

Nitro Express

Official Newsletter of Watauga Gun Club

July 28, 2006

Minutes from last meeting:

See the website or contact the secretary.

Monthly club match results:

The next match is the varmint match. 100 to 300 yards, any center fire rifle .17 caliber or larger but less than .50 caliber. Targets are paper facsimiles of various varmints (mouse, rat, gopher, crow, skunk, raccoon, groundhog, etc.) Targets are set at 100, 200, and 300 yards. 15 minutes to engage three targets. 4 shots on the 300-yard target, 3 shots on the 200-yard target, 3 shots on the 100-yard target. Prone position, bipod and sandbags, truck tailgate, car hood, log allowed. Cannot shoot off bench.

The July meeting was the picnic so there are no match results to report.

Upcoming Events

- ATA MATCH AUGUST 4TH, 5TH. & 6TH.
- CLUB MATCH AUGUST 10TH.
- IDPA MATCH AUGUST 19TH.
- NRA HIGHPOWER MATCH AUGUST 26TH.

President's Report

Reminder- Amendment 1 to the Watauga Gun Club Membership and Safety Manual requires that a person seeking membership must be a member of the National Rifle Association or applying for membership. Proof of membership or application for membership in the NRA will be required at the time a new member is voted into the club. Proof of continued membership would also be required upon renewal of club membership when dues are paid. If dues are paid by mail a copy of the NRA membership card should accompany your check.

The Executive committee has devised a pro-rata system of membership dues for applicants joining the club later in the year. New members voted into membership in the second half of the year will pay dues in the amount of \$10.00 per month for the remaining months of the year (example- a new member voted in at the August meeting would pay this first years dues of \$40.00- \$10.00 for the 4 months of Sept- Dec). The usual initiation fee of \$50.00 will still apply to all new members.

GREAT PICNIC!!!

The rains came but could not dampen the spirits of our club members and we had a great picnic. Then when the rain stopped we even got in some shooting- shotgun, handgun, and air rifle. I just want to thank everyone for their help in making the event a success !

It has been our policy that Wednesday afternoon is the time established for grass mowing, and when that occurs the ranges are closed. However, not all ranges need to be closed if the mowers are finished with that portion. Please check with the persons mowing and coordinate range usage with his work- but remember the work comes first if there is any conflict. Sometimes due to bad weather the grass must be mowed on other days, and these same "Work Party" rules apply.

TRAP REPORT

It has been awhile since we have updated the Cartel files. So here it goes. Trap got off to a slow start this year with the weather being a factor again this spring. This always puts us behind the rest of the competition since they can shoot during the winter in the low lands. Therefore, we have a lot of catching up to do in a short time!

The ATA shooters got started off with the spring shoot at the NC Home grounds in April. This turned out to be a good start for me. I tied a South Carolina Hall of fame member in doubles with a 98, shooting my new doubles gun, (thank you Jonathon Greene) and proceeded to smoke him in a two round shoot off. My doubles have been going well since. Handicap has been a lot of fun also, averaging in the 90's and winning more this year than I ever have in a year, (started shooting Remington nitro 27's cause of a hint by George Sudderth and have not looked back since). Singles have been another story. In the toilet bowl all year, except for that special Tuesday night when the moon and mars aligned and I shot a 99 straight and yup you guessed it, I choked on the last one!!!!!!! (Oh no it's a hard right!) Ugh! You all have been there I know!

Well enough about me (writer's privilege).

George has been having a hard time this year coming off a triple A Southern Zone win last year shooting a 200 straight and then another 248 straight in the shoot off to win. His wheels have rolled off into the creek and washed away as Tom Pitts says! It is worse than a slump; it's a Big Hole he has fallen into! We have all had those times and its hard to self analyze! I am sure he will work his way out of it and be heck on wheels again soon. The one bright spot to his summer has been that his doubles have been staying strong having won a number of events. The biggest joy he has received is the help he has given to his pupils.

George held his first clinic last month and a number of members attended. The

members I can remember are Dempsey Allgood, Walter "The" McCracken, John Cuttcliffe, and Doug Merkel. These guy's have really benefited from his class!

