

4-H Shooting Sports News and Views
 Electronic Version for Agents and Coaches

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Wichita County Hosts District Shooting Sports Day Camp

The Shooting Sports leaders of District 3 hosted a shooting sports day camp for 4-H youngsters at the Northwest Texas Field and Stream Association Range on August 2. They offered a round robin introduction to rifle, pistol, shotgun and archery led by Texas 4-H certified volunteers in those disciplines. On one hour rotations, kids had an opportunity for supervised live fire in each of the disciplines during the day. An outline of the event and suggestions on how you might be able to use this as a recruiter in your area will be in the next newsletter. Kudos to CEA Mike Mahan (mn_mahan@tamu.edu) and to pistol instructor Don Van Meter for acting as the kingpins for this event. The folks at the Northwest Texas Field and Stream Association have been allies in the effort to reach kids with safe and instructive shooting programs for a long time, hosting several workshops as well. Thanks everyone involved for the outreach!

Workshops

As this is written we have three of our 8 major workshops scheduled for the 2005-2006 4-H year. As always, anyone in the state can attend any one of them, but we like to list all of them so we can let you plan ahead. As soon as the others become available, I will pass their dates and locations on to you. At present we have Victoria (September 9-11), Paris (October 14-16) and Rosenberg (March 31-April 2) on the books with applications available. I hope to have the others on the calendar and ready to add to this listing soon. These programs are very demanding on the members of the training team, with a minimum of one instructor per discipline. Instruction includes approximately 30 hours of classroom and range time in the discipline selected. Some instructors take a bit more because they feel they need it. Thus the time at the workshops is information dense time either in the classroom or on the range. Your driving time on either end of the workshops pays off in strong content. We work you hard while you are there and give you a morning to arrive and most of an afternoon and evening to get home. See the calendar for others that are available.

Victoria and Paris Workshop Applications Attached

Both the Victoria (September 9-11) and Paris (October 14-16) workshop applications are attached. Note that the fuse is relatively short with applications for Victoria due August 24 in the State Office and those for Paris due in the State Office by September 16. In Paris, we have a block of rooms held at the Holiday Inn at excellent prices (\$55 per night) until September 15. After that date, the rooms revert to their normal price. If you are coming, act early with both your application and room reservations. For those of you tempted to drive back and forth, note that the schedule will run until at least 9 or 10 PM on both Friday and Saturday nights, and that the starting times remain 8 AM on both Saturday and Sunday mornings. If you want breakfast, be there an hour earlier. A couple nights in a hotel room is better than driving while exhausted and risking injury.

New Mailing Address for Applications

In order to comply with new regulations promulgated by Texas Cooperative Extension, we have a change in our mailing address for any application with payments attached. Instead of sending them to our office, they must be sent to the Texas 4-H Foundation. We have established a post office box for that purpose. Walk in registrants are welcome, but they will need to go next door to our offices and tender the checks to the folks in the Texas 4-H Foundation Office. They will get the applications to us quickly. We believe this will be a smooth transition. The new address is:

**Texas 4-H Foundation
Attn. 4-H Shooting Sports
PO Box 11020
College Station, TX 77842-1020**

All other contact information remains the same as it has been.

Workshops: Scheduling and Registering

The Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Committee has eliminated single discipline workshops except for hunting and reloading. We will be hosting two (2) workshops in each of the four Extension regions each program year. The workshops focus on the objectives, structure and nature of 4-H, leader recruitment and promotion, fundamentals in the chosen discipline, and application to the games fired in that discipline. Basics of coaching and teaching as well as club recruitment and organization are also covered. All workshops are open to anyone in the state, so take your

choice. Potential leaders and CEAs (CEAs attend at no charge except for housing and meals) should review the calendar and apply early to be selected for the ones they want. Site limitations (or instructor:student ratios) set the bounds for numbers in any given discipline, and we need nearly a month to get everything in order and notifications sent to the attendees.

