

Greetings from Ontario, Canada.

I write this article about a week after the conclusion of the Southern Grand. For those that know my writing style and content you know that I seldom discuss routine tournament results - Trap & Field Magazine already covers this in detail. My preference is to probe into subject areas that you are not likely to see on a score sheet.

Florida is usually a pleasant break for Ontario shooters hoping to escape the snow and cold. Not this year. We had a mild winter and March temperatures in Ontario were not that far off those in Florida. With the economic recovery fragile on both sides of the border and the cost of shooting on the rise, who would have thought participation at the Southern Grand would be the highest in recent history. Some of Bob Stuart's announcements said it all, like "if you have not paid your entries by _____ your presquad ticket will be released to other shooters". And "if you are holding a squad with an unused position, please turn it in as we are nearing capacity". Let's hope the participation surge continues.

For shooters like our Ontario shooters that have to travel great distances to get to shoots, there are often experiences enroute just as memorable as the competitions. Some experiences are pleasant and some are not. And sometimes one person's joy is another's horror. That is how I interpret one of our senior vet's experience on the way down Interstate 75. Fred Squires and his better half were getting along quite well until mile 160 in northern Tennessee. Both lanes of the southbound interstate were closed and Fred and his wife were obliged to detour with their huge RV along narrow, winding roads that followed mountain streams and mountain passes. Fred thought it was great but his wife was terrified. She could envisage the RV slipping off the road and down, down, down to the river bed below.

When Ray Cockburn's shooting crew did the same detour he swore he saw Jed Clampett and Granny in her rocker on the porch of one of the modest shacks. Some I talked to swear they heard "dueling banjos". Nobody knew at the time what the reason was for the detour and how long it would take. My wife Bev insisted that we keep the windows up and "don't stop". She wasn't impressed when I told her I wanted to stop and talk to some of the locals. Thirty plus miles of shacks, garbage, clutter, a sign that said "land for sale - make an offer" and another sign that seemed to be remembered by all as a real shocker - "\$500.00 fine for littering". When I suggested to Beverley that it was starting to get late and since there were no hotels we would have to be "billeted" she just didn't seem to have my sense of humour.

As it turns out, a rock slide closed Interstate 75 southbound for what was later described as an "indefinite time". Guys like Lloyd Beecroft and his "Galt" travel mates missed out on all the fun - on purpose. They got emails warning them of the rock slide and took an alternative route through West Virginia. Former Ontario delegate Andy Murdoch would have just laughed at us all - he always flew.

Speaking of former Ontario Delegates, Albert Hall recently passed away. He will be fondly remembered by all. It occurs to me that I did not pay tribute to one of our prolific shooters Vince Bonaiuto, who passed away last year. Most of you, if you did not know Vince, will know or know of his son Frank who has secured numerous Ontario championships. Vince has been

missed by all.

Good shooting.

Paul Shaw, Ontario ATA Delegate