Dempsey is shooting 24's all the time now, Walter has picked up the pace, Doug has shot his first 25 straight and as per trap tradition, his hat was blasted! Last but not least is John Cutcliffe, at our last ATA shoot, he shot his highest score ever with a 96 x 100! George has helped these people out a lot and is planning another clinic now, so if you are interested in kicking your game up a notch or two give him a call or come out Tuesday or Thursday evening and let him know. I think the cost is \$50.00, well worth the info, Tom Shelley and I have both have paid \$300 for all American classes, the same info you would get from George! Just ask John, and Doug and Walter and Dempsey if it was worth it.

As for the rest of the ATA bunch, Tom Smith has been shooting well and winning since his All American Clinic, more 99's than I care to remember. The Pitt-Meister known in Trap circles as Spy 1 has been shooting well, high 90's in singles and mid 90's in caps, taking his share of the trophies. His nemesis Tom Shelley known as Spy #2 has been hot and cold with his shooting due to his two new toys, (his girl Robin and his Hot Rod Nova) Sweet distractions!

The Tuesday nights have been great for practice with a good turn out by all. The IDPA team has used this time to practice and get really good. The Thursday league has two shoots left and there is a tie between Northwest Opticians and The IDPA team with a 4 win 1 loss tie. Good close competition! The secret to the teams has always been turn out! Both of these teams have had all there team members show up for the shoot or make up their scores the Tuesday night before. Todd Walker is the ringer for the IDPA team. He walks to the line and you can just about bet he is going to shoot a 24! The man can shoot anything and be competitive, a rare talent! Sandy is another one of these talented people; that's why Gary

has to behave! We plan to keep shooting Tuesday and Thursday evenings as long as the day light holds and the people want to shoot so bring your shotgun and come on. Don't have one? No problem come on out anyway you can shoot ours!

The last bit of news, the Southern Zone Trap shoot was last weekend, some of us shot competitively but not good enough. I shot a 97 in doubles in "A" class on Friday and got beat out by some 98's! That's as close as I got. George shot good doubles again but not good enough. Shelley popped a 93 in caps but not good enough! The only one to get into the shoot offs was Mr. Ken Moore; he shot a 96 in caps Sunday to tie for 5th place! Yup that's right for 5th place! He lost in the shoot off shooting a 23 to his rivals 25! I swear this tournament was a miss and OUT! Stiff competition! The only one to tie in the NC State shoot was Worth Miller, for Sr. Vet with an 89 and he lost the coin flip!

As for our shoots at the club the year has been good, all of us holding our own.

All your help has been greatly appreciated and we are calling out for some more help this August shoot. It is our biggest of the year, the Glenn Miller Memorial shoot, Friday through Sunday. We are expecting a large turn out with all that have already said they are coming. We will have some campers coming on Thursday afternoon, so if your need to sight in your 300 yard rifle please, before, as they will take up the area in front of the benches. Thanks again for everybody's help; it makes it easier and a more enjoyable experience for all if all pitch in.

I will report back after the Glenn Miller shoot with the read and weep section. In addition, to borrow a phrase from another "shoot more - it's later than you think".

Sorry for the length, lots of catching up and Wayne asked for it!

See ya on the shooting line!

Morgan

RANGE OFFICER'S REPORT

We have recently had some questions about shooting hours. For regular use of the Club, the hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Wednesday is from 8:00 A.M. To 12:00 P.M. if mowing is being done. Check with the person mowing to see if you can use the portions of the range he has finished with. No Outdoor shooting is allowed after 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday. Sunday is from 12:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Be sure to check by the two churches up the road to be sure they have finished their services before you start at 12:00.

Scheduled events such as ATA Matches, Highpower Matches, I.D.P.A. Matches, etc. and the monthly Club matches may run after 8:00 P.M. on any days other than Wednesday or Sunday.

When the range is being used for a scheduled event such as A.T.A., I.D.P.A., Highpower, etc. the range is under the control of the discipline director and the club range officer.

The Club Range Officer can enforce the local club rules. The discipline director is responsible for those rules as well as the specific rules of the discipline. The entire range is closed during these events unless the discipline director agrees to open parts of it to the general membership for practice. Check the Club Calendar and with the discipline director before you go out to the club on the date of a scheduled event so you don't waste a trip.

