

ATA article for April 2020.

Greetings from Ontario, Canada.

This article is devoted to those who make contributions large and small for the benefit of others and never seek recognition, and in many cases few if any people know what they did or why they did it. Some go to great lengths to ensure people never connect them to their “pay it forward” acts of random kindness.

But, I can assure you that within our trapshooting ranks there are many people that have benefitted from anonymous acts of kindness. Benefits bestowed are limited only by the imagination and transcend trapshooting. People’s lives can and have changed for the better and the hope is someday those people may help others – sometimes in the most unexpected ways.

The following narrative illustrates my point. While it is claimed to be a true story, I have been unable to independently verify all of this information and I will leave it to you to research accordingly. It unfolds as follows:

A poor Scottish farmer by the name of Hugh Fleming went out in his field trying to eke out a living and heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck and sinking rapidly was a terrified boy screaming and trying unsuccessfully to free himself. The farmer saved the boy from what would have been a slow and horrifying death.

The next day a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman’s modest hovel and an elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy the farmer had saved, “I want to repay you for saving my son’s life.” The farmer waived off the gesture and said he couldn’t accept payment for what any person would do under the circumstances.

At that moment, the farmer’s own son came to the door, “Is that your son?” asked the nobleman to which the farmer nodded affirmatively.

“I’ll make you deal. Let me provide him with the level of education my son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he’ll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of.”

The nobleman was true to his word and Farmer Fleming’s son attended the very best schools and in time graduated from St. Mary’s Hospital Medical School in London. He was a gold medalist, and later taught medicine and researched in specialty areas of bacteriology.

During World War One he had a commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps. There he observed firsthand the carnage caused not only by war but the death that occurred by wound infections. In 1928 Farmer Fleming’s son discovered something that made him world famous – Penicillin. His name – Sir Alexander Fleming.

To fellow trapshooters – your contributions big and small have a positive impact on the lives of others. And to all of you who know what I am talking about – thank you.

Paul Shaw,  
Ontario Delegate