Texas Outdoor Archery Tournament

Moving north and west into Young County, the 2005 Texas 4-H Outdoor Archery Match attracted about 75 archers from 15 counties, including three counties new to the competition. Sub-junior shooters were the largest body of archers at the match with over 30 competitors shooting a total of 161 competitive rounds in the match. Junior archers numbered about 20 with 91 competitive rounds shot, and seniors shot 110 matches for the 20 plus archers. All types of archery equipment were in evidence with archers using longbows, recurve bare bows, recurve bows and compound bows all well represented. Complete results of the match are attached (Outarch05) for those who want to see how their archers may have stacked up had they attended or those who want a more permanent record of their kids' performances. The match was extremely well run by the team from Young County, right up to having some entertainment built into the 3-D course in the form of a "slide." We plan on being back in Graham for next year's match and hope to see some of you who wanted one "closer to us" taking part in it. The archery discipline group is looking into moving the matches into the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Games after next year. Your comments to any of the state level archery instructors or to my office are welcome.

Texas 4-H Indoor Smallbore 3-Position Rifle Match

With the change from being a Roundup Contest to being a separate program, one of the oldest matches in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program went through some changes this year and will show more as we adapt to imposed conditions and your wants and needs. This year we had 103 of the 140 young people who qualified posted scores at the range in Rosenberg. The match went well with our shooters posting some excellent scores under "somewhat warm" conditions. Gary Shipley of Austin County fired scores of 197 (prone), 188 (standing) and 192 (kneeling) to post a 577 - 36X score early (a mere 4 points below our current half course record in the match) and saw it hold up through the match. He also fired the high score in the finals round, posting a final score of 664 to take high individual honors. The median score for the 103 shooters posting scores was a 467 while the average score was a 441. That means that the scores are skewed somewhat to the high side. The average score for the top 10 shooters before the finals round was an outstanding 551, with 36 shooters firing scores at or above 500 points. Nearly 80 percent of the shooters posted scores of 400 or better for the half-course match.

Mr. Shipley took top honors in both the standing and kneeling positions. Rhianna Ridgeway (Harris County) posted a 198 - 17X score to take the high gun in prone, closely followed by Jason Rabel (Wilson County) with a 198 - 14X score. Harris County won the team competition with an aggregate score of 1636 (top three scores in each of the three positions). Val Verde County finished in a tie for second with Cooke County at 1630. That tie was broken on total center shots with Val Verde posting 50X and Cooke posting a 45X for third place. We also broke a tie at 1617 between Wilson and Sherman County teams with Wilson finishing fourth with 55X and Sherman finishing fifth with 43X. Bee County also posted a score above 1600 with a 1604.

First Method Demonstration/Illustrated Talk a Success

The first shooting sports method demonstration/illustrated talk contest at Roundup was concluded on Thursday, June 9 with two teams and two individuals competing. All of the presentations were strong ones, posing a challenge for Eddie Lero (Brazos County), Phillip Pearce (former Director of the Texas 4-H Foundation) and I to assign the winners. Topics were wide ranging from construction of a Flemish bowstring, firearms safety, 4-H archery recruitment, and hunter safety (with a well executed model firearm). We look forward to seeing this element grow in the future.

4-H National Match – 2005

Texas 4-H Shooting Sports teams once again claimed the overall team title, bringing the H. T. "Tom" Davison trophy home for the sixth consecutive year. It was an excellent match, very well handled by our hosts from Missouri. The Air Pistol team took second in slow fire, and first in both timed and rapid fire and in silhouette. The Air Rifle team placed fourth, third and second in 3-P, standing, and silhouette respectively. Compound Archery placed eighth, tenth

and seventh in FITA, Field and 3-D, respectively. Recurve Archery placed first in TITA and Field and second in 3-D. The Hunting team took first in Hunter Decision Making, second in Wildlife ID and Management, and third in Hunting Skills. One of the competitors said, "we just wanted to have one of each of the colors on the medals." Muzzle Loading Rifle placed third in Bullseye and fourth in both the Bottles and Haffner Combination and Silhouette. Smallbore Pistol swept all three events - Slow fire, Camp Perry and Silhouette. Smallbore Rifle took first place in both 3-P and CMP and placed fifth in silhouette. The Shotgun team took first in Skeet and Trap but dropped to eighth shooting among the trees in Sporting Clays. Our margin of victory was better than 2004, but close using the Missouri method of calculation. For those who want to view the entire array of results, the overall results are posted on the National 4-H Shooting Sports web site (http://4-Hshootingsports.org/national_match.htm) as well as on the Missouri 4-H web site at: <http://4h.missouri.edu/go/Nat4HSSContest/> .

Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Games

As this is written, the 2005 Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Games have just been completed. They have continued to evolve for many reasons, one of them being the national match courses of fire. For example, this year we added a hunting live fire event featuring 3-D archery, sporting clays, smallbore rifle on animal targets, and muzzle loading rifle on animal targets. Shot placement in all games was a consideration. Next year expect to see rapid fire air pistol and division of the hunting live fire into four elements each fired on a different day. Most of the results from the Games are posted with this newsletter. The remainder will be posted as soon as we get them from those who are working on getting them finalized. They will be posted with the rest of the results for easy location. Among the currently missing are the sporting clays (walk through) results and the Iron Man results from silhouette that contained an error.

Applications for the 2006 Texas Team for Nationals

As stated in the April newsletter, NOW is the time to apply for membership in the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Teams representing us in South Dakota in 2006. All members participating in the program are eligible if they are not be 19 or older on August 31, 2005 and must be at least 14 on January 1, 2006. An individual may participate in any given discipline at the National Shooting Sports Games only once, but they may participate in each of those disciplines until they either age out or lack the interest to apply. Current venues include:

Compound Archery	Recurve Archery	Hunting
Muzzle Loading Rifle	Air Pistol	Smallbore Pistol
Air Rifle	Smallbore Rifle	Shotgun.

Each of the disciplines includes three events. Both archery venues include a half FITA, Field, and 3-D rounds. Hunting includes hunter decision making, wildlife ID and management, and hunting skills, which includes live fire (like the one in San Antonio, where actual hit location counts) with bows, muzzleloaders, shotguns and smallbore rifles.), Muzzle loading Rifle used the 25 yard Bottles and Haffner, 50 yard bullseye and muzzle loading rifle silhouette. Air Pistol includes bullseye, rapid fire and silhouette silhouette. Smallbore Pistol includes the Camp Perry Round, slow fire round, smallbore hunter's pistol silhouette. Air rifle includes 3-position air rifle, standing air rifle, air rifle silhouette. Smallbore rifle includes 3-P, CMP Sporter Smallbore, smallbore **hunting** rifle silhouette. Shotgun includes skeet, trap and sporting clays of some kind. This application takes some time and thought (and maybe some research), so waiting to the last minute to apply is unwise. You may want to keep a copy of your application in case you want to apply in a later year, too. Regardless, if you are interested, act now. Next years match will be near Rapid City, South Dakota on June 25-30, 2006. As I understand it, our hosts are planning some historical site visits along with the matches which will be fired on a National Guard base just outside the city. One rumor places the final awards ceremony at the foot of Mount Rushmore.

Please note that the application is due on or before 1 December 2005 for review around the first of the new year. You must have shot all of the events listed in the discipline to apply (except for rapid fire air pistol, which we do not shoot here at present - maybe next year). The letters of recommendation and all other elements must be in place in order for us to evaluate your application. Time is shorter than you think, particularly if you want to do any research on the questions posed in the application.

Hotel and Bus Travel Being Explored

As you know the 2006 National Games will be in South Dakota. We are looking into getting a charter bus and a team

hotel. Preliminary cost are looking to be \$150 per person. We are not sure at this moment how much will have to be paid by the shooters and how much will be picked up by the Shooting Sports program. Please do not let this hinder your decision to apply for Texas Team. We will also be trying to book group attractions, not only for the Texas Team members but also for their families. We expect some parents to drive, but there will also be some room on the bus after we accommodate the shooters and coaches. For those parents, coaches and others who want to drive on their own, we will have some additional space booked, but booking on your own might be more effective. This will not be required, but is in response to the suggestions of the kids at previous matches. Once teams are picked, we will finalize all of this. Contact Tammy (979) 458-0466 or TAGEbert@ag.tamu.edu if you have a question.