Also, please remember work details have priority over shooting. However, discipline directors should keep as much of the range open as possible during their setup preparations.

For sale, lost, found, want to buy

Two Ruger Vaquero, single action, .45 Colt caliber with competition action jobs. Guns are chrome and ivory. \$525.00 each. One Winchester Model 94E, full tube mag in 45 Colt caliber. \$350.00. One Winchester Model 97 12 gauge, full choke. \$450.00. One belt, holster and side holster of above Vaquero's. \$50.00 450 rounds +/- of 45 long Colt ammo, 200grain RNFP, Mullins. \$35.00 Whole package of above for cowboy action shooting for \$1600.00 Contact Doug Merkel 828 – 719 – 9646

One 12 gauge Savage Model 67H, full choke, 28" barrel. One Thompson Center Arms .50 caliber black powder rifle, 28" brown octagon barrel. One General Motors U.S. carbine, 30 caliber M1 with flash hider and 1200 rounds of ammo in cans plus extra clips. One Springfield Armory M1A .308 caliber, glass bedded with NM5 ½ minute sights, leather sling and ammo. One Springfield Armory .30 caliber M1 with leather sling, national match rear sight, national match operating rod, oiler with pull through patch and ammo. One Norinco SKS 7.62x39 rifle, new with all acquirements, chrome lined barrel, 1000+ round of ammo in boxes and bandoleers. One Marlin Model 80 bolt action .22 rifle with clip. One High Standard Model 103 .22 semi-auto pistol, 7" target barrel, with three 10 round clips. One Smith & Wesson Model 41 .22 semi-auto pistol, 7" target barrel and 5 ½ ' standard barrel, and three 10 round clips. One Smith & Wesson Model 14-3 .38 revolver with 6" barrel. One Smith & Wesson Model 19-3 .357 revolver with 4" barrel. One Astra Model 600/43 9mm semi-auto pistol with 1 clip. One Walther P38 9mm semi-auto German World War II pistol with all matching number parts and parkerized. .30-06 and .30 ammo, and shotgun and rifle reloading equipment. Contact Charles Loretto 297-2325

And The Last Word Goes To:

Wayne Green

I recently had a discussion with a club member who could not understand why so many of us had permits to carry concealed handguns and why we regularly do so. I do not think I did a very good job of trying to explain the reasons to him. It is like trying to explain color to someone that has been blind from birth or that deer hunting is not about killing a deer. The best explanations I have ever read were in a couple of issues of *AMERICAN HANDGUNNER* magazine. These articles were by John Connor. Mr. Connor made his living serving in the military and as a law enforcement officer before he became a gun writer.

Mr. Roy Huntington, editor of the magazine, graciously permitted me to reprint these articles in the newsletter. Mr. Conner also writes for *GUNS MAGAZINE*. It is well worth buying the magazines for his articles alone. Here they are courtesy of *AMERICAN HANDGUNNER*.

"WHY DO YOU CARRY A GUN?"

If I had a nickel for every time I've been asked that question, I'd have, uh ... as many guns as his firearm-festooned Editorial Immenseness, Roy-Boy. It's been asked of me by all flavors of folks in all slices of society, with attitudes and expressions ranging from angry-arrogant to curtly-contemptuous, to brainless an' befuddled. My answers to it have sorta formed three phases in my professional gun-carrying life. During that first and longest phase, I answered all of 'em sincerely and articulately, often following up with stacks of historic and legal documents. After many years, I concluded only a semi-significant sliver of people even heard what I was sayin'. The rest had already made up their muddled minds.

Finally, I just got sick of it, and moved on to Phase 2. If those asking seemed to have teensy open spaces in their minds, I gave 'em S & A: "Sincere & Articulate." The more harshly-bleating sheep, however, often got exchanges like this: "So," queried Snidely Snotworth III, lookin' down his un-busted but needed-bustin' nose, "Why do you think you have to carry a gun?"

"Well," bellowed the Brutish Neanderthal (that would be me): "Because you're not QUALIFIED to carry one. You haven't got the skills, the judgment, the sense of responsibility, or the courage for it."

