



A Little Time for Nature

“As I Said,” I have always had a soft spot for animals. As a kid, I would always bring home the stray dog or any animal that needed attention. It has always been inspiring to see the birds of prey and look at the intensity in their eyes and the focus that they possess when they are on the hunt. They move about with just grace and speed, and are truly one of God’s great works. I have always related this to shooting. Attempting to stay focused and keep my mind on the subject at

hand. The cat reminds me of myself. He looks pissed off at the world and the look says “back-off” or someone is going to pay. There are days I feel a like the cat but after a few phone calls and a couple of laughs with my friends, I’m ready to face the world and it’s problems. Just a little reminder, of our friends the animals and the lessons they can teach us if we are observant.

Rodeo Man



The DeVault “Winners Box”

Remember if you have a DeVault Custom stock, Delrin rib, MachOne or DeVault Custom Shotgun send us your scores or how you have improved. We will publish them for all to see!

Larry Litwin: Michigan Road Kill Shoot champion HOA, AA singles Champ, 25-27 yd. Hdep. Champion Friday event Kreighoff K-80, DeVault Custom Stock.

Dave Brusman Sr.: First Team All-American Senior Veteran, Shooting DeVault Custom Shotgun 655 points Congratulations Dave

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“The World According to Me,” *Dennis DeVault*

The Big Bailout; “Oh no” the Rodeo Man has gone political. Ain’t happening. The title, Big Bailout, is about shooting. I reviewed notes from a past visit with Red Hill and decided to talk about the “**bail out.**” What is it? How can it be corrected? Do I have this problem; Maybe and maybe not? When I took lessons from Red years ago he asked me, “Why do you shove the gun off your shoulder the instant it goes off”? Red said, “It’s not a snake and it isn’t going to bite you.” I still did not recognize the problem; so out came the video camera. The camera showed that from time to time I pushed the gun away from my shoulder just before the report of the gun was noticed in the sound portion of the playback. Red explained that your mind lies to you. The brain tells you the gun has been fired but with the delay of that command to the finger the hands react at the same time and pushes the gun off of the shoulder. I had become the pre-mature Bail Out King - (caught you thinking dirty). Red said in American Trap we shoot mostly single shot events. This constant habit of shooting one shot and then we are done causes the mind set us up for the early bail out. The result is not following through after the shot. Red said, “I bet you’re just the ticket for Doubles.” He was right; most of my second target misses were from the gun being off my shoulder before shot was completed. Once this problem was discovered, Red begin a training drill to break the bad habit and stay in the gun through the shot. We started with Red standing behind me. Breaking a target was not a priority.

I called for my target and the drill was to follow the target with my eyes and concentrate on keeping the gun in my shoulder pocket following the target most of the way to the ground. Red would actually tell me when I was allowed to dismount the gun. After a couple of hours my brain started to understand mentally how to finish the shot. We then went back to shooting Doubles and my scores improved immediately . I was now staying in the gun and finishing the shot. It is a scientific fact that it takes 21 days to break a habit. The trick is to destroy old muscle memory and develop a new habit. After returning home I changed my Perazzi to mechanical triggers. My training continued in the basement by dry firing at two spots on the wall. I did this drill everyday for about 6 weeks. It worked great to mentally teach me to finish the shot and follow through. Red gave me another training drill to use. This drill was actually for another problem but it also worked for the following through. Red instructed me to take an old record player and tape a flashlight to the top of the turntable. By elevating the record player I picked a spot on the wall that was the desired height. The player and flashlight were turned on and it started to spin around the room. Standing on the right side of the room the light was placed to the left. As the light would come around the wall my eyes and gun would follow the light spot and pull the trigger two times. This helped me maintain a sight picture on the leading edge of the spot and allow me to stay in the gun and follow the target through both simulated shots. After following the light and varying the length of the follow through for six

weeks, it was time to shoot Doubles. The results were amazing. It was much easier to stay in the gun and scores improved dramatically. The flashlight trick helps in several ways, staying in the gun thru two shots, maintaining lead on the target, following through and following a target at different speeds. You also need to move the light set-up to different sides of the room so you can practice follow through going from left to right and then right to left . All of these routines can be done by using inexpensive devices that can be bought at discount stores or e-bay. For those of us in the North this is a way to stay in shape while we wait for warmer weather. Soon it will be Spring and we can move outside and start shooting real targets. I hope this will help and until next month,

Rodeo Man Out



“From The Mind” of Dean DeBow

“Out Side Looking In”

This month I would like to shed some light on a subject that, in my opinion, causes more confusion than the help it meant to give.

