



SAGA SNIPPETS

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Keep Shooting Fun

Tips and Targets That Engage New Shooters

by Sheriff Jim Wilson

Thursday, September 1, 2016

I can tell you from my own experience that parents and grandparents are in for a lot of enjoyment when their kids get old enough to begin learning to shoot.

Of course, even before they fire their first gun, they should already have a solid understanding of gun safety. And this strong emphasis on safety should continue through their shooting training and throughout their lives. Having said that, parents or other adult teachers should make every effort to see that their range time is a fun and enjoyable experience.

Sometimes, we get so caught up in trying to teach marksmanship we lose sight of the fact that we got into shooting because it was fun. You might consider that a teaching session could begin with emphasis on the principles of marksmanship—breath control, sight picture, and trigger squeeze—but be sure to allow equal, or more, time for some fun shooting.

Kids—actually kids of all ages—enjoy shooting at targets that do something when they are hit. Several companies make different kinds of metal spinner targets at very reasonable prices. The child can see an immediate reaction when he hits one of these targets and some friendly competition will just enhance the experience. However, when shooting at metal

targets, always make sure that you are far enough away from the target that the occasional bullet splashback doesn't endanger anyone.

Another great idea is to take some impromptu targets to the shooting range with you. Of course, it is important to make sure that this is acceptable with whoever is managing the range. And it is best to avoid shooting at anything made of glass for what should be obvious reasons.

Old vegetables make excellent targets for the young shooters and are biodegradable. A center hit on a tomato just gives very satisfying results. Equally fun targets are charcoal briquettes, scattered around at different ranges, that turn in to a gray, smoky-looking cloud when the bullet flies true. Again, these are biodegradable and won't create a mess on the range.

And don't forget about those plastic water bottles that are so popular. Filled with water, capped off and hit with a .22 hollowpoint, they virtually explode. For a real technicolor experience, fill them with water and food coloring—the kids will enjoy helping with that. Think about it and use your imagination in coming up with reactive targets for your little shooters.

Regardless of the fun that you are having, two things are extremely important. Never, ever, allow fun to get in the way of gun safety. No one expects, or requires, us to

become great marksmen, but they do have a right to expect us to be safe in everything we do with guns.

The second important thing is to clean up any mess that has been made during our shooting range fun. The range area should be cleaned up just as well as your campsite when you are about to head for home. If you packed it in, pack it out.

You will find that when the kids are having fun, their marksmanship skills steadily increase, and increase at a surprising rate. When you are teaching kids to shoot, to respect guns, and to enjoy the shooting sports, not only are you teaching them important life lessons, you are teaching safety and codes of conduct.

Extracted with slight editing from:
https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2016/9/1/keep-shooting-fun-tips-and-targets-that-engage-new-shooters/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=insider&utm_campaign=0916



Chicago Officials (Finally) Recognize Criminals Cause Crime



Friday, September 9, 2016

<https://www.nraila.org/articles/20160909/chicago-officials-finally-recognize-criminals-cause-crime>

After more than five years in office, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is finally looking beyond his city's gun control laws to stop the out-of-control violence in the Windy City. After promising in 2011 to hire a thousand new police when he first ran for office, Mayor Emanuel has announced plans to recruit hundreds of new officers to address the city's dire personnel shortage.

Chicago officials have also begun to admit that the recent spike in homicides is a crime problem – not a gun problem. Just this week, Chicago Police Superintendent

Eddie Johnson acknowledged that “as long as we fail to hold violent repeat offenders responsible for their actions, we’re going to hear the same stories of murders and shootings in certain parts of our city.”

Johnson blamed Chicago's broken justice system. “It's frustrating for [Chicago police] to arrest a guy on Friday for an illegal gun and then the next Thursday they see him right back out on the street with another illegal gun.” A police spokesman echoed Johnson's frustration: “with nearly half of those we arrest for murder being repeated gun offenders, we need help to ensure these individuals stay off our streets after repeated arrests for guns.”

Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez made a similar acknowledgment last week: “Criminals know and understand our system” and “tell prosecutors that Illinois gun laws are ‘a joke.’” She noted that the worst offenders “are spending fewer and fewer days behind bars for their violent and repeat felony gun offenses,” and that “an unexplained revolving door” is “spitting these convicted criminals out of prison after

they have served only a fraction of their court-imposed sentences for violent gun offenses.”