This answer often popped out after I'd just returned from some Heart-Of-Darkness where every living soul knew that the difference between slaves and free people is having the means and determination to defend their lives, property and liberties. That meant having guns and guts and God-given rights. Most of those people would quite literally die fighting for the freedoms so many Americans casually give away, and proudly bear social responsibilities those sheeple* won't even recognize.

*Sheeple: Sheep-like people, many of whom deny the existence of wolves, and vote to pull the teeth of the sheepdogs who protect the flock.

The Voices

Then I matriculated to Phase 3, where I started having some fun with the Snidely Snotworth types. When they asked the Big Question, I'd go all hunchy-shouldered an' secretive, then lean in close and mutter, "Because of the voices, ya know?" "The VOICES?" sniveled the Snidelies, suddenly scaredy-cattish. "Oh, yeah, the voices ... They told me to be, you know, prepared for when the killer clowns come ... " I'd furtively goggle around. "The voices say the killer clowns are comin' ... They're cannibals, some of 'em, and ... " About that time the Snidelies would be skitterin' away like mice on polished marble. Yeah, I know, the "killer clowns" answer might not have been "helpful," but it did just as much good as giving S&A answers to the sheeple, and it was a lot more fun for me. I know you already know why we carry these cannons. But sometimes, just sometimes, we all need a littlereminder. That includes me, and I've got one to share with you. One that got me where I live.

The Connor Clan has been nomadic, and we've lived in a number of places. In one of 'em, we shared a side yard and friendship with a young woman we'll call Miss Maine, and her knee-high daughter, Little Lizzie. Miss Maine quickly bonded with the Memsaab Helena. Clearly, Helena's Amazon-warrior spirit and skill with arms impressed Miss Maine mightily, and much of their time and talk revolved around that fierce self-confidence – and guns.

As for Little Lizzie, the munchkin almost duct-taped herself to the Mem's leg. She followed Helena everywhere, but always, always, kept glancing back to check on her momma, as though she were the worried parent. There was something guarded, something hurt and defensive about both of them, and that fearfulness extended to me for a while. They got over it, thank God. Then I sorta became a moving bunker for 'em, representing cover and protection. Finally, we learned the story.

Miss Maine had been attacked – brutally and viciously. You don't wanta know the details. As with so many such crimes, it wasn't really about sex. It was about hate and domination, cowardice and cruelty. And an even younger Little Lizzie had witnessed it. I like to think the Memsaab and I helped them to recover emotionally.

Then one day Lizzie came and snuggled into my shadow, visibly disturbed. That morning her kindergarten had put on "Frighten The Munchkins Day." Some schools do a pretty good job of alerting children to predators – don't go with strangers and that kinda thing – but others do more harm than good. All they do is terrify the tots and give 'em no operating options. Lizzie already had twin tears glistening, ready to fall when she grabbed a tiny fistful of my trouser-leg and asked, "Connor-Sir, will you a'ways be here? Wouldja be here ... When the bad mens come?"

My knees cracked on the sidewalk as she slammed into my shoulder, shaking with sobs as the hot tears came, splashing my neck and searing into my soul. " 'Cause I'm a-scared!" she choked, and clutched me tighter.

Oh, GOD! Who would not – who could not – fight without fear, suffer without sense of sacrifice, and kill or die deliberately, using the most effective means available – to protect life, liberty and a Little Lizzie? For God's sake, who?

Those who would not are no better than the predators.

Maybe in Phase 4, when somebody pops The Big Question I'll just smile and say, "For life, liberty and Little Lizzie." You guys can fill in the details.

That Four-Letter Word

Over 500 of you wrote in with responses to "Why Do You Carry A Gun?" (July/August 2005). If you missed it, or need a refresher, it's posted on the Web site at www.americanhandgunner.com. We'll wait. Done? Good. I carried Little Lizzie and her mom, Miss Maine, around in my head and heart for several years, waiting for the right audience to share them with. I guess I found it.

Numbers-geeks who study these things tell me that 500 write-ins means your feelings were shared by somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 readers. That article has spread to chat rooms, BLOGs, gun forums, lunchrooms and bulletin boards, with copies scattered in some very unusual places across the country. I was overwhelmed with its impact – and struck with some unsettling themes in your responses. First, the ferocity and determination you expressed were stunning.