Bird Bead Relationship!

I have found that many people misunderstand the term. It has been a topic of many articles over the years in Trap & Field, Shotgun Sports, Etc. Here is a prime example. I took my nephew on his first rabbit hunt last weekend. Knowing better, but caught up in the moment, I told him to “put the bead on the rabbit if it was sitting still and if it was running to lead him and then pull the trigger.” We heard the dogs barking about an eighth of a mile back. Knowing the rabbit would be ahead of the dogs by a good margin I told him to get ready and where to look for it. The rabbit came running by us. After it ran by us I ask why he did not shoot? “I was trying to put the bead on the rabbit”, he replied! I instantly apologized and took full responsibility for the confusion. After giving lessons for years I knew I had broken one of my own rules by using this term. Be it game or clay targets it still works the same. If you are looking at the bead how can you look at the target? In this case it was a rabbit. If the gun fits, and is shooting where you are looking, why should you need to check the bead? Shotguns, as we all know, do not have sights but at times people use beads as sights. Every year I work with people who are in this dilemma. The ones who recognize this dilemma are much easier to help. It is the shooter who does not realize it, who become very hard to convince this in-fact is the problem. When some shooters get into trouble the first thing they tell themselves is “Do Not Miss!” Now the person will go from trying to break the target to trying not to miss it. This is the point when most start to bead check. It is impossible to look at two things at the same time. However you can use your peripheral vision to know when something comes between you and what you

are shooting at. This also applies to floating a target. I have worked with a couple of people this past year that confused POI with floating a bird. This also falls into this same category. If the gun shoots too high lower the POI.

Most people try to shoot a POI that is too low. What I have noticed is if a shooter is floating a target they will shoot under it. Not solely from floating the target but also from trying to look at two things. When the eye leaves the target to check the bead we immediately stop the gun movement. Since before we were able to vocalize what we wanted or were talking about we pointed at things. We did not point under them we pointed at them. It is the natural thing to do. Hence the term pointing a shotgun. If you consider the people who shoot good Doubles they usually shoot good Singles and Handicap. Doubles are a very good way to improve your pointing ability. Doubles teach you to look and point the gun without too much thinking or bead checking. There is just not enough time if you are going to shoot them before they are falling to the ground! Some thinking is good but too much can be a disaster. It’s not natural to try to over ride something, like pointing, that we have been doing since we were babies. I am sure there maybe a few shooters that this may work for. There is always an exception to everything and this is no different. The only reason to pattern a gun is to see where it is shooting; left, right, high or low. I used to shoot with a friend who won the Champion of Champion’s event at the Grand in 1987. He shot a Model 12, with a high rib, and if you ever looked at it’s pattern on paper it would scare you! There was a hole in the pattern I could put my hand into. But it would smoke a target from anywhere and it shot where he looked. Have your gun properly fitted to you to make sure it is shooting where you look. You should be able to look at a target, pull or release the trigger, and it will break. It makes no difference whether it is a straight away or an angle, watch how the target breaks to see if your gun is in fact shooting where you look. Most of the guns made today have adjustable everything! This

is supposed to be a good thing, and it is, if used correctly. Once you get your gun set it will not change unless something breaks. It is a piece of equipment. The only problem with adjustments is some people will not leave them alone! Some days when you are not as focused, or not seeing the target as well as on other days, the harder you try the worse it gets. Many times when someone is running a good score they begin shallow breathing. This will cut off oxygen to the brain which is not good. Maintain a steady rhythm of breathing. Do not try to hurry up to get the score on the board. You should not try to adjust for head winds or tail winds, cross winds, etc. If your gun truly shoots where you look it is a matter of staying in the gun and trigger control. Easier said than done I realize. But take some responsibility for your shooting when it is good and bad. Shooting bad is only temporary; it happens to us all at one time or another! If you will notice when you, or someone you know, has broken a great score it came so easy. As if you, or they, could do no wrong. That is exactly what happened! They did nothing much wrong, or if they did they received a Hail Mary, or Get Out of Jail free card. When it is easy it is easy but, when it is hard it can seem impossible. This is something we all go through. You never hear about the low scores of top shooters, you only hear of their great scores. While shooting do not grade your hits and get off of your back! A broken target is a broken target. An “x” is an “x”, and an-“o” is an-“o”. I would rather chip the top of a couple of targets than shoot under or graze the bottom off of several. Allow yourself to be human. I hope this helps shed some light on these subjects for someone. I do this because I believe there is a champion in each and every one of you. Until next month,

Dean DeBow