Help Needed at EXPO

EXPO is coming again, although this may be the last year for this event. The Travis and Williamson County programs will serve as the lead group for EXPO this year, and they will need LOTS of help to get the job done. You need not be a rifle coach to assist. We need people to check eye dominance, give safety briefings, load magazines, do repair work on the rifles, reset and replace targets, and work the firing lines where we want a one on one process. Most of your audience will be rank beginners who have never fired a shot with anything before that day. There will be no general breaks until the event shuts down for the day. Rewards are great, if mostly intangible! We usually get a tee shirt and an Expo goody bag plus lunch and a drink or two. (Sort of like working the ranges at home.) If you can help and are willing to do so, please contact Jennie Dietrich at (pfun_stampin@hotmail.com)

In Case You Missed it - On the Value of Strong District (Regional) Committees

I decided to run this again, even though it was in the last newsletter. Why? Because it is one of the most effective ways I know to provide the highest quality 4-H programs. By maximizing the use and roles of highly motivated, trained volunteers, Extension staff gets a better program with more help and less time and energy expended by the staff. To me this represents a clear win-win situation. It does require that we listen to and empower those volunteers. While I intend these comments mostly for shooting sports, sportfishing, and field and stream programs, the approach is applicable to most programs. The keys are: 1) picking the right people - those with broad vision and willingness to invest as well as being well-prepared, 2) giving them a charge which includes both responsibility and authority, and 3) letting them do the job identified with guidance while avoiding interference. These things avoid the problems involved with dysfunctional committees. Those tend to be in four categories: 1) weak, agent dominated committees, 2) single discipline committees, 3) area-biased committees, and 4) committees focused on grinding a personal axe. All of them tend to be ineffective, disruptive, time demanding, and doomed to fail. Functional ones tend to think about enabling and reaching outside the box to improve things. It takes both some time and lots of faith to take this route, but the rewards are worth the effort and the risks.

State-trained Volunteers - Why the Requirement?

I field this question several times each year. The answer is relatively simple. It revolves around program quality, risk management, stability, youth development, and program consistency. Shooting is safer than such sports as badminton and table tennis, safer than any team sport, and much safer than taking baths or driving. The primary reasons for that safety center on range control and enforcing fundamental rules of safe firearm or archery handling. Our program looks much like the nationally recognized standard in this area, the education and training programs of the National Rifle Association, National Archery Development Association, and National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association. We teach to those standards and a bit beyond, because we work with kids. Providing a baseline of competency is vital to having a stable program in which kids can learn the fundamentals of both safety and marksmanship. We start with the absolute basics, keep it simple and reinforce the learning. As a result, kids do well and instructor/coaches are successful. We have no business running this program if young people are not developing lifelong skills as a result of their participation. Research shows that we are accomplishing youth development education. We build that into the training programs deliberately. Finally, we are interested in having consistency among clubs and counties. We do that by making sure that the national standards AND Texas standards are being taught (and tested) in our workshops. Why to we require state training? We do so because we care about the leaders, kids and program. It does cost in money, time, travel, and lost opportunity to do something else. We cannot make it shorter, less demanding, or personalized to every individual. If we attempt to do so, we risk losing something of extreme value along the way – the entire program.

Help Wanted: We Need Specimens You Throw Away

The hunting committee and team needs some help from all of you. Seasons area about to start. You are all over the state with access to things that some of us do not have. We need specimens for our teaching collection! What is a specimen, you ask? That is a great question, so let me try to answer it. Specimens are anything that can help us identify an animal available anywhere in North America whether classified as a game animal, furbearer, or varmint. In mammals that includes: skulls, skins, bacula, scats (dried droppings), and tracks. In birds, it includes wings and diagnostic feathers as well as tracks. We could also use diagnostic tracks (e.g. hen and tom turkeys) and dried droppings, like those of turkeys showing the difference in shape.

