



“New Year Wishes”

Special points of interest:

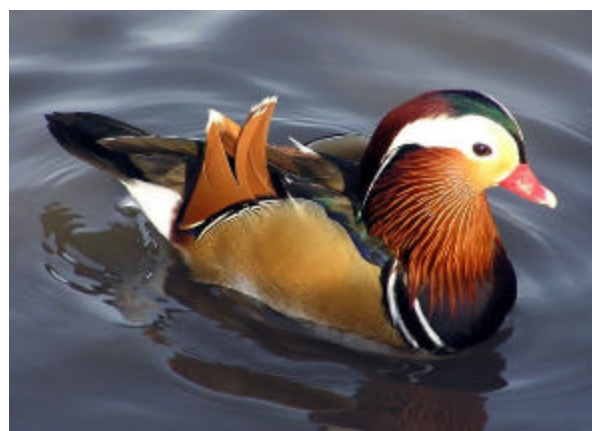
I hope everyone enjoys the expanded Newsletter. I have wanted to add more writers but writers needed to be shooters and not just writers. I want to thank Dean and Steve for helping me with this project.

Dennis R. DeVault
AKA Rodeo Man

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a great New Year. We haven’t had shooters send in scores for the winners’ box. We want to remind everyone that if you are shooting a DeVault stock or an Infinity Shotgun, please e-mail us your winning scores so we can post your name in our monthly newsletter the winners’ box. I want to

welcome two new writers to the monthly newsletter, Mr. Dean DeBow and Mr. Steve Carmichael.

I am honored to have both of these gentleman help with this publication, they are both accomplished shooters and a real tribute to the sport of trapshooting.



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Youth Shooting Program KY.

We are now into the New Year and I want to touch base on the raffle for the youth shooting program at the Kentucky State Shoot July 4th, 2009. I have only heard from two coaches so far. I am wondering if there is something wrong or maybe a misunderstanding about the program. We are attempting to give away \$16,000.00 to the youth

shooters to help promote this sport. If anyone has other suggestions please let us know if there is more that we can do. All the details about the program are located on our web site;. Remember you can be from any youth organization to be eligible.

<http://www.devaultind.com>

If anyone knows of coaches please have them get in touch with me by e-mail or call me at the shop 330-456-6070. DeVault Industries will also be sponsoring the handicap event on Friday the 3rd. There will be a BBQ dinner for all the shooters and their families on Saturday.

"The World According to Me," Dennis DeVault

Another month has gone by already. Most of the shooters in the upper regions of the country are knee deep in snow and shooting should be a distant thought. At this time of the year we should be working on our mental game and how we will get into shape for the upcoming season. Gun lifts are very important this time of the year. Through the years I have tried different methods of exercise to build up my arms and increase my stamina.

The only method that has worked for me, is to insert a barrel weight in the gun and start lifting every day. The extra weight will build the proper muscles in the back, shoulders and neck to improve your performance for the new target year. The important thing to remember is to do the gun lifts correctly. Work on making perfect mounts every time you bring the gun up. If you begin to get tired, stop and take a breather before starting again. If you do 25 lifts today increase that to 40 tomorrow. By the end of a month you should be doing 200 to 300 lifts each day with no fatigue and the mounts should be perfect each time. I know that in past years, it used to take me two months to get back to where I was

the year before, if I did not do lifts during the winter months. We have all heard that trap shooters do not have to be in shape to shoot, I beg to differ. Shoot 300 targets a day and tell me how you feel at the end of the day. What about being fortunate enough to get into a shoot-off? You wait around all day, you are already tired and then the shoot-off begins. The mind is there but the body says "you-gotta-be kidding me. Lets miss a couple of targets and go back to the room and relax." This has happened to me and I suspect it has happened to all of us at one time or another. Last year my friend Tal Seger got into a shoot-off at the Iowa State Singles Championship. He broke 200 in the event and then went 400 more targets in the shoot-off. I cannot imagine shooting 600 targets in one day; then go back to my room and get up on Sunday and do it again. I ask Tal how he felt the next morning and he said, "Great." He works out when he can and physically is in great shape. If you are in need of a barrel weight we have them available on Windy City's web for a cost of \$ 50.00.