The problem is exacerbated by a new policy the Chicago Police implemented through an agreement with the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. The policy, which took effect on January 1st, requires officers to write a detailed report every time they stop a suspect for a brief investigation. This not only requires time-intensive paperwork, but suspects must also get a receipt indicating the officer's name, and the time, place, and reason for the stop.

Under the new policy, street stops by Chicago police officers have dropped significantly. Less enforcement combined with weak punishment for violent offenders are driving Chicago's surging murder rate. Perhaps the seriousness of Chicago's soaring violent crime problem will cause the city's leaders to abandon their pursuit of ineffective gun-control measures and instead focus on the actual cause of crime: criminals.

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets

Bloomberg Ponies Up \$300 Million Dollars to Attack Gun Owners

Friday, September 16, 2016

Michael Bloomberg probably realizes he has only so many years left to spread around his enormous fortune to inflate his ego and manipulate every sphere of human activity.

So it was this week that the New York City billionaire came up with a cool \$300 million for the School of Public Health that bears his name at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Demonstrating the ex-mayor's typical hubris, "the Bloomberg American Health Initiative" seeks to increase life expectancy of people in the U.S. by tackling five issues from a "public health" perspective. Squarely in the crosshairs of the effort is the private ownership of firearms.

Citing "public health" to assail the things they don't like is a long-standing tactic of nanny-staters in general and gun control proponents in particular. A Baltimore Sun article describing the initiative gushes that it could "transform responses to public health challenges."

The "guns as disease" rhetoric is nothing new, however. It was official policy during the Bill Clinton administration, with taxpayer funded research producing shoddy advocacy efforts to promote the idea that gun control was a public health imperative, akin to mandatory immunizations or clean drinking water.

That led Congress in 1996 to impose a funding limitation to prevent the Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) from engaging in efforts to "advocate or promote gun control." The measure, while more specific, is akin to common restraints against using public funds for the purpose of political lobbying.

Nevertheless, gun control advocates have falsely claimed that the funding restriction is a ban on "research" into the causes and possible responses to firearm-related crime in the U.S.

Ironically exposing that lie, Barack Obama in 2013 issued an official directive to the CDC to "conduct or sponsor research into the causes of gun violence and the ways to prevent it." This, despite the fact that the funding freeze continues to remain in effect. He has also repeatedly called on Congress to appropriate \$10 million to fund the CDC's efforts (an effort Congress has wisely refused, considering how notoriously politicized the Executive Branch has been under Obama's watch).

Bloomberg's gift this week is 30 times larger than Obama's funding request. And while that money will not be solely devoted to "gun violence research," it is likely the single-largest investment in gun control in the history of the United States and will undoubtedly release a torrent of new gun control advocacy posing as dispassionate "research."

But don't take our word for it. Daniel Webster, director of the Center for Gun Policy and Research at the Bloomberg School, decried as "indefensible" the

"system" in America "designed to facilitate gun commerce"

While insisting throughout that same editorial that America's gun debate is being deliberately miscast by NRA as an either-or proposition, he fails to acknowledge any of the benefits associated with firearms (or even that they could have benefits). Nor does he mention that America nationwide is enjoying historically low rates of violent crime, with more firearms in private hands than in any time during the nation's history.

Simply put, he – and all his colleagues researching "gun violence" as a "public health" issue – see their role first and foremost as justifying restrictive gun control by whatever means they can concoct. To them, lawful commerce in firearms in the main vector in the spread of a fatal disease, which means that anything that suppresses that commerce must be "healthy."

Of course, the tens of millions of Americans who own guns simply don't see it that way. NRA will continue to work against Bloomberg's efforts to cast our Second Amendment in such terms and trust the American public to understand the difference.

<https://www.nraila.org/articles/20160916/bloomberg-ponies-up-300-million-dollars-to-attack-gun-owners>

Vertex Distance, Optimum Vision or Not?

by Norman Wong, O.D.
Thursday, September 15, 2016

Brian, a high power rifle shooter from Texas, came to see me for a shooter's eye exam but did not bring his Champion shooting glasses for the evaluation. I determined an initial prescription but asked Brian, once he returned home, to send me a side-profile picture wearing the shooting glasses with a ruler along side. This allowed me to extrapolate the needed information to provide a prescription that would help Brian compete with confidence. This experience led me to write this article in order to help other shooters under similar circumstances.