Great!, you say, what the devil do I do with them. Anything can be frozen and brought to us in that form. Skins can be have the fat removed (it rots things fast) and covered with borax (yep, the washing stuff). Let them air dry and put them in a cardboard box for shipping. Since they are being donated put the transfer information on them, showing who reduced them to possession. Skulls need to have the brains removed if you are shipping them. The brain (mostly fat - so calling you a fat head is actually a compliment) can be removed by inserting a wire loop through the foramen magnum (the big hole in the back of the skull) stirring and flushing it out with a jet of water. Let the skull dry a bit or carefully remove some of the flesh before doing so, then ship them in a paper box to my attention. We can take it from there. Please do not bother sending us those that are blow apart. We do not have someone to finish the jig saw puzzle. If you want to clean them yourself, carefully boiling them works (but may cause them to come apart); but dermestid beetles or ants do a better job. Just put them in a wire cage so they cannot take a trip with the critters. Be particularly careful with rabbit or jackrabbit (hare) skulls. They have many thin bones and many openings (fenestra or windows) making them very delicate. I need all kinds of rabbit skulls and skins. We can also use the baculum, the bone found in the penis of many mammals, from the males of most species. Droppings can simply be allowed to air dry well away from insects (wrap them in cheese cloth if necessary), then packed in cotton batting and shipped in a cardboard box. Tracks can be gathered by pouring plaster of paris into the track, labelling it with a scratched in number (I use my initials a date code and a serial number - e.g. RAHddmmyy-xxxx). Give it about 24 hours and lift it with the soil around it if necessary. Let us know who it is if you can identify it. Otherwise we will figure it out. We can clean them later with a bit of care. The best treatment of bird wings is to let them air dry a bit, then ship them in a paper envelope. Fresh ones are welcome with personal delivery. We can take it from there. **DO NOT USE PLASTIC BAGS!** Trapped moisture causes bird tissue to rot very quickly. I need duck and goose wings, upland bird wings, dove wings of all legal species, and other “webless migratory birds, like rail, crane (sandhill or little brown cranes), snipe and woodcock wings. We cannot use anything from protected species, including all songbirds, pelicans, all other shorebirds, cormorants, raptors, etc. Those are protected by both state and federal law and cannot be possessed without the appropriate permits. I am hoping that getting this out before we start this year’s hunting and trapping seasons will help me get the specimens needed to teach the hunting discipline better.

State Committee Meeting Scheduled

The Fall meeting of the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Committee in Kerrville promises to be a busy one, with an evening and an entire day set aside for deliberations and decisions. Discipline sub-committees will meet on the afternoon and evening of August 26 to discuss discipline-specific items, with recommendations coming to the full committee for additional action on Saturday, August 27. With the exception of some executive sessions, all 4-H Shooting Sports Committee meetings are open to all 4-H shooting sports leaders, coaches and kids. You may even take part in the discussions, but you do not have a vote. The decisions rest with the committee itself. Most of the real action takes place in the discipline committees, which make recommendations to the full committee on actions they wish to have taken. Those with suggestions, problems or issues to be addressed by the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Committee are welcome to forward those items whether you can attend or not. While telephone contacts are quite acceptable, they have an inherent potential for misinterpretation. As a result, we strongly recommend written or electronic messages. Direct them to the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Office, Ron, Stanley Baumbach (overall committee chair), or any of the discipline chairs. Currently those chairs are:

Archery - Ben Dybala
Coordinators - Craig Sullivan
Pistol - Phil Guenther
Rifle - Roy Green

Black Powder - Jim Peagler
Hunting - Rick Howard
Reloading - Ron
Silhouette - David Williams

Items shared with Stanley or my office will be copied to the appropriate discipline chairs for inclusion in their committee agendas. Your input is important, and you may be the only one making a suggestion that will have a significant and positive impact on an entire discipline area. (As an example, Mike Gentry's suggestion that we squad shotgun practice to allow all participants equal access to the fields worked like a charm and eliminated a lot of friction. We will be doing so again in 2006.) Please make your interests known so we can act on them accordingly.

NMLRA Postal League for 4-Hers

The National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association has a postal league set up for 4-H members. It is accessible through their web page by doing the following: go to <http://www.nmlra.org>. Hit the ENTER icon. Go to Postal Match Information, then click on the 2005 4-H Postal Match Printable Target, Rules and Instructions. This will give you access to the entire works. This is a 5 shot match with any metallic sights at 25 yards. Kids younger than 13 can shoot from a rest or standing free choice. Those 13 or older must shoot standing. There must be at least one adult member of the NMLRA working with the club. Rifles may be flintlock, caplock or inline. Entry fees of \$2.00 per shooter must be submitted with the fired target. Funds raised will support the NMLRA's youth shooting programs. Oh, yes, the entry deadline is a 30 September postmark, so it is in time for preparation for the seasons. Here is a chance to see what you can do in the wider world of muzzle loading. Let's have a BUNCH of Texas 4-Hers participate!