Lets talk about Shot String. For years I have advocated that a long shot string in shooting has been

very over-rated. I have posted a link to a U-Tube sight that shows what shot looks like coming out of the end of your shotgun barrel and what it looks like when hitting a target. You can plainly see that the more shot that arrives at the point of impact the more chances you have of breaking a target. Long shot-strings may be great for shooting still targets but with a moving target you need all you can get at the initial point of impact. Shooting a pattern only lets the shooter see the pattern in a two dimensional view. A patterning board should only be used as a reference or starting point. You need time on the firing line so you can see how you are breaking targets. If you are consistently breaking the bottoms of targets, move the POI up, until you are hitting the targets well in the center. When you are centering targets move the POI up a little more until you are breaking targets on top. Remember the POI when you were centered and then where the POI is at when you are on the top side of the target; split the difference of the two measurements and that is where you want the final POI to be set. You will then be breaking the target with the leading portion of your pattern.

Rodeo Man Out

From the Mind of Dean DeBow

I would like to introduce myself to all of you who do not know me. My name is Dean DeBow. I have been around shotgun sports for 25 years. I have been successful because of a God given talent, understanding family, from meeting great shooters and having helpful coaches early in my career. Plus I have had very supportive sponsors. Receiving the Trap & Field 1985 Co-Rookie of the Year award afforded me the chance to meet many people very quickly. I have never been shy about asking questions trying to better my game. Other than 2 seasons in Arizona my primary state of residence has been Kentucky. I was unable to shoot for 7 years due to an auto accident in early 1997. Since returning to the game I have had to learn to shoot all over again using an array of different techniques. It is still a work in progress to get back to where I was before the accident. Even better I pray the increases in technology will enabled me to find my game again by the end of this 2009. Dennis ask me if I would be interested in writing for the monthly news letter. All of us have different views and opinions on the sport we love. I accepted his invitation and here we are. With all of the experiences I have had over the years, people I know or have known or had the pleasure of shooting and socializing with, I hope to shed some light on different topics each month. Some where in all of this you may find some useful information. Dennis wanted me to share some of that knowledge with you. Each month I will choose a topic which I feel is often over looked or not explained so most people can put it into practical use. That is why I decided to call this article **Inside Looking Out.**

I personally know several of the writers whose articles we have all enjoyed over the years. I know most of the coaches, people who give clinics, both past and present. They all have something to offer. Some of it will apply to you and some will not. We all have our own style and perceptions of the game. We are all different people with different needs in life and shooting technique. One of the best lessons I ever learned for shooting Singles was from a great guy but who was also one of the worst Singles shooters I have ever known. At the Ohio State shoot one year it was windy (30-50 mph) head wind and raining. There were only 7 people, out of over 1000 shooters, who broke the first 100 in Saturday's Singles and I was one of them. We walked out later that afternoon and I thought I had gone blind. I broke a 94 for a total of 194. I said "I have no Idea what I am doing different?" My friend turned and said "You really do not know?" "No" I replied! He said, "You are shooting because it is your turn and this morning you were shooting when you were ready!" That was a lesson I never forgot. Though, from time to time, I still have to re-

mind myself. This is something most shooters do, but do not realize, especially now with the voice release and fully automated systems. We take them for granted. The human error we once factored into the game is gone, as far as targets being pulled on time and being set on the arm correctly, right? Wrong!! Now more than ever, a shooter needs to pay attention to the release of the target, instead of the call for it.

