

ATA article for November 2016

Greetings from Ontario, Canada.

Our condolences are extended to Vivian and her family on the passing of Ernest (Ernie) Freitag who was a familiar face and friend to all, not only at Ontario trap clubs but throughout the northeast.

Target shooting is enjoyed by millions of enthusiasts around the globe. The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) regulates the (International Style) rifle, handgun and shotgun sports worldwide. The International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) governs the "Olympic" shooting disciplines. Commonwealth Games and Pan American Games have their own governing bodies. In spite of our vast membership the ATA regulates only one type of shooting – "shotgun". And for the most part we operate in jurisdictions that exclusively or predominantly communicate in the English language.

For those of you that have had the opportunity to travel internationally you already know that communicating in a "foreign" language is a challenge. Some languages are relatively straightforward to learn, for instance, French and Spanish. Some languages however make little sense to one struggling to learn the nuances and among them, one of the most difficult has to be English. Imagine yourself trying to assist a new foreign shooter eager to master ATA trap and who is struggling with the English language. You volunteer to take him "trapshooting". Think about the inconsistencies and contradictions in our language.

Here are but a few examples: Try explaining at lunch before you go to the trap club:

- There is no egg in eggplant;
- No ham in hamburger;
- No apple in pineapple (or pine);
- English muffins were not invented in England or French fries in France;
- Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads (which aren't sweet) are meat.

While eating, keep your conversation simple. You'll further confuse your guest to know that quicksand works slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig (it may in fact better describe your guest who is trying something which, for him at least, is a new experience).

After lunch, while driving to the trap range avoid commenting on many of the things that you observe along the route like:

- The farmer's field on your left side is used to produce produce. Strange farm for sure because to help with the planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow;
- The dump on your right hand side is so full it has to refuse more refuse;
- If it happens to be the Tucson Trap Club you are heading to you might want to remind your guest not to desert his dessert in the desert;
- Good luck if you try explaining why the buck in the grove ahead does funny things when in the presence of does.

When you finally arrive at the Club, good luck in explaining:

- Why a recent club member (you know the one who gave up alligator wrestling after the big “bite”) has wound a bandage around the wound;
- This is the same (temporary) invalid whose health care policy was declared invalid;
- Or why your guest put his shooting bag too close to the passenger door for you to close it (he may wonder why you didn’t object to him placing this object there in the first place);
- Or why you have to subject your subject to a safety overview before taking the line;
- Or why the three people impatiently waiting for you and your guest to take the line keep threatening to have someone else take the lead unless you get the lead out.

Thankfully, while actually trapshooting the ear protection is also a good excuse to avoid the torture of trying to explain the inconsistencies of the language. You don’t have to explain for instance why the tears in your eyes resulted from tears in your new shooting vest.

And, of course, after the round you and your buddies think it only fitting to give a token memento to your guest for his efforts. One of your buddies comments that “there is no time like the present to present the present”.

At the end of a long day of trapshooting it may be comforting to know that your “non-resident alien” guest has started on the long trek to mastering our sport. But to master our language?

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