The distance between the eye and the back surface of the spectacle lens is known as vertex distance. Eye care specialists are well aware that a prescription may change when contact lenses are fitted to replace eyeglasses. This is because the prescription at the corneal plane (the front surface of the eye) is different than at the plane where the lenses sit on the eyeglass frame. A prescription lens for a nearsighted eye becomes stronger in power when it is closer to the eye and weaker when farther from the eye; whereas a farsighted lens becomes weaker when moved closer to the eye and stronger when farther from the eye.

Specialized shooting glasses such as Champions and Knoblochs offer the shooter a variety of options, including lateral lens positioning. Unless the eye care specialist understands their use, a careful eye examination may or may not provide optimal vision with these glasses. How much does vertex distance affect shooters? The lenses in Champion, Knobloch and similar shooting glasses may be positioned two to

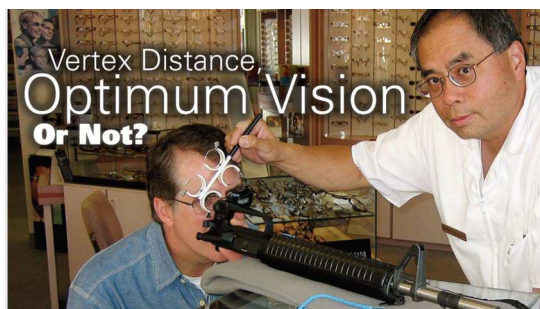
three times farther from the eye than with typical eyeglass frames. (An offset lens bar is available with some models to bring the lens closer to the eye.) This increased distance from the lens to the eye will increase or decrease the power of a lens as explained above.

If you are using a relatively weak (lower power) prescription, changes to the vertex distance will show a negligible difference in your vision. However, as the magnitude of the prescription power increases, the new prescription could be 0.25, 0.50 diopter or more in error.

Prescription lenses are normally fabricated in 0.25 diopter increments but the following abbreviated table will show how some of you may be affected. The exact numbers are not as important as the general tendencies the table exhibits. As the shooting glass lens is positioned farther than your normal eyeglass lens by 15mm, 20mm, 25mm and 30mm, the effective power changes.

Use the link at the end of the article to view the table.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the only published table of this kind, specifically for the benefit of shooters. By understanding how vertex distance may affect some of our shooting glass prescriptions, we can use this to our advantage,



as I do in my practice. If you see just fine when shooting, there's no need for any concern. But if you don't, vertex distance may be a contributing factor for an error in your prescription. Also, if you see fine but your eyes fatigue as the shooting day progresses; again, consider vertex distance. Other factors must be considered by your eye care specialist, such as unstable vision due to poor medical health as with Diabetes, pathology associated with the aging eye, side effects from medications, and an incorrect shooting glass prescription.

An interesting note to consider; a +0.50 diopter lens used on the front sights on certain rifles to provide magnification no longer behaves as a +0.50 diopter power lens to our eyes because of vertex distance. The effective power becomes higher.

https://www.ssusa.org/articles/2016/9/15/vertex-distance-optimum-vision-or-not/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=insider&utm_campaign=0916

Conservationists Unite at Conference for our Wildlife's Future

Brisbane, Australia
30 August - 1 September 2016

<http://ssaa.org.au/news-resources/hunting/conservationists-unite-at-conference-for-our-wildlifes-future>

08 September 2016

From the social challenges of kangaroo harvesting to utilising feral camels in the Top End; managing wild deer populations to trophy hunting in South Africa and uniting farmers in the United Kingdom; the ethical use of wildlife for future generations was the focus of a recent landmark gathering. With the original conference of the same name first held in 1994, the 2016 Conservation through Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference brought together around 200 delegates from universities, government, industry and key stakeholders to reflect on past and present wildlife management practices. The occasion provided a platform for both budding and experienced presenters to put forward their ideas and research on the topic of conservation broadly, with the need for a 'social licence to operate' a recurring theme across the three-day event.

Hosted by The University of Queensland (UQ) at the Pullman Brisbane on the cusp of spring, SSAA National was a proud major supporter and committee organiser of the long overdue conference. One of the attendees from the first event presented the opening keynote address. UQ Emeritus Professor Gordon Griggs reflected on his time spent advocating for the commercial kangaroo harvesting industry and stressed the need for the right marketing of this emotive trade if it is to move forward.



Fellow original conference attendee Dr Dan Lunney, from the New South Wales Environment and Heritage Office, focused on the lessons learned from the 1994 event. He highlighted emerging environmental challenges to consider, including climate change, predicting that this will have an impact on wildlife populations. He called for proactive policies instead of reactive policy approaches and lamented the zoological and biological ignorance of animal liberation activists and political parties that seem to be playing favourites with species.