You can get 3 to 6-or as many as 12 slow pulls per 100 targets. Most voice release systems have a .4 second delay set from the factory. Remember this, as it will make sense the more you read. Voice release can put you into a pattern of moving the gun, on the call for the target, instead of the release of the target. The target is the stimulus we should be conditioned to react to. That is one of the most important rules to a good score. But in most cases shooters don't follow that rule. Most shooters react to the call. Get a friend to try this with you and you with them. Shoot 25,50,75, or 100 targets that are hand pulled, purposely slow pull and watch what happens to the end of your gun. It will probably move on the call. The gun is not the first thing to move. The gun is following the movement of your eye. This shows the effect of your conditioning off the call and not the target or stimulus. Automatic traps are not perfect either. Most of the time they do very well. But what if they do not? It is usually the shooters rushing the machine that gets them out of whack. I have watched many good shooters blow a score because they did not give the equipment time to work. A Winchester model 1524 target machine works in 1.5 to 1.7 seconds. There are not many in use today. Pat Traps, depending on the model, need 2.1 to 2.5 seconds to function correctly. This may sound trivial, but if you grew up shooting hand set targets you will know what I am talking about. Do not rush the machine; it can cause problems with miss set targets and broken targets left on the plate. I have enough to do without pieces coming out with my target to distract me. Some trap houses have been modified to accommodate the larger machines. The newer houses were built larger to accommodate the larger machines and hold more targets. If the trap is too far back in the house it will cause the angle to be wider. The target has to travel further and takes longer coming out after the call. The size of the house and positioning of the trap will affect hold points. A shooter has to learn the boundaries (limits) they can get away with, as far as how high, low, inside or outside their hold points can be from different stations. The height and or width of the house can make a difference. All houses are not created equal. There are also optical illusions. At my home club we have 3 fields. All built years apart. All are now fully automatic. The first 2 are close to the same. The third field has an optical illusions. The ground, 20 yards out in front of it comes up and makes the target look low when in

fact it is the same as all of the rest. It drove me crazy when I first started shooting on it! One day we measured it with a transit and it was right on the money.

So I shot and shot and ended up blowing many great scores until I figured it out. The target was not as it appeared. So one afternoon I decided one of us (me or the trap) was going to give in. I sat and pondered the situation. Just shoot the target! The target was not different; it just seems so. I set the targets with a T-Bar and proceeded to break 100 straight in Handicap. Long story short. Think but do not over analyze things. Nothing changed but the way I reacted to the field. Set up to succeed in this game and it will happen. You only get out what you put into it. Just as life. Now, my advice to you, when you practice "work on your game not on your score", the one will take care of the other. Don't just stand there and go through the motions. There is difference between practice and just going out to shoot a few rounds with your friends.

Set realistic goals and it will come together.

If you need to get some help don't be to proud or shy. All of us need someone we trust to go to when we get into trouble. Someone who will help you work on your strengths and point out your weakness or problem at that time. Then you know what to work on and how to approach it. If not ask someone else. But remember, too much advice is as bad as not enough advice. It is not long until the 2009 season will be here. I hope through this news letter, you will find something useful to help in your shooting season.

There is a Champion in each and every one of you.

Until next month,
Sincerely, Dean DeBow

News from the West by Steve Carmichael

The Rise, and Fall, of two of the West's Premier Trapshooting Events- The Las Vegas Midwinter Trapshooting Tournament, and Reno's Golden West Grand.

The Boeing 707 skidded onto the Albuquerque runway, after battling a strong cross-wind all the way to touchdown. Veering right and left as the pilot struggled to regain control, things finally smoothed out, and we made it into the terminal area with only one blown tire as a casualty. I was with my parents, and several other trapshooters from Kansas City, on our way to the 20th Las Vegas Midwinter Trapshooting Tournament. It was February, 1967. I was 17, on my first jet airplane, and the world was still a very large place.

As we departed the plane to catch our connecting flight, the stewardess handed each of us our Winchester Model 12s, all in soft, full length gun cases, which had been stored in the Captain's compartment during the flight.

The remaining flight was without incident, and we finally arrived at our destination. On our way from the airport to our hotel, the brightly-lit marquis along the Las Vegas Strip displayed names such as Frank Sinatra, Sammie Davis Jr, Joey Bishop, Dean Martin, Buddy Hackett, and Don Rickles. For sure, this was Las Vegas alright, a trapshooting mecca of this period. I had read about it, and heard the shooters talk about it while standing around the old stone fireplace at Elliott's Shooting Park. We arrived and checked in at the host hotel, which was the Sahara at that time. If I recall correctly, rooms were about \$12 per night. Starting the next morning, 40-passenger coaches would provide our transportation back and forth from the Hotel to the Gun Club as needed.

