

ATA DELEGATE REPORT
JANUARY 2016
Mark Stevens, Minnesota

Well the Calendar says it is December 21st, but 35-45 degree weather and skim-ice on lakes, says it is perhaps really November! Who can believe that the day I am writing this is the shortest day of the year, the day of winter, and Minnesotans look forward to the longer days starting in just 48 hours. Shoppers are flitting from store to store in their shirt sleeves and sweaters and the warm winter coats are still in the closet.

Minnesota has sure turned into a tropical state over the past 50 years. No longer do we see a week below -30 and ranges closed due to cold weather. Instead, Del-tone/Luth, Minneapolis and Buffalo gun clubs are running jackpot shoots for cash and or prizes, much to the enjoyment of our Minnesota winter-abiding residents. Registered shooting has screeched to a halt but there is still plenty of friends out busting targets. Please get out and enjoy these days. Support the clubs that are open. Costs are still there for these clubs each and every day, whether you shoot or not, they still have bills to pay. If you want economically priced targets, the more you shoot the more they can afford lower prices.

Hunting is coming to an end in about two weeks in Minnesota and, while it wasn't the normal barn burner, it was still excellent. Hunting is not about the harvest of game, but more about comradery and sharing of all the experiences that occur while in the field. When the gun goes off, the fun stops, and the work begins. Until that time, there are countless sights and sounds, and each one of them an adventure of discovery.

NRA Level 1 Shotgun Coach Classes are starting up in several weeks and many of the classes are filling fast. You can find a class and sign up on line by visiting www.minnesotashotgun.org and look for coach education in the middle of the page. The nonprofit, which Sally and I donate all our time as NRA National Coach Development staff to, will be holding classes in Buffalo, Fairmont, St. Cloud and Bemidji this year, a total of six classes. Don't wait, classes are limited to 30 persons maximum and Bemidji is already full, even though it's being held in mid-January in northern Minnesota!

There is no news on Sparta yet, but I do have a phone conference tonight with the Central Zone so perhaps some word will come soon.

The Christmas season is here, upon us, and I hope that the season is a bright and happy for your family as it is for us. Christmas is about giving. There are many out there whom have nothing. Sally and I do random acts of kindness all the time, like buying breakfast for a table of strangers in a restaurant, or paying for McDonalds for the car behind you. I would encourage you to do the same if you are able. A Senior citizen eating all alone, would appreciate someone to join them, if for just a few words perhaps pay for their meal. Help distribute food at a food shelf or ring the bell. Community service starts with you. Share the season, your heart will grow warm because if it.

I am again reminded this morning, just how precious life is, and how we never know when the end will come. Hug your family, tell them how much you love them, make sure they know. Yesterday, a family friend saw their mom off to the airport, said good bye, as she was going to Florida to visit family for the week. The mom, 61 years old, passed away on the plane. Don't be left wishing you would have spoken up. Live each day to the fullest.

I am humbled and honored to be your Delegate for the ATA. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me at your convenience. Happiest of Holidays to all of you!

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