Postal League Results Attached

Results for several postal leagues are attached for your review. These include the following: Archery Postal League,

Parting Shots¹

I have been doing a lot of thinking and some discussing about the program, its direction and its future leadership. I believe it is time to share some of that with the people who really make the program work. For the most part, I am extremely pleased with the program, its impact on kids and families, and its value to the Texas 4-H program. On the other hand, several concerns or challenges continue to emerge. Most of those concerns arose in my thinking, but many have come from some of you as well – from committee members, volunteers, parents and kids.

One thing is clear. We must be absolutely sure that we are learning and teaching the life skills that are the core of the program. If we allow anything else to become the prime objective, we have committed the worst error we can make. If our prime objective is the development of the kids participating in the program, we cannot put any other aspect of the program ahead of it. We teach those elements "in passing" while appearing to be teaching something else. Most of it is taught subliminally or as an inclusion in what appears to be shooting skill development. Any process that does not teach life skills is in opposition to our purpose. Let comment on a few observations.

There are some among us who believe our purpose is to be a farm team for creating elite shooting athletes. While that is taking place, this is NOT our primary objective. We will generate them, just as we have in the past, and that is a good thing. Our real objective is stronger, more confident, more self-motivated young people who have the skills to cope with adult life. This we can do with all of them, including the kid who will never be an elite shot. One close to me has no urge to compete in the shotgun games. He shot an old side by side shotgun in preference to the dedicated target guns in the safe. After shooting his last targets at the Waco shoot some time back, he walked off the field, took his shotgun apart, put it in the case, and announced that he had just shot in his last competitive shotgun match. Did we fail? No. He will remain a recreational shooter, and will likely teach his kids to shoot. He will continue to hunt. He just did not like the competitive side of shotgunning. Did he learn or hone some life skills? Absolutely! He stuck with the process he started, even though he did not really enjoy it because others were depending on him to do so. On the other hand, he learned that competitiveness, untempered by sportsmanship, personal humility, and the ability to separate one's self from one's performance, can be destructive.

¹ Comments contained in this section are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect any official policy of Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University or the TAMU System. They are shared as personal editorial opinion.

Similarly, trading internal motivations and satisfactions for external ones (like a tangible award) sacrifices more powerful and positive motivators for those that are weaker and of lesser value. (If you listened in the coaching and teaching sessions of our workshops, you have already heard this.) There is nothing inherently wrong with tangible awards if they are used carefully and without undue emphasis. If we start believing (or acting like we believe) that those tangible awards are our objective, WE introduce the wrong in them! In so doing, we may tend to act differently toward our kids. To use a non-threatening example, I had a leader in Indianapolis who once told me, "Ron, if you give me 50 kids, I can weed them down to 5 and win everything in the state with them." My response was, " (Name deleted), if I give you 50 kids and you turn 45 of them away in order to have a winning team, I will fire you as a volunteer!" He had put the baggage ahead of the passenger, the outcome ahead of the process, and the object in front of the child. It is not always that obvious. Most of the time the error is insidious - it just sort of sneaks in under the radar and goes unnoticed until it is entrenched.

Without any attempt at placing blame, except perhaps on those of us who have taught program content, practice and philosophy, here are a few examples I have encountered recently.

1. A parent was overheard at the Games telling his/her youngster that "you have all the answers right and if you do not get an award, I will buy you one." It was evident the youngster did not study the materials and was in WAY over his/her head. What is that teaching? Does it teach commitment to learning the material and using it in the contest? Does it teach that there are some things that are right and others that are not? This was a classic example of Coach Jellybean from the old **Coaching Young Athletes**.

