

## APRIL NEWSLETTER

Spring is in full swing in Alabama. My grass (weeds) has already been cut twice, so it looks like a long summer. But, if you are like me, you are ready. All your brass has been reloaded, all your guns have been cleaned – repeatedly - and you have read and re-read the latest gun magazine until you're tired of it. Time to shoot!!

I am fortunate enough to have spent most of my adult life playing with guns and associating and socializing with like-minded people. I have played at different forums, none very seriously, but always managed to have a good time.

The one common thread that seemed to run through every different type of shooting I have ever tried is the fact that the overwhelming majority of people I have met, competed against, been beaten by, and on the rare occasion, beat, have been uncommonly good people. If you needed anything – gun, ammunition, ear muffs, etc. – someone would always have what you needed and gladly lend it. I once drove over a hundred miles to shoot a rimfire benchrest match only to discover that my rifle rest was still at home in my shop. A half dozen shooters cobbled together enough gear so I could shoot and not waste a trip. No muss, no fuss, and all for a “Thank you!”

I cannot begin to count the number of times I have called on shooting acquaintances for gear, services, or just to ask a question that I felt they were better equipped to answer. I've got friends that have years of experience and volumes of knowledge that I can never hope to live long enough to acquire. All of this gained because we share a common interest.

The point I'm trying to make is this: regardless of how the mainstream media tries to paint the “gun nuts”, I find more than just a little fault with their reasoning. In all the hundreds of hours I have spent at gatherings where there were probably millions of shots fired, not one was in anger. Each and every person there held in their hands a “BAD” gun, but no one, ever, was injured. We have laughed, joked, gotten frustrated with our own performance but never, never, resorted to the use of a firearm to settle any differences.

Most of the people that are familiar with me will tell you that along with my other peculiarities and personal peccadilloes, I am not a social butterfly. I have friends and acquaintances, a small and treasured group, and I am happiest in familiar surroundings – or, as my wife puts it, I’m one cave short of being a hermit. However, within this small group of friends and co-conspirators, I have a gentleman friend (don’t tell him I called him one) that has taught me more about wing shooting than I ever hoped to learn. One of my friends showed me the ins and outs of bullseye. He owns things that say “National Champion” on them. A friend, a talented pistolsmith, is putting together a carry gun for me. I accompanied the bullseye friend to the Bianchi Cup in Columbia, Missouri. A close friend – close enough that his children call me “Uncle Tim” (and I would have it no other way!) – is in the retail business and has been there for me for many years in a multitude of ways. You are beginning to get the picture, I think. As small and select as my circle of acquaintances is, we reflect all that is good about the shooting community. I’m sure this is repeated time and time again nationwide.

The NSSF (National Shooting Sports Foundation), of which our club is a member, has released some interesting numbers for April. One, in the last five years, the amount of the contribution by shooting sportsmen and women to the U.S. economy has almost doubled, from 19.1 billion dollars to 37.9 billion. That ain’t pocket change. The shooting industry also supports 165,000 American jobs. NSSF has also replaced Ruger as the sponsor of the Rimfire Challenge, a very popular two-gun type entry level competition. I’m glad someone stepped up and kept it alive.

Let’s go shooting! As usual, all content, all opinions, are mine and mine alone. Bowling pins Sunday 4/13!!

Tim Courtney

Secretary ACSC