Renowned Professor Grahame Webb expanded on the rise of animal liberationists in an entertaining and almost mesmerising keynote speech at the conference dinner, based on his book, *Wild-life Conservation: In the Belly of the Beast*. He cautioned against 'bio-politics' and labelled animal activists as campaigners of animal rights. He also warned the captivated audience about the growing rural-urban divide and the imperative of effectively working with landowners and people in regional areas, instead of returning to knee-jerk political actions which have become all too common.

In a room full of pro-ethical hunting organisations and proud conservationists who use firearms as a tool to protect our native wildlife, the presentation from the RSPCA's chief science and strategy officer Dr Bidda Jones

was highly anticipated. In her address, Dr Jones reiterated that the RSPCA does not support recreational hunting as a wildlife management tool, saying any form of wildlife management, based on what the RSPCA deems 'sentient animals' needs to be "justified, effective and humane".

Dr Jones went on to illustrate survey results indicating that 74 per cent of those approached viewed recreational hunting as 'unacceptable'. In contrast, 79 per cent of survey respondents recorded recreational fishing as acceptable. She argued that not all involved in recreational hunting can maintain high standard operating procedures and questioned the benefits of recreational hunting on achieving conservation goals.

But with presentations from independent academics and ethical hunting organisations, including the SSAA's National Wildlife Program Leader Matthew Godson, such concerns were quickly overshadowed by evidence. Conservation benefits recorded following pest control programs involving volunteer shooters spoke loud and clear. The SSAA Farmer Assist program was just one initiative that demonstrated the unreserved importance of utilising capable volunteer shooters, with Matthew outlining how the program has benefited landowners in terms of feral and pest animal control. At no cost and with tangible results so far, volunteer shooters had proved they played a crucial role in conservation and wildlife management.

Student presenter Ellen Freeman also showcased how recreational hunters are contributing to wildlife management. Ellen, a SSAA Academic Bursary Program recipient, outlined the known benefits,

Continued...Conservationists Unite at Conference

including relieving pressure on government departments and landowners to tackle the growing wild deer problem. She received a special commendation for her talk from a judging panel that were searching for the best student presentation out of six students. This was awarded to Stewart Pittard, from Charles Darwin University, for his research into buffaloes in Kakadu.

Along with a focus on future sustainable use practices, there was a notable push for those involved in wildlife management to positively portray activities in such a way that meets public expectations. This is commonly known as the 'social licence to operate'. Organisations such as the SSAA play a key role in engaging with the community, government and industry to demonstrate our members' roles as ethical hunters and ensure our activities cause no undue unrest among broader society. It goes without saying that our members must adhere to a strict code of conduct at all times. Animal welfare is paramount.

Professor and Head of the Nature Conservation Department, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, Brian Reilly, gave a first-hand account of the backlash

against the trophy hunting industry and how this has had real effects in South Africa. While ecotourism in his home country is still thriving, Professor Reilly explored why Australia has been unable to achieve similar success with our indigenous animals.

The kangaroo industry in Australia outlined some of the challenges it faces, but also explored its true potential. The overwhelming message was that the key is to work with landowners and win over the public. If we are able to create a viable kangaroo industry it would be a big win for conservation, landowners and the general public.

Macro Meats managing director and founder Ray Borda provided insight into why the company is now only harvesting male kangaroos. Much of this discussion focused on social licensing and how the kangaroo industry is still solidifying its place in the Australian and world psyche. On that note, Ray told the conference to keep an eye out for 'Paroo' at your supermarket, the finest wild game kangaroo selected from specific regions.

The experience from Teresa Dent, of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, UK, where farmers

were recruited to conduct native wildlife surveys and work together to tackle environmental issues, was well received by the international audience. New Zealand was also represented and put forward its experience with fish and game bird management.

Closing remarks from the host organisation and committee chair, Dr Peter Murray, were poignant. He reflected on the growing amount of young people and students entering the industry, including the high numbers attending and presenting at the conference, before reiterating an earlier point: conservation and wildlife management is "not an area of science that is male, pale or stale."

While it has been 22 years since the first gathering focused on how we, as ethical humans, should best utilise wildlife in a way that benefits future generations, today's wildlife managers need to adapt to changing societal and political challenges. Whether the next conference is held in another two decades or three years, it is clear that the role of hunters as conservationists is one that should never be underestimated.