

## ATA Article for May 2015

### Greetings from Ontario, Canada

During the month of April, five Ontario clubs had scheduled a total of five ATA registered events. A further six events are scheduled for May. For those of us in attendance it will soon be evident whether our severe winter weather had a negative impact on shooting performance. From my experience, winter league shooting definitely helps in keeping the reflexes and sight picture honed and advertes the onset of muscle atrophy. Some have had an opportunity to shoot in warmer places like Florida and Arizona. But for many of our colleagues (including myself) taking in some of the early season satellite grands was not in the cards this year.

I am well beyond my "best before date" but, believe it or not, I am one of a handful of Canadian shooters on our national team in contention to represent Canada at the 2015 Pan Am Games in July. The shooting venue is at the Toronto International Trap & Skeet Club which is my home club. What a privilege it would be to represent our country Canada at such a prestigious event. So, I am trying to turn back the clock and position myself physically and mentally to be a contender. For the first time ever I hired a personal trainer and joined a health club. I have been slugging it out for almost three months now, three times a week. The exercise (stress and strain) is so intense that I barely recover from the aches and pains from one session only to be emerged in the next. With all the perspiration that accompanies the rigors of each session I expected a significant muscle toning and weight loss. Guess what? I have gained three pounds and am so exhausted I fall asleep shortly after dinner but am wide awake at 3:00 am. There is something to be said about aging gracefully – I obviously missed the lecture.

On the political scene, the federal election is scheduled for October 19, 2015. There is speculation that the Prime Minister may accelerate or delay the election but it is in the end up to the Prime Minister's Office. In my opinion the Federal Conservative's grip on power is becoming increasingly tenuous. The economy is not robust, oil revenues are so low that the projected budget surplus will almost certainly be a deficit. Justin Trudeau, leader of the Federal Liberals and son of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, although considered by many to be prone to gaffes and incredibly naïve is nevertheless leading the polls. A Prime Minister Harper Senate appointee Mike Duffy will go on trial later this spring for a number of alleged criminal acts. This (and other) Senate scandals are likely to expose a lot of things the Prime Minister's Office would prefer to keep under wraps. And, in an attempt to shore up support, the

Federal Government has brought forward a number of bills designed to appeal to a broad cross section of the population.

Keep in mind that there is only one political party in Ottawa that is firearm owner friendly. For those of us who enjoy our firearm heritage the Federal Conservatives are our only choice. The Liberals and NDP will cause us grief. Bill C-42 (the "Common Sense" Firearms Licensing Act) was scheduled for its first day of debate on the very day that one of our Armed Forces "guards" at the Soldiers Memorial outside the Parliament buildings was murdered by a terrorist gunman. The Bill was summarily shelved but is now back on track. It likely won't be enacted before the election which means it will die on the order table. It could streamline and simplify transportation laws with firearms, cut down on red tape and decriminalize some activities. So, my question is – does this Bill represent merely a political ploy to shore up the support of firearm owners? Is the plan by the Harper government to give us a taste of firearm revisions we want – as long as we continue to align ourselves with the Conservatives and help them get re-elected? Ploy or not, we have little choice.

But firearm laws are only some of the hot-button legislative issues that has wended through the courts and beyond. Until the Supreme Court of Canada recently struck down the provision prohibiting assisted suicide in the February 2015 Carter vs. Canada (AG) case,, it was a criminal act to participate in active euthanasia (intentionally killing a person to relieve pain). The Supreme Court, in striking down this law, concluded that in limited circumstances it was not only legal but in the public interest to permit a consenting adult to end his/her life in dignity to alleviate intolerable and permanent suffering. This was, and is, a very emotional issue. The government has one year from the S.C.C. decision to enact legislation that lays out the parameters of when assisted suicide will be permitted (legally). [Note: I wonder if this new legislation will cover zealous trainers at exercise clubs and their "consenting" out of shape clientele (like me). Sounds a lot like "assisted suicide" to me.]

The way our Canadian Government deals with new legislation is often problematic. Sometimes when legislation is struck down and the Government is ordered by the Supreme Court of Canada to come up with new legislation to replace the old – they play "silly-bugger". Take, for instance, the S.C.C. decision in December 2013 that struck down our laws on prostitution. Prior to the S.C.C. decision it was legal for the purchase and sale of sexual services by consenting adults. What was illegal were certain activities such as solicitation, running a "bawdy" house, etc. Sex trade workers had to operate in a clandestine way that exposed them to danger and many were murdered. The S.C.C. required the Government to re-write the law. It did, in the form of Bill C-36. But a key component of this new "proposed" law was to make it legal

for a sex worker to personally advertise sexual services and sell them but then made it illegal for anyone to buy sexual services. Can you imagine the stupidity?

But we as firearm owners have experienced "stupid" laws and continue to live under their cloud. Our American friends have experienced laws that are arguably more bizarre than ours. They, unlike us on firearm issues, have the benefit of their Second Amendment and the advocacy of the NRA. Stay tuned.

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