

MARCH NEWSLETTER

There are not many occasions when I am at a loss for words, especially written words, but somehow, for some reason, I find myself in the spring of a relatively new year with no great expectations.

Always in my past there was at least a rudimentary plan, at least a rough outline, if not a timeline, of things to do – or at least things that I wanted to do. But, as the old saying goes, the only constant in life is change. The rough plan needs to be discarded; the dreams cast aside, because the immortality of youth, the strength and expectations of a grown, confident man, have been overcome by the frailties of health.

I am now and always have been a voracious reader. Books have been a constant companion for most of my life. As a youngster I read everything I could about hunting in Africa. Hemingway, Ruark, and Taylor were often companions to be replaced (replaced is not a good word – overcome fits better) by the consummate storyteller of the Dark Continent, Peter Hathaway Capstick. I daydreamed and fantasized of being the Man; the one behind the English-made, nitro-proofed double rifle, staunchly facing down the charge of 1. buffalo 2. elephant 3. lion. Take your choice. It mattered not to me. Such was the stuff of dreams...

But time has a way of changing things. Time had a way of changing me. I never planned on hearing someone tell me never to never again pick up anything that weighed more than five pounds. I never planned on hearing words like “disability” or “early retirement”; never planned on not being able to pick up whatever I wanted, work until I ran out of daylight, play until I couldn't. But that time is here.

I'm sure the question is in your mind as to why this column has headed in this less than pleasant direction. This reason only – make your plans, dream your dreams, but if you see a way to bring them to fruition sooner than later, don't wait. I fully realize everyone's personal fulfillment leads down a different path, but it is a path that you must follow while you can. It is no one's fault but my own that I find myself at this crossroad. I chose to devote myself to a career, making sure that the needs of family were always met. The road I chose was demanding; long days and weeks, seven days a week most of the time and ten hour days were the short ones. But it was my choice. Make your choices, but make them wisely.

Speaking of choices, I hope more than just a few of you have chosen to participate in our bowling pin matches this year. I want to reassure every one of you that is on the fence about coming out to play – every one of the regular shooters started somewhere. These matches are all about fun and a good time. Come see for yourself!

The Alabama Gun Collectors Spring Show is scheduled for March 15 and 16. If you have never attended one of the AGCA shows, these are exceptional. Usually in the

neighborhood of 700 tables, the association strictly limits what can and cannot be displayed on tables. I don't go to gun shows to look at jewelry and beanie babies and that is never a worry at the association shows. There will always be a large number of "Exhibit Only" tables, usually of items that are related to the theme of the show. The theme of this show is World War II. I understand they have a large number of military weapons exhibitors, some military vehicle collectors will be showing their collections, and you will even see a WWII era tank. I believe they have a Viet Nam era Huey helicopter slated for display as well. In the past, the surviving members of the Band of Brothers and the raid on Hiroshima were present. I don't know if they have these gentlemen scheduled to participate, but this is indicative of the educational effort and value that the AGCA is putting into their shows. It is at the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center Exhibition Hall and open to the public 9am – 5pm Saturday and 10 – 4 Sunday.

Tim Courtney

Secretary ACSC