I was amazed when we arrived at the range, and what I saw when I first stepped

inside the clubhouse. The entire center section was filled with slot machines, and along the North wall were an array of blackjack tables, crap tables and a Wheel of Fortune. It was a mini-casino right at the Gun Club! The place was packed, and everyone appeared to be having a very good time.

The weather that week ranged from half-way decent to horrible, as heavy North winds rolled in for the weekend, quite typical of the area that time of year. But nobody scratched, nobody complained, as all were here to compete in a sporting event. Over 1000 shooters took the line and took their shot, as protecting averages and sitting out events was unheard of at this time. When you went to a shoot, you signed up, and you shot. The idea of not shooting due to the weather never entered your mind. I vividly remember big Dan Orlich breaking a lone 25 on the first trap of the final handicap, and being compensated with \$1200 for this feat.

Described above was typical of what I considered the very best of trapshooting in the great state of Nevada, a period that covered roughly 20 years, from the mid-50s to the mid-70s. These were very unique times, and will never again be duplicated. If you look at the covers of *Trap & Field* magazine during this period, many featured new trapshooting clubs that were being built around the country

After World War II, our country experienced a tremendous economic boom. The war had ended in glory, the veterans returned home as heroes, were able to procure decent jobs, and life was good. From those that returned from the islands and the front lines, there were also a high number of individuals that knew they had been lucky to survive, and were hell-bent on enjoying life to the fullest. A new age of potential gamblers had arrived.

Businessmen in Nevada, such as Del Webb in Las Vegas, and Harold Smith Sr, in Reno, were aware that the country was

now full of a new, ambitious, and bold American that could take about anything that was thrown at him. Air travel was being accepted as a new and safe way to travel, and Nevada was now no more than 3 to 4 hours away from anyone in the country. Nevada was also the only State in the Union that was legal for gambling. So began the effort to attract another new customer base to Nevada. New trapshooting facilities were built and expanded to host mega tournaments in both cities, with adornments of added money, and huge guaranteed purses. Both Reno and Las Vegas operated on the old principal at that time; the Hotel/Casino would give the customer a bargain on hotel, transportation, food, drink, etc, and hope this new group would gamble enough to see a return on the investment. This was a formula that provided a win-win situation for all for many years.

I am reading directly from a full page ad that appeared in the August, 1958 issue of *Trap & Field* magazine-

“The Sahara Gun Club presents the “Annual Fall Trapshooting Tournament, October 1,2,3,4, & 5, 1958. \$7,500 in Added Money, a new Cadillac Sedan, a \$2500 Mink Stole, and a complimentary ladies luncheon, Bingo Party and Fashion Show. Rooms- \$12, and transportation provided!”

That was over 50 years ago...

By the early 70's things began to change. The Del Webb Corporation had now hosted many tournaments in Las Vegas, utilizing the Sahara and Mint Hotel & Casino, with the Gun Club carrying the name of the host hotel at the time. By now, casino executives had determined who gambled and who didn't. The old Harold's Club in Reno had now become Harrah's, and things were changing there as well. Prime customers, who had been identified and pulled from the group, still

Continued from page 4

received many great perks, such as RFB (room, food and beverage) and probably an occasional show or two. A lot of this depended on the shift-boss on duty at the casino. This is the guy who had the power of the pencil. He could pull out his pen, and write up about anything for you, right on the spot. Dinner for 4 at the House of Lords, or Top of the Mint, front row seating for Wayne Newton, or a free upgrade to a corner suite.

