spikes are 1-1/2-year-old deer," he says, "even those with inch-long tines. Based on research we have conducted since 1974, even at age 4-1/2 that little spike is very unlikely to grow a rack with a 13-inch inside spread. So if you want to reduce the likelihood of narrow-racked bucks, you need to take all the spikes you can."

But what about passing up those too-narrow 8-pointers?

"Only 4 percent of bucks 4-1/2-years old or older have inside spreads of less than 13 inches," Lockwood adds. "If hunters use that second tag and shoot yearling spikes even that 4 percent could drop."

We now hear credible word and even see photos of the occasional 160- and 170-class B&C buck, though few of us who hunt the Post Oak Savannah ever expect to encounter an animal of such proportions in the free-range timber two hours west of Houston. Regardless, compared to what we anticipated less than a decade ago, we head for the deer stands nowadays with a whole new degree of attitude and optimism.

There's still plenty of work to do if we want things to get even better. We have lots of doe tags to fill, and fill them we shall.

Plus, those spikes ... even the little-bitty ones ... have to go.

All of them.

And I thought Grandpa was the only one who'd be surprised.

(Editor's Note: The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has continually added more counties to the "13-inch Rule" deer management plan since its inception in 1992. For details on specific counties, season dates, regulations and more, check the Web at: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/hunt/season/deer/spec_antler).

To join the Texas Sportsman's Association, or for more information, including an in-depth history and assessment of the 13-inch management plan by veteran outdoor writer Herman Brune, log on to the TSA Website: <http://texassportsmansassociation.org>.

Throwing the book at them

On Oct. 10, a Jack County game warden and a Wise County game warden apprehended three subjects at a deer camp for possession of marijuana, hunting deer by illegal means and methods (rifle during archery-only season), failure to tag, two counts of failing to maintain in edible condition, no archery stamp, no hunter education, hunting in closed season and possession of a stolen ATV. The ATV had been stolen in Wise County in 2001. The ATV was returned to Wise County sheriff's office. Cases are pending.

Test your deer I.Q.

Consider what you really know about deer. See how you fare in the following quiz. Answers are at the end of the test.

- How many permanent teeth should an adult deer have?
 - 24
 - 32
 - 36
 - 38
- Where would you look on a buck to find its vomeronasal organ?
 - base of eye
 - between its hooves
 - scrotum
 - roof of its mouth
- True/False. White-tailed and mule deer will interbreed, and the resulting cross is fertile.
- How many teats does a doe have?
 - none
 - two
 - four
 - six
- How many parts are there to a deer's stomach?
 - just one
 - two
 - three
 - four
- Which of the following structures is responsible for the "eye-shine" of a deer when a spotlight illuminates a deer at night?
 - fovea centralis
 - pineal gland
 - tapetum
 - glandus reflectorus
 - Q-beamus detectus
- What is the gestation period in white-tailed deer?
 - 205 days
 - 240 days
 - 280 days
 - 310 days
- The metatarsal gland in deer is located about midway between the hoof and the hock on the outside leg. What is it's function?
 - alarm notification
 - signals deer's status in the herd
 - produces pheromones involved with the rut
 - the function is unknown
- About how many deer are estimated to live in Texas?
 - 2,000,000 head
 - 8,000,000 head
 - 1.8 million head
 - 4 million head
- Which of the following woody plant species provides the most desirable browse for white-tailed deer in Texas?
 - hackberry
 - shin oak
 - live oak
 - blueberry cedar

Answers: 1. b, 2. d, 3. True, 4. c, 5. d, 6. c, 7. a, 8. d, 9. d, 10. a

— Ken Cearley, Extension Wildlife Specialist