

MOTION

FALL 2009

For The Active Attorney

OUTSIDE COUNSEL

THE LURE OF
THE SPORTING LIFE

BURIED TREASURE

A LOOK INTO THE
UNDERGROUND
ECONOMY

BATTLEFIELD BARRISTERS

LAWYERS IN ACTION

A man in a tuxedo and bow tie sits in a rustic lodge. The walls are covered in taxidermy, including several large deer heads with antlers and a mounted eagle. A stone fireplace is behind him, and a small dog sits on a chair next to him. The title "CALL OF THE WILD" is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image.

CALL OF THE WILD

BY BRIAN COX

Photos by Robert Chase

The lure of the sporting life

The Portuguese podengo excitedly works a zigzag pattern through the patch of sorghum, her snout low and snuffling. Under a cloudless sky, heat lowers across the field of switch grass and thistle as two shotgun-toting hunters and a guide in orange vests track the dog's progress.

With a rapid rustle of grass and a startled flutter of wings, a pheasant is flushed from the sorghum. The rooster lifts out of its cover and makes for the tree line, but with a smooth single shot that splits the afternoon calm, attorney Jonathan Savage brings down his second bird of the hunt. He shouts in exaltation.

It's a nice day for shooting. Savage, a municipal bonds lawyer with the firm Lewis and Munday, has been a member of Hunters Creek Club in

Metamora, which is just 50 miles north of Detroit, for nearly three years.

"I come out here all I can just to relax," says Savage while eating lunch out on the club's patio with his wife, Kim, a school psychologist in Okemos. "We come up here and just be ourselves. This is the most relaxed I ever am when I come up here."

Savage took up bird hunting as a hobby in the early 1980s when his brother-in-law invited him down to Del Rio, Texas, to hunt on a 20,000-acre spread on the Rio Grande. He had been an avid fisherman since childhood, growing up in South America where his parents were missionaries and he had the chance to fish in the Amazon, but he was immediately taken by the experience of hunting birds.

Last year, he and his wife were traveling in Portugal when they grew fond of a stray dog of a strange breed with enormous ears. They brought the Portuguese podengo home, named her Xana, and had her trained at the club to hunt birds.

The club's dog trainer, Steve Hardenburgh, wasn't sure how Xana would do. He'd never trained a Portuguese podengo before, though he took it as a good sign when he learned the breed

was used for rabbit hunting.

Xana, Hardenburgh says, turned out to be "birdy as heck."

Savage now brings clients or other business associates to Hunters Creek to hunt birds whenever the opportunity presents itself.

"I just love people to love the sport," he says. "It is a bonding experience. You're in the battle together. Your competition is with the bird or the fish."

Paul Feehan, wearing an orange whistle around his sunburned neck to direct the dog, has led hunts at the club for more than 30 years. Savage is Feehan's fifth hunt this week.

"I have met a lot of interesting people guiding hunts," says Feehan, noting that the majority of the club's 400 or so members are successful professionals.

Which, after all, isn't too surprising. Hunting isn't an inexpensive hobby. Individual memberships at Hunters Creek run \$850 a year and half-day hunts start at \$185 per hunter.

And that's just for pheasant, quail, and chuckers. Small change for small game, in comparison to how much big game hunting can set you back.

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Attorney Jonathan Savage and his 18-month-old Portuguese podengo welcome every opportunity to spend time at Hunters Creek Club in Metamora.

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JONATHAN SAVAGE



Roberta Russ, a partner at Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn, has journeyed to Africa every year since 1996, taking part in numerous big game hunts. Her office is decorated with African artwork, including a brass leopard head and a traditional tribal mask.

Below:
Among the artwork in Russ's downtown Detroit office is a brass carving of an African fish eagle.

Photos by Robert Chase

Honigman real estate attorney Roberta Russ started pheasant hunting at an early age with her five brothers and has since pursued her passion for adventure to hunt antelope in Wyoming, wildebeest in Africa, and walrus in the arctic.

"Hunting is a break from the pressures," she says. "You can concentrate on doing something totally different."

She has traveled to Africa to hunt big game every year since 1996. Her first African kill was a leopard at night in Zimbabwe's Mateke Hills that cost her \$3,000 (dangerous game is more expensive than, say, an impala, which might cost only \$400).

The first night, a leopard and a hyena fought over the bait

only 75 yards from Russ's blind. She never got off a shot, but a thrill raced through her nonetheless.

"It was the only time in my life my hair stood on end," recalls Russ. "That was the first time I experienced fear. It was a horrible sound."

The second night, Russ had better luck, and since then over the years she has shot a kudu, a zebra, an oryx, a sable, and a nyala. She spent a full day hunting the zebra and tracked a wildebeest for hours

in a truck across Namibia trying to get a good shot. She has taken musk ox and caribou in northern Canada and

once while hunting walrus was stranded in a small runabout on an ice floe for 36 hours.

"I like to have excitement in life," says Russ. "I've got some nice adventures. You have to work for everything you get. None of these come easy."

"Hunting is a break from the pressures. You can concentrate on doing something totally different."

ROBERTA RUSS





On a recent big game hunting trip to Africa, 34th District Judge Brian Oakley shot two impala, a nyala, a warthog, and a kudu with a bow he made himself.

"Nobody goes to Africa once. I started thinking about how I could go back on the plane ride home."