The Del Webb Corporation abandoned the Gun Club operation in Las Vegas in the summer of 1976, even though the club carried the name as Mint Gun Club for several years thereafter. As the corporations and bean counters took over the town, the shift-boss position was virtually eliminated, and a new Las Vegas was emerging. A new Las Vegas that pretty much rolled up the red carpet it used to extend to trapshooters. For the most part, gaming no longer totally subsidized other areas, such as rooms, beverage and food, as it had in the past. Hotel, beverage and food managers all had to show a profit in their various bottom lines. Also, as our trapshooting group aged, they really didn't partake in the gambling activity near as much as is in earlier years. It simply was not a win situation for the casino any longer. The golden years of trapshooting in Nevada were coming to an end.

During my tenure here as operator of the old Mint Gun Club (now the Las Vegas Gun Club), I have dealt with numerous hotels & casinos, namely, the Rio, Holiday (now Harrah's), Imperial Palace, Aladdin, Maxim, Lady Luck, Showboat, Palace Station, Texas, Frontier, & Santa Fe Station. In the early 90's most hotels implemented a new card system to track players while they were in the casino. These were issued at check-in, and guests were asked to present these when at a table, or insert them into the various slot or video machines. Many trapshooters that I spoke with about this told me they were suspicious of the cards, and didn't like using them, as they didn't want to be tracked!

Following our major tournaments, I

would meet with executives from the host hotel, and all would tell me the same thing. As a gambling group, they never knew the trapshooters were even in the hotel. It made it a very hard sell when I would go back to them for assistance in tournaments scheduled for the following year. As a matter of fact, the hotels were no longer interested in about any sporting event that had an activity that took the guests outside of the hotel. About the only sport they will invest in is NASCAR, boxing & the National Finals Rodeo, as all of these have a huge spectator base, which is the real target of the hotel. Unfortunately, trapshooting has no spectator base at all, so we evolved to the point where we finally fell off the grid.

The great Golden West Grand of Reno, has pretty much ran parallel to the Mid-Winter Shoot of Las Vegas. Both of these tournaments have provided me with some of my very best memories of trapshooting. Hundreds of shooters used to huddle around the L-shaped bar inside the old clubhouse built by Harold's Club. We'd hoist a toast to the few that were able to break in the 90s that day, as the majority certainly had not. We'd lick our wounds, get a good nights sleep, then brave the elements to give it our best shot once again the following day. Like the Vegas Midwinter, you took all of your clothes with you to Reno, temperatures may be in the 70s one day, and sleet & wind chills in the 20s the next. Rain or shine, in victory or defeat, I feel very blessed to have been part of the glory of both of these tremendous Nevada tournaments.

In the past 15 years or so, hosting a major mid-winter trapshooting event in Las Vegas is an extremely risky venture. With no monetary support from the casino, the club is totally on it's own, and if the weather goes South, so do the shooters. We have aged, and are not the avid competitors we used to be, damned be the

weather. We have become more average conscious, and sensitive to wind and temperatures. We all either have white hair (or none), and simply do not wish to fight the elements as we would have in our youth. We no longer skip 4 or 5 traps to reach our next field, even though that is really what is the most fair. Now we just go to the adjacent field, because that's much easier, and right in front of our RV. Targets give us a warm, fuzzy feeling when we break them all in the calm air, and the sun warm on our back. In a few years, over 90% of us will either be vets or senior vets. It has become a social sport, where Lewis Class is king.

Besides, the Cadillac is no longer there to shoot for anyway...

Steve Carmichael
Las Vegas Gun Club

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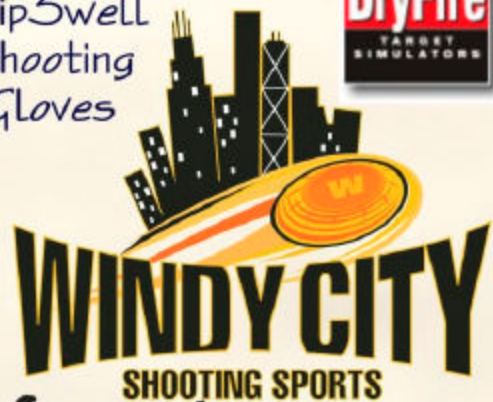
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