2. A parent called the office irate that her son had a higher score in an event, but that someone with a much lower score received an award. The parent insisted that ALL (their emphasis) awards should be given to the top individuals, not to someone who finished lower in the list. I explained that we gave as many awards as we have always done in the top category. The others are additional awards provided as an encouragement to those who are newer to the sport or simply less skilled, but competing with kids of like skill level. Shooting, unlike many other sports, often permits shooters to compete against those of similar skill. These classifications are determined either **a priori** or after the fact. In the former case, those who want to make sure they win something can cheat. They can "sandbag" their way into a low classification, then show their true skill in the match where it counts. Lewis classes (explained several times in the past) do not require this prior qualification. Instead, the scores are listed top to bottom, the array is divided according to the scores with ties at the break points going up, and additional awards are provided as incentives for those who would have truly had lower classifications if we spent the time, energy and record keeping to generate them. My advice to those who are top shooters but missed an award in a match - keep practicing and working on your skills. You are already a top level competitor in our program. You will be competing at that level. For those who are not ready for that level or may lack the physical skills to get there, the other awards are there to say "thanks for working on your shooting and being with us!" I believe this is valuable and worthy **and supportive of the youth development mission**.

3. A parent whose child finished out of the awards at the top level in an event let it be known that all awards belong at the top, and if we had gone 12 deep instead of only 5 (numbers here are not useful to you in figuring out the individual) his/her child would have gotten an award. The fact that someone else's child did get an award down the list was a frustration. This is a reflection of putting the award ahead of the objectives again. We do not plan to change to accommodate folks possessed of the Little League syndrome. We have plenty of that in local youth team sports. While shooting is most often a game of absolute or pure placing, we do not intend to manipulate it so someone's child gets an award at the expense of someone else's child. Let's keep awards in perspective!

4. Others reported three instances of booing taking place in awards ceremonies this year. Such behavior has NO place in 4-H Shooting Sports. It has left me both distressed and frustrated.. Nowhere in our program should this be taught or tolerated. I do not know where it came from, but it is among the lowest form of poor sportsmanship and fellowship with other shooters. None of us should tolerate it, and all of us should stand ready to admonish any kid or adult who participates in such behavior. Fair Warning - If such a thing ever takes place where I can detect the locus, I will disqualify the individuals, club or county from that event or match. While that may seem harsh and the kids would be paying a penalty for failure on the part of leaders, it would reinforce the point that we will behave as ladies

and gentlemen in a competitive sporting event without rancor or resorting to rudeness.

5. We continue to have an occasional parent who believes that they can impact the outcome of a match by arguing with anyone who will listen or by talking among a cloister of similarly malcontent individuals. We have repeated many times that the kids have standing in this program. They have the right of challenge and the right of protest. Parents and coaches do not. Rulings from the event management are NOT negotiable, and argument is abysmal sportsmanship (both in practice and example). Parents and coaches have access to the committee.. If you have something to say, please have the guts to do so up front, in person, and with courtesy. When you are right it may create a chance to do something about it. When you are wrong, have the courage to admit it and move on. Let it go. A case in point is the annual hoopla over the Top Gun award in shotgun. It operates under a strict set of rules developed by Mr. Elrey Ash, who donated the award.. It requires participation in all of the events. It includes every competitive shot fired as the denominator and every hit made as the numerator and yields a decimal "grade." It is not rocket science. It is easy to calculate, and we have a machine formula that does so for us.

Let's apply the acid test to all our events and activities. Do the things we are doing apply to all the kids in the program, regardless of their skill level? Are our actions enhancing life skills in both the kids and the adults involved? Are we putting the interests of all the kids over the interest of our club or county when it comes to program management and activities? Will the kids that come to us become better kids and better adults because they were associated with us? Are we creating our own replacements among both the parents and the kids that are participating in the program? Are we willing to address the challenges in a positive manner and make the program better, or will we let it degrade into a mediocre program?

I suspect there are several responses in minds right now: 1) who does that \$%^& think he is (I think I am the one responsible for the program to the TCE Administration), 2) "that's why he gets paid the big bucks – let him figure it out," 3) ouch, 4) preach on, 5) ho hum, or 6) what can I do about this? I hope that for most of you the primary thought is "where do I stand on all of this?" It is in the constant questioning of our objectives, values and practices that programs grow better, stronger and more productive. Now is a great time for some review.*

Ron