Virtually every one of you spoke of your willingness to kill or die to protect Little Lizzie – any "Little Lizzie." Second, so many of you were confused or surprised with the depth of your own reactions, saying you had never really examined – not deep in your guts – this very primal and central dynamic, which drives all of your more intellectual and super-conscious reasons for being armed, for asserting your right to self-defense, and to intervene to protect the lives of others. Third, those of you who have not been tested under fire wondered – How would I do? Could I cut it? – if you had to stand and deliver, at grave risk, as a human barrier between "the bad men" and a Little Lizzie. Folks, we need to talk.

These are three same-and-separate issues, as tangled and twisted as human emotions can be. I can only try to answer them in an equally tangled way, using slices of my past. When I was a small boy, a great-uncle, a 48-year British Army veteran, told me about our family history, laying out that long, unbroken line of lifelong warriors. "We fight, boy," he growled. "We lose and die sometimes, yes, but we always fight."

I asked him, "Why do we fight, sir?" He laughed, harshly, and pointed to the puppies rolling in the yard. "Why do they hunt, boy? Why do those dogs point? Born to it, bred for it, they are, same's us. And because we will not be trod on." I accepted that explanation for a long time. Later I learned he had it half-right, and nine-tenths wrong.

There had been some ugly incidents involving other teams. Men, some living and some dead, had been left behind, both due to "combat circumstances," and to orders. We could not live with that. Before each mission, my teammates and I began joining hands and swearing that we would never leave each other behind; the mission, pain and fear and wounds be damned, orders be double-damned; if it came down to it, we would all go down together. Together.

On a pitchy night in another world, five good men and I violated orders. We ferried nine small children across a murky, shallow river because other men wanted them dead. It took a twelve-eternity hour to cover 100 meters of dark water into darker trees, and we fought for every child and every meter. Two of my mates and one of the kids didn't make it. I remember that night with a piercing sweet sadness – and an immense, soul-filling, self-defining pride. I never knew those children's names, and I never saw them again.

There is no bloodline so thick with history, so red with ancient battles, as to render anyone into an unfaltering warrior by birthright. There must be something more. There is no acceptance of duty; no oaths, no allegiances ever sworn so binding that they have not been thereafter cast aside and forgotten under fire – when men had nothing more to hold them than the memory of those pledges. I've seen it. There must be something more. You have not armed and oriented yourself for fighting, in defense of yourself and others, just because you are fearful of attack by predators, have you? No. Because you are

blessed with natural bravery and it's just the "right thing to do?" No. There must be something more. And there is.

It is love. Perhaps not the kind of love that first springs to your mind, but love, yes. None of you ever met Little Lizzie, so you couldn't love her. Why risk death to fight for her? I have served with many men whom I would willingly fight and die with, but in truth, I loved only one. When the Memsaab Helena and I first got together, we discussed what I did for a living and how I felt about it; my best and worst times, my motivators and morale busters. I talked about duty and promises. I didn't know I was shotgunning around the center, fooling myself, until she put one dead in the 10-ring. "Bullshit, Connor," she said, "It's about love, ya goof. Admit it; get over it." She was right.

Unless that gun on your hip or in your nightstand exists only to protect your own hairy hide, and if it extends beyond your own mate and offspring, then it's about love; another kind of love, but love nonetheless, ya goofs!

It is about a nameless thing – call it "honor" if you will – that is the finest, purest shred of yourself and all humankind. It's a love you only feel when you face the ultimate self-sacrifice – for the life of another; even a stranger; no, especially a stranger. In a way it is a love of self, even if it is only a love of the smallest, least recognized, most rarely exposed slice of your self.

We talk about it so little its unbidden emergence surprises many of us. That's because in this weirdly warped "modern society," its presence strangely embarrasses us, and its absence shames us. So we avoid it altogether. That's a pity. Only by bringing it out in the open and knowing it can we lean on it; live by it.

90 Percent

Without knowing what you'll kill or die for, how can you know what you really live for? In the end, it's about love – and in the end, love is all you have, and all you ever really had to begin with. And as for whether or not you'll stand and deliver if and when the time comes? Ten percent will depend on how you've trained. Ninety percent will hinge on what you love.

Now I'll go back to being the capering clown of the gunwriting circus, and you can forget I ever said these things, okay? Good luck to both of us.

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