

Greetings from Ontario, Canada.

At the time I write this article (August 25, 2011) we are within days of our target year end and have only recently finished the Grand. The shelter that the shooters of Ontario sponsored gave relief from the elements on bank 5 and looks quite attractive. Grand numbers in most events were up by as much as 20%. This may have a lot to do with the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Martin and their financial incentives (\$100,000.00 handicap shootout and \$200,000.00 lewis).

The records will show that Ontario was not in attendance at the ATA annual meeting. I couldn't be in two places at once. I was called to a shoot-off scheduled for the same time. I was Ontario's representative in the Men's Champion of Champions event and had run the event targets that morning. There were 14 of us. After 100 overtime targets under the lights there were still four of us. I missed on in the 5th round and ended 4th, which many maintain is the worst place to be - a long way to inglorious, trophiless oblivion.

Congratulations to all the Ontario award winners including the All-Star teams (based on cumulative averages and minimum target requirements) and kudos to our first ever annual Delegate and Category Delegate teams which are based on event victories and not averages.

On a completely different front, Canadians were saddened to learn of the passing of Jack Layton this past week from cancer. He was the leader of the NDP and became as well the leader of Canada's "Official Opposition" in Parliament. His political achievements were precedent setting and the NDP lost a strong and effective voice and leader. I respect the man, his tenacity and work ethic. However, I did not like his politics. The NDP are masterful at finding ways to distribute wealth, but are short on ways to create it.

Finally, on the flag and national anthem issue - I am confident that the vast majority of Canadians and Americans would never do anything to show disrespect for the flag or anthem of another sovereign nation. But sometimes and thankfully rarely there is a problem. Most turn out to be unintended. Sometimes they are very much intended and it is more a reflection on the perpetrator than on the Country being snubbed. And sometimes it is hard to know how to deal with these people. I believe education and enlightenment on how a Country's anthem and flag came into existence is a good start.

Last month I discussed the "Star Spangled Banner" and how it was inspired during a desperate seige on Baltimore's Fort McHenry during the War of 1812 between American and British North American (Canadian forefathers) forces. Ironically Canucks had a role in the American anthem. Even more ironically, "Yanks" had a role in Canada's national anthem as well.

Our National Anthem was first sung on June 24, 1880 having been composed by Calixa Lavallée who was in fact known as "Canada's national musician". He composed the music for a poem written by Judge Adolphe - Basile Routhier. The occasion was the "Congres national des Canadiens - Francais" in 1880, held at the same time as the St. Jean - Baptiste Day celebrations. It didn't attain much traction initially and went through several variations over the years in both English and French. It was, however, the best known patriotic song in Canada by the time the Great War of 1914 broke out. It was authorized for singing in Canadian schools and at public

functions in 1927. But even during the second World War, the then Prime Minister Mackenzie King refused to deal with the issue of a formal national anthem opting to keep "God Save the King" and "O Canada" as unofficial national anthems with equal status. It wasn't until January 31, 1966 that then Prime Minister Lester Pearson recommended the government adopt "O Canada". But it wasn't until June 27, 1980 that the House of Commons actually (unanimously) accepted "O Canada" as our national anthem with Royal assent given the same day.

So what was the US influence? Well, Calixa Lavallé although born in Canada was often described as a "Canadian errant" - one who left Canada for greener fields. Those greener fields were south of the border. He won a musical competition in New Orleans which enabled him to get a job as an accompanist to famous Spanish violinist Olivera and he toured Brazil and the West Indies. He returned to the States and joined the Northern army during the civil war attaining the rank of lieutenant. In 1865 he began teaching music and doing concert music tours in the States. He got married and began to work with Arnold de Thiers with whom he composed a comic opera called "Lou Lou". The night before its first performance the owner of the opera house was shot and the theatre closed. Lavallee, who had been conductor and artistic director of the theatre - the New York Grand Opera House, found himself out of a job and booted it back to Canada. His skill set was honed in the USA and the rest is history.

When standing at attention during the playing of the Canadian national anthem, you will most often observe our single leaf design flag (red and white) which was finally approved to take effect as our National flag on February 15, 1965 replacing previous adaptations of the British "union jack".

So now you have it - a little history of the anthems and flags of two nations. If you encounter people in the future apparently unwilling to spend the few moments it takes to observe the playing of both anthems, threaten them with reading them this diatribe. If that doesn't work, nothing will.

Good shooting.

Paul Shaw
ATA Ontario Delegate