BRIAN OAKLEY

Judge Brian Oakley, of 34th District Court, wouldn't want it any other way. Oakley recently returned from his first big game hunt in Africa, where he killed two impala, a kudu cow, a nyala bull, and, on his birthday, a warthog.

Using a bow he made with his own hands.

Oakley, who since he was 14 went deer hunting every November with his father up in Atlanta, Mich., where his family owns a large tract of land, is engrossed with traditional bow hunting. He has been making his bows for almost a decade, painstakingly transforming a length of Osage orange or hickory first into a stave and then a bow that he coats with tendon sinew using hide glue. Beaver fur serves as string silencers.

Oakley turned to primitive bow hunting after he hunted deer with a compound bow for years, but never pulled the weapon back on a doe.

"I felt like I was carrying a machine in my hand," says Oakley, who has been enthralled with Native American culture since he was a kid. When he first went hunting with a recurve bow, the sensation was immediately different. It somehow felt richer and deeper for Oakley. He felt connected.

The fall after making his first bow, he used it to shoot a black bear in Ontario. He field dressed the animal with a knife he also made himself.

He says his trip to Africa was life altering. In fact, he and Russ speak of their experiences hunting in Africa with a similar mix of awe and reverence, sometimes at a loss for words.

"The stars are so different in the Southern Hemisphere," says Russ. "Africa is a different flavor, a totally different way of life."

"Nobody goes to Africa once," says Oakley. "I started thinking about how I could go back on the plane ride home."

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Photos by Robert Chase

Collaborative divorce attorney Lori Becker has won several shooting trophies at the Huntsman Hunt Club in Dryden, Mich., where she had trained her three English pointers (Ranger, Dallas, and Copper).



Photos by Daniel Lippert

Reminders of Africa accent Russ's downtown Detroit office, which is decorated with paintings of an elephant herd and a pair of giraffes, a bronze leopard head, a tribal mask, ostrich eggs, and a crystal carving of a cape buffalo.

In stark contrast is attorney Lori Becker's Bloomfield Hills office, which in the front room gently welcomes a visitor with tall green plants and impressionistic paintings of Parisian street scenes. As an attorney working in the field of collaborative divorce, Becker wants her office to present a soothing environment.

So the two pintail ducks she shot with her father while bird hunting in Mexico and had mounted are relegated to the very back wall of the conference room.

Like Russ, Becker has been around hunting all her life. She may be the only

lawyer in a family of doctors, but she is not the only hunter. She initially took to the sport as a way to spend time with her father, Dr. Carl Becker, who would take her fly-fishing on the Bow River in Calgary or hunting for pheasant or wild turkey.

"I don't think my dad thought I would fall in love with it as much as I did," says Becker. "I've always had a sense of adventure and my parents were fabulous in letting me believe I could do anything."

In 1998, her father took Becker with him on a trip to South Africa where she shot a gemsbok with a 30.06 at 175 yards.

She also got a kudu, a warthog, an impala, and a zebra.

She, too, fell in love with the land.

"I almost packed up and moved there," she says with a laugh. "If I won the lottery tomorrow, I would be a game hunter in South Africa with a game ranch."

She has since hunted bear and mountain lion, spear-hunted lobster, and once, while visiting Crooked Island in the Bahamas with her father and brothers, went wild goat hunting with a sawed-off shotgun.

Every adventure, Becker says, transformed her, brought out more of who she is and wants to be.

For Oakley, too, there is a spiritual component to hunting. It makes him feel connected, tethered somehow to the earth.

"I'm sure I've stood places where no human feet have

"I don't think my dad thought I would fall in love with it as much as I did. I've always had a sense of adventure and my parents were fabulous in letting me believe I could do anything."

LORI BECKER

Attorney John Chau took up fly fishing as a teenager, but he didn't get his first fly rod until he was a sophomore at the U.S. Naval Academy where on the weekends he would fish at Gunpowder Falls.



"Fly-fishing takes you back to other places and other times. It's a calming experience."

JOHN CHAU

been," he says. "I don't think many people in our society truly spend time alone with their thoughts. I think human beings are healthier when they spend some time alone."

As a fly fisherman, John Chau would be unlikely to disagree. An intellectual property attorney with Gifford, Krass, Sprinkle, Anderson & Citkowski, Chau says he was drawn to fly-fishing by its aura of mysticism, but quickly appreciated its more practical side.

"There's this whole Thoreau kind of mentality to finding your own piece of nature," says Chau, whose wife of three years is an assistant prosecutor in Oakland County, "but at the end of the day, you just want to catch fish."

Chau, who grew up in Oregon, began fly-fishing when he was 16 and purchased his first fly rod when he was a sophomore at the Naval Academy. Fishing at Gunpowder Falls State Park in Maryland became his release from the rigors and demands of the Academy; it was his "alone time."

"It's amazing how fast time goes by when you're out there," he says.

And so when he returned from a tour of duty in Iraq and left the Marine Corps and had a month before attending Ave Maria School of Law, it was to the Beaverhead River in southwest Montana that he traveled to fly fish and ease into a life transition.

"Fly-fishing takes you back to other places and other times," says Chau. "It's a calming experience."

The afternoon at Hunters Creek Club is passing. The heat has broken.

Savage, whose favorite fly-fishing spot is Henry's Fork in Idaho, is getting in some trout fishing before heading home. He prepares to cast out over the stocked trout pond, the line whizzing past his head.

"It's this that reminds you what you work for," he says.

He releases the line, which arcs through a slant of sunlight before the lure plops softly in the water, and he waits for a strike. **M**